Committee: PLANNING COMMITTEE - LEWISHAM DEPTFORD  
Item No. 5

Report Title: GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE, ST JAMES’S SE14 (CAR PARK R/O FORMER BATHS, LAURIE GROVE)

Ward: Brockley
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Class: PART 1  
Date: 10 JULY 2003

Reg. No. DC/03/53635
Application dated: 26.3.03, completed 15.4.03, revised 24.6.03
Applicant: Alsop Architects on behalf of Goldsmiths College
Proposal: The construction of a part five/part seven storey building incorporating a roof terrace on the site of the existing car park to the rear of the former Baths, Laurie Grove SE14, for educational purposes, together with associated landscaping and access onto St James’s and Laurie Grove.


Background Papers:
(1) Case File - DE/310/A/TP
(2) Adopted Unitary Development Plan
(3) Revised Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan

Zoning:
Adopted UDP – Part of Development Site 09, and Area of Archaeological Priority
Revised UDP – Area of Archaeological Priority and Sustainable Living Area.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPLIES

English Heritage: Any reply to be reported verbally.

Cabe:
We are very pleased to see these thoughtful and considered proposals for the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase new arts facility at Goldsmiths College. We do not feel the need to formally review the proposals at our Design Review Committee and we wish the scheme well. The landscape design should be integral to the entire project so that the new building fits into this landscape setting rather than the landscape being fitted in around the building.

Neighbours & Local Amenity Societies etc.
Telegraph Hill Society
New Cross Gate NDC 287 Queens Road
St.James C of E School, Day Centre, Parish Church & 17-31 (Odd) St.James’s
Design & Conservation Panel

Panel generally welcomed the proposal and considered its bold and simple design excellent. Given the external art works attached to the building, lifting gear could have been added to the building which could have added vitality and functional interest to the façades and assisted in managing and maintaining the building. However, the building was considered to be both reserved and dynamic and was very much welcomed.

Panel stressed the importance of Phase 2 as this would be both much more visible from New Cross Road but would also serve to screen this building and physically draw and entice people in to the campus. Panel noted that with external lighting proposed, the amount of light pollution should be kept to a minimum.

Environmental Health

Request conditions regarding site contamination and requiring controls over hours of construction, sound insulation, dust minimisation, wheel washing and soundproofing of machinery. The applicants should comply with the Council's Code of Practice for Construction.

Highways & Transportation

Unobjectionable in principle.

OBSERVATIONS

Property/Site Description

The application site is part of Goldsmiths College. The site lies between the rear of the former Laurie Grove Baths and the rear of the single storey Ernie Rowing nursery on the east side of St James's. The land is currently used as a car park, with vehicular access from St James's. There is a gradual increase in levels across the site from west to east and from north to south. The rear boundaries of premises in Laurie Grove and St James’s are to the south of the site. With the exception of a small part of the Laban Centre, these premises are occupied by Goldsmith’s. The site adjoins the southern boundary of the Deptford Town Hall Conservation Area.

Planning History

Since its establishment as an educational institution, Goldsmiths College has expanded steadily. The main College building which was built in 1844 and extended in 1905 is a Grade II Listed Building, as is the Chapel at the rear of the main building. A major building programme which included the 14 storey Warmington Tower residential block and the Gallery building was carried out in the 1960’s.

Since the 1960’s the most significant new developments of teaching accommodation have been the library building constructed in 1988 and the Information Services building constructed in 1998, both fronting Lewisham Way. There have also been a number of temporary buildings and adaptations/extensions to existing accommodation.
In recent years Goldsmiths has had a programme of locating student housing close to the College and a significant amount of additional student housing has been provided through both conversion and new build. The Loring halls of residence on the corner of St James’s and New Cross Road and Dean House at 347-353 New Cross Road were built in 1997 and more recently the Chesterman Halls at 334-336 New Cross Road were built in 2001.

The group of buildings on land bounded by Laurie Grove, New Cross Road and St James’s, of which the application site forms part, was acquired by Goldsmith’s College from the Council in 1991. These include the former Laurie Grove Baths and Deptford Town Hall, both of which are Listed Grade II. Planning permission was granted for their use for education purposes in 1991.

Present Application

The application is for a new visual arts building on the site of the existing car park to the rear of the former Laurie Grove Baths, now converted to art studios by the College. The proposal is the first phase of a new arts complex for Goldsmiths College. The current architects were selected following an open architectural competition for the design of Phase 1 and a Masterplan concept for Phase 2 of the new arts complex. The current application is for the Phase 1 building only.

The building would be rectangular in form with a cut out section at roof level and would have a flat roof. It would be 37.5 metres long, 15 metres wide and almost 30 metres high. It would be seven storeys high, with a five storey element. The ground floor would have a double height entrance lobby, a large arts studio and an 80 seat lecture room. The first and second floors would accommodate the offices of the proposed Centre for Cognition, Computation and Culture and a suite of specialist research labs. The second floor would have media labs with film and video editing facilities and graphics workshops. The third and fourth floors would accommodate visual arts and textiles studios as well as arts administration offices. The fifth and sixth floors would have studios and teaching space for fine art.

