

CAAG are familiar with the site and the conservation challenges that face the restoration of a Grade II listed building in need of repair and restoration, the removal of a 1960/70's flat roof rear extension and the redevelopment of the site that lies within a sensitive part of the conservation area adjacent to the Barracks and Scheduled Elizabethan walls. The scheme is informed by numerous pieces of conservation research and consultation, including an archaeological desk based study, conservation engineer report on the Grade II listed building, tree survey, ecological research, references to the Character Appraisals and townscape analysis as well as input from CAAG, English Heritage and Berwick planning and conservation officers.

The scheme has gradually evolved from plan forms and early concepts to 3d modelling and formal architectural styling that has been presented to CAAG at various stages of the design led process. CAAG comments have been taken on board as part of this early consultation work. It is noted that this approach has taken some time, spanning a period of 18 months from concept to final design. CAAG wish to formally acknowledge this process, which it regards as an exemplar and benchmark for receiving presentations to CAAG and wishes to congratulate the architect on his design led approach.

Previous CAAG comments established support for the form, height, scale and massing of the scheme and its relationship to the adjacent listed building that it immediately abuts, as well as the relationship to the Barracks and Elizabethan Walls within this part of the conservation area. Comments have been provided on sketch ideas for some of the architectural features, styling and detailing which were presented as a number of different elevations and external treatments. These comments are not repeated.

It is noted that a number of photomontages had been requested to show the final scheme in context and that numerous 3d models had already been prepared showing the design in situ. These were displayed along with a number of additional photographs, 2d plans and drawings as well as a sample panel of materials.

There was overwhelming support for the design concept and information displayed. The presentation amplified a number of matters of detail in relation to particular features and materials that were discussed after the presentation.

These related to three main areas;

1. Windows – although the architect discussed the proportionality and rationale behind a simple framed window design without any astragals or defined glazing bar pattern, there was some concern that the windows were too “plain” and not in the “Berwick tradition”. It was acknowledged

this was a new development and not a pastiche but it was noted that a lot of new developments in Berwick were not including any glazing bars as part of the overall design. Was this setting a new trend?

2. Arch – the vehicular entrance arch was shown as square and the architect explained the reasoning for this as part of the angular nature and clean lines created by the ashlar stone work he envisaged for the Ravensdowne elevation. He did not feel it needed to be “softened” or rounded. There were differing views expressed as to whether this should be a rounded or squared arch, although the group acknowledged there were examples of both in Berwick.
3. Materials – the architect had left stone samples that he acknowledged would match the listed building perfectly for repairs but was less than happy with this as the dominant material for the new development. He wanted to achieve a more lively texture and richer depth of colour on the new development (similar to the workspace building which was a Doddington stone) and wanted to research the stone further. Render samples needed to match/complement the stone but were a fairly smooth texture in neutral shades. Slate would be the principal material for the roof and would match the slate on 76 Ravensdowne. There were also small areas of cedar boarding shown on some of the elevations.

CAAG regards the general palette of materials presented to be entirely suitable (stone of a more varied tone and texture; neutral render to match/complement the stone; slate to match 76 Ravensdowne) and acknowledged that these needed to be refined and submitted as part of the application process. CAAG does not however, regard the cedar boarding to be a suitable addition to this strong and simple palette and sees no reason for its inclusion on any of the elevations.

CAAG unanimously supports the scheme as presented and offers the above comments on matters of detail.