

18/1930/FUL - Appendix C

Cambridge City Council

Design & Conservation Panel

Relevant notes of the meeting Wednesday 10th October 2018

1. Presentation – Old Press Mill Lane South Block.

This was first seen by the Panel in November 2017 and then again in May 2018. This latest consideration of the scheme focused on the main areas of design development that had taken place since May.

Cycle parking and servicing arrangements

Further development has taken place on the area between the University Centre and the west end of the new Dolby Court. This area will provide a major component on of the cycle parking for the proposals, including residents of Dolby Court. The Panel were generally supportive of the changes in this area, though some concern was expressed that the restrictive nature of the space might have implications for the longer term wellbeing of the proposed sedum roofs to the two enclosed cycle stores. The two trees to be planted within this space would also need to be carefully selected to ensure they did not grow too large for the space.

A total of 4 disabled parking bays are to be provided to serve Dolby Court and accessed off Little St Mary's Lane. These will service the 5 disabled access study-bedrooms (the experience of the college is that not all students requiring accessible study-bedrooms will need cars and therefore a 1:1 ratio of car parking to accessible study-bedrooms is not necessary). The parking is to be provided within a space that will also contain a relocated electricity substation. The site for the substation has been revised so as to allow the retention of one of a group of three sycamore trees on Little St Mary's Lane, and the new substation has been designed to read as part of a new boundary wall facing on to Little St Mary's Lane and the south-east boundary of the University Centre. The Panel were again supportive of these changes, and in particular welcomed the retention of the sycamore tree which would help soften the impact of the new Dolby Court. They also noted that the brickwork for the boundary wall and substation should respond to the context of Little St Mary's Lane rather than the Dolby Court.

The new commercial units on the ground floor to the Mill Lane wing to Dolby Court will all be serviced from Mill Lane. Additional provision for servicing off Mill Lane is to be made by setting back the gates in front of Stuart House. The Panel were generally supportive of the proposed detailing for the re-sited gates, though noted that the new stone paving on the Mill Lane side of these gates will need to be appropriately sized and carefully detailed so as to be able to take high point loadings from vehicles (the size and weight of vehicles parking in this area cannot be controlled).

Dolby Court

Further design development has taken place on the proposals for the new Dolby Court. The dormers to the retained section of Miller's Yard (fronting on to Mill Lane) have been revised so as to reduce their bulk and impact in the streetscape, which was welcomed by the Panel. Elsewhere, and in particular on the internal courtyard elevations to the new Court, the set-back mansard roof to the top floor has been revised to incorporate dormers that are an integral part of the masonry elevations. These dormers have thick stone surrounds which appear visually 'heavier' than the narrow surrounds to the windows on the lower floors, and the Panel found this apparent reversal of historic precedent to be somewhat uncomfortable, and recommended further review and development of this element of the design.

Further design development has also taken place on the architectural treatment of the commercial units fronting on to Mill Lane. Two alternative solutions were put forward, one involving a more traditional timber shopfront design and an alternative solution incorporated recessed glazed shopfronts that attempted to respond to the more to the 'industrial' context of the buildings on the north-side of Mill Lane. The Panel did not have a particular strong view on which approach should be pursued, but noted that if the recessed glazed option is to be adopted there might be scope to have some 'fun' with the detailing of the recessed glazing.

Kenmare Garden

The new Kenmare Garden will be created through selective demolition of less significant elements on the rear of the range fronting on to Trumpington Street and also removing two bays from the School House. The works to the School House also include replacing the roof where the timber ties on the original trusses were cut through and the roof

reformed to allow the insertion of a first floor. While the south elevation, which incorporates a rose window, is to be retained, the Panel noted that the proposals would effectively result in a new building replacing the School House.

Trumpington Street

The proposals for linking the new College accommodation across Trumpington Street to the existing College have been developed in consultation with the Highway Authority and include granite setts in bands across the road to provide a degree of traffic calming either side of a new pedestrian crossing that is to be formed on the axis of Kenmare House, and will be formed in light and dark granite setts. The Panel were generally supportive of these proposals, and were keen to see them developed further so as to better reveal the significance of Hobson's Conduit at the points where the crossing will intersect with the Conduit. The proposals would also need to incorporate blister paving to help blind people identify the crossing, which might be achieved through brass studs in the stone paving at either end of the crossing. The Panel were pleased to learn that the design team are working closely with the Trustees of the Conduit.

The forecourt to Kenmare House is to be opened up to provide adequate space for circulation and movement across Trumpington Street. This will require the removal of the existing dwarf wall at the back of the current pavement. The forecourt is to be paved in natural stonework that will be different to the colour of the pavement, and incorporating a narrow band of planting immediately in front of Kenmare House. Consideration had been given to incorporating railings or a dwarf wall in front of this planting, but this was felt to be too close to Kenmare House to work successfully. The Panel felt that the depth of the planting was rather tokenistic and that it would benefit from being made deeper. A deeper depth to this planting might also allow the possible use of railings in front of Kenmare House to be re-visited.

75 Trumpington Street

The design of the new building to replace 75 Trumpington Street and provide access through to Kenmare Garden has also been re-visited. The first floor window to the gallery is now to be in two separate elements; a larger window fronting on to Trumpington Street and a smaller window on the return wall overlooking the forecourt to Kenmare House. While noting these changes, the Panel consider that this part of

the scheme would benefit from further design development, which might also consider incorporating the college crest to signal this new entrance (a well-established practice amongst Cambridge Colleges).

Conclusion:

The Panel generally welcomed the design developments that had taken place since their last consideration of these proposals, and in particular regarding their previous concerns about site access and cycle parking provision. The Panel also welcomed the interaction of the development with the public realm on Trumpington Street. However, the Panel considered that the proposals would benefit from further design development for the top floor of Dolby Court and 75 Trumpington Street, together with refinement of the landscaping to Kenmare House forecourt.

VERDICT – GREEN (4), AMBER (2)