The inset corner at the western end of the building would form a roof terrace at level five. It is intended that a two storey high sculptural ‘scribble’ would be placed around the perimeter of the terrace, which would be used for the making and display of large works. The access from St James’s would remain; there would be entrances on both sides of the building and there would be a pedestrian route through to Laurie Grove between numbers 14 and 15. The front (north) elevation of the building would be of clear glass curtain walling incorporating clear glass openable louvres. The remaining elevations would be clad in vertical aluminium standing seam cladding in a natural silver colour. There would be an external fire escape stair on the south elevation. A number of relatively small windows are proposed in the south, east and west elevations and it is proposed that metal art works will be fixed to these facades.

The applicants have also submitted a design report, a transport assessment and an archaeological impact assessment in support of the application.

Policy Context

Policy STR.LCE 1 Provision of Education and Community Facilities, is to ensure that there are sufficient education and community facilities to enable the Council and other protective and public authorities to meet their statutory obligations and duties.
Policy STR.LCE 2 Leisure and Education Facilities, is to ensure that leisure, community, arts, cultural, entertainment, sports, healthcare, child care, protective and public service and education facilities are located in appropriate places that both contribute to sustainability objectives and provide easy access for users.

LCE 1 Location of New and Improved Leisure, Community and Education Facilities states that the Council will welcome proposals to provide new buildings for such purposes.

These policies update and replace policy CMN 2: New and Improved Premises for Education in the adopted UDP.

Policy URB 2 Urban Design states that the Council will expect a high standard of design in new development, whilst ensuring that schemes are compatible with or complement the scale and character of existing development and its setting. The policy sets out criteria to be taken into consideration where appropriate. This updates BLT.ENV 1: Urban Design in the adopted UDP.

Policy URB 15 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas indicates that the Council will resist development adjacent to a Conservation Area which has a negative impact on the character or appearance of that area.

Policy URB 17 Preserving Listed Buildings states, among other things, that the Council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings in considering any application in their vicinity in terms of other policies.

Policy URB 11 Landscape and Development states that applications for development should, where appropriate, include landscape proposals for all areas not covered by buildings. This develops BLT.ENV 3: Landscape in the adopted UDP.

Policy TRN 1 Location of Development states that development proposals that generate a large volume of traffic or person movement must be located close to good public transport.

Policy TRN 2 Travel Impact Statements requires developers of major schemes to provide travel impact statements to assess the impact of the development on congestion, safety and the environment of the surrounding area.

Policy URB 20 Archaeology sets out the importance of archaeology in planning decisions, updating Policy BLT.ENV 20: Archaeology of the adopted UDP.

Planning Considerations

The site is already part of a complex of buildings in education use and the main planning considerations are whether the scale and design of the proposed building is appropriate in this location, whether it is acceptable in the context of the adjacent buildings, particularly in relation to the Listed former baths and Deptford Town Hall and the adjacent conservation area; and to assess the effect of any increase in student and staff numbers in the context of the development of the present car park for the new building.

Goldsmiths College is a leading academic institution in the UK for the study of the visual arts and aims to build on its international reputation to become a world leader in the field of creativity and innovation. Currently the teaching areas for the visual arts are located in several buildings including the former Laurie Grove Baths, the main building and a number
of buildings and workshops at the south of the site in the backfield area of the campus. It is intended that a new creative arts complex will be provided in the north-west part of the College so that teaching accommodation for the visual arts can be concentrated in this area. It is intended that for funding reasons, the new buildings would be provided in two phases.

The architects for the project were selected following an architectural competition in 2001. The competition brief was for a new Arts Complex to bring the majority of the Visual Arts departments of the College together in one location to provide for immediate teaching and studio needs while supporting the expanding local creative sector and improving links to the local community. It is envisaged that each phase will be a sustainable stand-alone facility that anticipates future phases.

The Masterplan concept envisages an L-shaped building wrapping around the rear of Laurie Grove Baths and extending towards New Cross Road. The current proposal, Phase 1, would form part of the L form. It is envisaged that Phase 2 would contain exhibition and performing space, café and retail units and publicly accessible open space. It must be noted however, that the Masterplan does not form part of the current application, as further development is dependent on future funding.

Impact on Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

There will be views of the proposed building both from within Goldsmiths’ campus and from outside the site. In order to assess its impact, 3-D computer and photomontage modelling has been undertaken to consider both local views in the vicinity of the site and more distant views from Telegraph Hill and Hilly Fields Parks, identified in the UDP as Local View 3 and 4. In respect to the UDP Local Views, photographs taken in December show the building would not appear to be visible from these points. With regard to local views at street level, a progressing sequence of views has been produced to illustrate how the building would relate to New Cross Road and Deptford Town Hall; these show that the proposed building would be viewed most fully from the corner of New Cross and Goodwood Roads and as views progress westwards the building would be glimpsed between, or be concealed by, existing buildings.

