

PLANNING APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENT

Application number: PP/17/00253
Site Address: 128A Lancaster Road, LONDON, W11 1QS
Proposal: Demolition of existing youth centre buildings (Class D1 use) and construction of mixed-use four storey building comprising library, replacement youth centre, external multi-use-games-area (MUGA) and education space (Class D1 use), together with associated hard and soft landscaping. (MAJOR APPLICATION)

Comment received: The Kensington Society wishes to object to this application, on the following grounds. We appreciate that these comments are after the deadline for responses, but were hoping that the Council would announce the outcome of the tendering exercise for the 'third party educational user' of a large part of the new building, in order that the specific use could have been taken into account in our comments. We appreciate that the specific use of this proposed D class floorspace is not a material consideration in deciding the planning application. But the success and viability of a multi-use building does depend to an extent on the nature of all users. In this case, the building access and circulation arrangements in particular do not appear to cater adequately for multiple users.

The Framework School Travel Plan prepared by TTP Consulting and accompanying the application assumes that the third party user will be a secondary school. If this proves not to be the case, an alternative Travel plan will be required. Any approval to the current application should be conditioned on this basis.

It would have been easier for the public to respond to the planning application if the Council had chosen to sequence its decisions so that the choice of third party user had been made public prior to the end of the planning application consultation period.

In respect of the current application are concerns are:

- in terms of the design of the building, we agree with the many respondents who have commented on its bland and 'office-like' appearance. For a major new municipal building, an opportunity has been missed to provide the public with a design that will add to the Royal Borough's heritage and provide an exemplar of architecture that lifts the spirit of library users and the wider public.
- we support the view of the Ladbroke Association that the massing and height of the building could be improved, with the higher sections towards the rear of the building and the railway line and the front elevation paying greater respect to its neighbours.
- we question whether the choice of light brickwork successfully blends with the neighbouring buildings, and the surrounding area generally. The precise type and appearance of the brick to be used will be critical, and should not be a decision left to MACE as the design and build contractor.
- at previous meetings with the architects, we have pointed out the inadequacy of the lift arrangements and access for

people with disabilities. With one of only two lifts assigned for the exclusive use of the third party educational user, the lift provision to the MUGA is not adequate. We were told that in the event of lift failure in the 'public' part of the building, users would be asked to use the third party lessor's lift, going outside and re-entering the building to do so. We were assured that such an arrangement could be secured in a management agreement with the third party user. This is not a satisfactory solution.

On the ground floor plan submitted by the architects (Piercys) there is provision for cycle storage to the east of the building 'labelled education cycle storage'. It is not clear what is provided for library or youth club users?

On balance, we consider that the present application should be rejected as inadequate and an alternative route found to provide a new multi-use building on this site that will prove its merits over several decades to come, as has the existing library building.

Sent by: Kensington Society
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