

Michael Briginshaw
Principal Planning Officer
Strategic and Major Applications Team
Place Directorate
Civic Centre (3N)
Hillingdon Council

22/11/2022

Alastair J Longden

o. +44 (0)1636 653027

m. +44 (0)7860 530593

f. +44 (0)1636 653010

e. alastair.longden@umcarchitects.com

w. www.umcarchitects.com

RE: Design Comments Rec'd 17.11.2022

Dear Michael,

Many thanks for your time on the teams call (15.11.2022) and the resulting comments (17.11.2022). Both were/are extremely useful in defining the Design officers' comments and highlighting areas where further explanation is required.

The comments are summarized on page 2 of the report. Please find the design team responses as follows:

• **Develop a contextual design approach in relation to urban grain and appearance**

The design in both layout and elevation is a direct result of the contextual analysis. To confirm the key drivers:

- There are residential properties to the north of Uxbridge road. The design rational is to reduce impact of overlooking, overbearing and shading of these properties. Relocating the vertical form closer to Uxbridge road would have a significant impact on residents. Our proposals are directly responsive to this.
- The east, south and western boundaries are flanked with industrial buildings, the proposed building location sits comfortably within this urban grain; not at odds with.
- The permitted hotel (38421_APP_2021_4045) adjacent to the site has an outdoor garden area to its south eastern boundary along with elevated outdoor spaces. Moving the building closer to Uxbridge road would clearly impact if not completely negate the benefit of this amenity. The proposed landscaping on the application site offers an extension of this amenity and can be developed upon in context.
- Further to the above the permitted hotel has several windows overlooking the proposed landscaping / car park; these would clearly be obscured should the proposed building be sited further north. The hotel's eastern elevation is clearly designed to be viewed from Uxbridge road, not screened, conflicted with and diluted.
- The site access location creates a 'pinch point' that allows a natural segregation of HGV and Car traffic. Furthermore the siting of the office and the car park offers a



legible sense of arrival. Relocation of parking and built form will clearly cause traffic conflicts while designing in directional confusion.

- **Place office facility closer to Uxbridge Road and carpark placed away from Uxbridge Rd frontage**

Response is largely as above.

- Legibility of the site for employees and visitors is key. We are not seeking to hide car parks and mix traffic types. HGV's and cars / pedestrians should be segregated.
- The natural rhythm of arrival; car park then main entrance is clear from outside of the site.

- **Review location of back and front of house functions on the site**

The back and front of house functions are as sited expected / demanded by occupiers.

- Logistics operations are to the south (back of house). These activities (reversing vehicles / loading etc) are intentionally sited away from the hotel its garden areas and the local residential properties.
- Office elements (front of house) are sited to the front of the site for reasons outlined above.

- **Develop a quality design strategy to break down mass of tall building (roofscape and facade)**

The existing quality design strategy is as follows:

- The office element is outboard thus offering a reduction of building height to the north toward the sensitive receptors (residential, gardens etc).
 - The principal access is clearly defined offering legibility and identity.
 - Elements facing north (Uxbridge road) offer horizontal and vertical articulation in line with the permitted hotel. And translucent elements offer a depth of appearance in both the office and warehouse areas.
 - Materials and rhythm take precedence from the adjacent buildings / hotel with bronze feature cladding woven through the design.
 - The warehouse elements are sited to the south in context with neighbouring buildings and are broken down by the introduction of horizontal and vertical elements with lighter colours utilised at height to ground the building and reduce the perceived mass.

- **Review the architectural palette (including texture, colour, roofscape, signage opening and lighting)**

- Timber has been omitted. These areas now offer an opportunity for bronze features to break down the elevation and add excitement. This is in accordance with the hotel application adjacent.
- The texture of the cladding (profiles and orientation) and the depths of goalposts allied with the building form offers a considered, high quality principal elevation.
- Transparent elements offer a depth to the form while giving a glimpse of the structural frame within thus activating the elevation.
- The orientation and form of the roof is suitable for a building of this scale. Reorientation would vastly reduce the efficiency of the frame resulting in material wastage at odds with the design aspirations. Roof lights and or solar panels will both operate efficiently given the low pitch.



Further to the above and the teams call we have developed an alternative design.

Revised design is as follows:

1. The office elevation has been amended to offer further articulation of the goalpost. The additional horizontal return takes precedent from the adjacent built and permitted context.
2. The architecture where the office meets the warehouse element has been simplified ensuring each element is read independently and cohesively.
3. The warehouse now features a 'lightbox' to the north eastern corner. This gives depth to the building while tying the warehouse and office elements together when viewed from the north.
4. The materials, form and design aesthetic have been amended to suit the comments received during the call in the 15th.

Revised drawing and visuals will be provided.

Should you wish to discuss any part of this commentary please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

With my regards,

Alastair J Longden
[BA(HONS), MARCH, PG DIP PPMA, ARB, RIBA]