The building would be prominent from the corner of New Cross and Goodwood Road and would ‘announce’ the presence of Goldsmith’s, however it would be set back by from the New Cross Road frontage by some 70 metres, and while the glazed northern façade would contrast with the Town Hall, the building could be considered to complement its surroundings. A high quality building of contemporary design could preserve the character of the conservation area. The New Cross Road/St James’s corner is occupied by low rise buildings of a temporary nature and it is considered that the building would provide a dynamic addition to this part of New Cross Road. It is not considered that there would be significant impact on the rear elevation of Laurie Grove Baths or a negative impact on views of the front elevation of the baths.

A detailed architectural model of the building and a model showing the building in the context of its surroundings will be available at the Committee meeting.

Other Design Issues

It is important for the building to succeed both as a significant building in its own right and also within the concept of a more extensive Masterplan for the arts complex.
In terms of the building itself, the fully glazed north elevation will afford views of the activities within the building and when in use in the evening, illumination will provide a different character. Interest will be provided to the remaining facades by three external elements. These are described in the design statement as follows:

“The building has three external elements that give it a definitive identity. These are the external escape staircase, the double height structural scribble enclosure to the roof terrace and the artwork to the south, east and west facades.

All of these elements are metal and will be galvanised or painted steel.

The external staircase is cantilevered from the south elevation via bridge links and cascades down the façade. Three panels of metal cladding are overlaid on part of the staircase and relate the stair to the artwork.

The scribble is woven around the terrace defining a double height external space and will be a landmark feature on the building when viewed from a distance.

The artwork has been inspired by brain scans to be undertaken by the CCC. It will be fixed to the metal cladding standing seams and will be in relief.

Together the three elements break down the scale of the metal elevations and cast changing shadows across the facades.”

It may be that funding for the completion of the ‘scribble’ and other external art work will not be in place immediately, however as these are considered important to the quality of the building, it is proposed that a condition be imposed to require that they be completed within three years of the first occupation of the building.

The main access to the building will be from St James’s. The existing access will be primarily for pedestrians, but will also provide for emergency vehicle access and for deliveries. The landscape treatment around the building will be fairly simple at the phase 1 stage; however phase 2 of the arts complex would offer considerable scope for a significant landscaped space.

A small lift overrun box at roof level is set well back from the edge of the roof to minimise its visibility; other roof plant is to be set within a well in the roof and would not be visible from street level.

Transport Issues

Goldsmith’s College currently has 8805 students and a total of 1431 staff. As a result of the development it is estimated that student numbers will increase by 251 and there will be an additional 20 staff. Although the current 38 car parking spaces will be lost as a result of the Phase 1 building the, applicants’ Transport Assessment states that other areas have been identified for the re-provision of these spaces and there will therefore be no net loss of car parking spaces as a result of the development.

In any case, Goldsmiths is very well served by public transport facilities and most of the halls of residence are within walking distance of the College. It is understood that students are not permitted to park private cars within the College. The Transport Assessment submitted with the application outlines the travel impact arising from the redevelopment and proposes measures to mitigate the transport impacts.
The assessment indicates that the impact, in terms of car borne movements arising from the development, is likely to be small. The principle conclusion is the forecast addition of six additional staff that may drive to the College.

The College states that they are committed to developing and implementing a range of activities to encourage travel by non car modes, these include improving facilities for cyclists, prioritising parking in staff car parks for staff considered to be essential car users and continuing to provide and promote interest-free loans for season tickets and cycle purchase.

The Highways Engineer has raised no objection to the proposals.

Consultations

No response has been received following neighbour consultations. In addition to the planning consultations, the plans and model were displayed at the College during a recent public opening and local community and arts groups were invited to view the proposals. The activities within the building are unlikely to differ from those currently carried out within the College and it is considered unnecessary to require the submission of details of machinery.

Conclusion

The proposed building is considered to be satisfactory in design terms and the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

RECOMMENDATION GRANT PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:-

(1) Notwithstanding details shown on the submitted drawings, no development shall commence on site until details of all facing materials (including their colour and texture) to be used on the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, unless the local planning authority agrees in writing to any variation.

(2) Notwithstanding details shown on the submitted drawings, no development shall commence on site until drawings showing the landscaping treatment (both hard and soft) of any part of the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All works, which form part of the scheme shall be completed in the first planting season following the completion of the development, unless the local planning authority has given written consent to any variation. Any trees or plants, which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority has given written approval to any variation.

(3) Notwithstanding details shown on the submitted drawings, details of the following elements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council and shall be installed in accordance with the approved details:
   1) The ‘scribble’ at the level 5 roof terrace.
   2) The art works to be fixed to the external faces of the building.
   3) The canopy to the front of the building.
   4) Lettering at roof level.
The above elements shall be completed within three years of the first occupation of the building, unless the local planning authority agrees in writing to any variation.

(4) No plant or other equipment shall be placed on the roof of the building hereby approved without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.

(5) AR2 Archaeological Programme

(6) C11 Construction Hours

(7) N10 Dust Minimisation Scheme

(8) N11 Wheel Washing

Reasons

(1) B01R Facing Materials – New Buildings

(2) L01R Planting, Paving, Walls etc.

(3) B01R Facing Materials – New Buildings

(4) C06R Storage on Roof of Building

Informative

Construction Sites Code of Practice.