

THE KINGS CROSS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Response to planning application

KING'S CROSS EASTERN GOODS YARD Planning Application 2007/5228/P and Listed Building Consent Application 2007/5230/C

The King's Cross Development Forum considered this application at its meeting on 15th November 2007 and the following submission was approved at the Forum meeting held on 10th January 2008.

1. University of the Arts (Granary Building)

This is an interesting, though rather complex, proposal which is broadly supported by the King's Cross Development Forum.

In the Forum's view the following issues need further consideration as they detract from what is otherwise a good proposal.

2. The Granary Basin

There are objections that the proposed designs for Granary Square completely ignore the existence of the Granary Basin. There should be conditions which would ensure that nothing is done which could prevent the eventual re-opening of the canal basin in front of the Granary and of the canal arms stretching under the Granary building, should future generations wish to do so.

3. The new road bridge

There were objections raised among Forum Members to the siting and position of the new road bridge over the canal. It was pointed out that the proposed alignment is most unsatisfactory because:

(a) It routes traffic across part of Granary Square when the traffic could much less obtrusively travel north in a straighter line, passing the eastern end of the Fish and Coal Office, if the bridge crossed the canal a bit further west;

(b) It would preclude the re-opening of the Granary Basin because the northern bridge abutment would demolish the basin's entrance arch.

As the applicant requires a straight line walk for pedestrians, continuing the line of the "boulevard", a light pedestrian bridge at this location would be acceptable.

4. The electronic screens

There is concern that the proposed electronic screens on the left and right of the Granary façade will detract from enjoyment of the building as well as destroy the industrial context of Cubitt's Granary. It seems very likely that the screens will

affect the colour and shading of the Granary façade and they will certainly impair the elegance of a building that is of international architectural significance.

It is proposed that, at most, a time-limited permission could be given for this element (subject to review after, say, the first year of operation).

5. Pavilion

We consider the design and location of the new Pavilion building to be totally out of context with its surroundings and we suggest this be re-considered.

6. York Road Station

With a large number of students traveling to the University each day, it was considered that it may be viable to re-open York Road station, given its proximity to the Granary Building. At least, a developer contribution should be sought, pending a full review of the business case for York Road station.

7. Transit Sheds

The Transit Sheds (the ones running up the sides behind the Granary) are to be retained and used for retail and office. There was a comment at the Forum meeting that the appearance of the western Transit Sheds was going to be altered too much as the blind arches (bricked in) are to be made into large glass shop windows. The suggestion was made that the openings could be smaller and in keeping with the style of the building – in other words have openings in the middle of the brick arch rather than the opening being the whole arch.

General comments were also made at the Forum meeting

Public consultation

The Forum wishes to bring to Members attention a universal and strong concern that public consultation on the major applications in the King's Cross Central development could be improved. For example, by a permanent exhibition space and through a copy of major applications being publicised at the main public libraries in Camden, with visually prominent displays at Camden Town and St Pancras libraries.

Resources

The Forum also seeks a Council resource to be made available to the Planning Response Team (part of the King's Cross Development Forum) so that we are able to analyse applications and provide early information to Forum members, thereby encouraging community involvement.