

Hatherlow House

27 Park Crescent, Southport.
Planning Ref. S/2011/1531

Supplementary Design Commentary 01

26th January 2012



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Supplementary Design Commentary 01 in response to the letter from Sefton Council Planning Services dated the 17th January 2012.

Hatherlow House, 27 Park Crescent, Southport (Your ref. S/2011/1531).

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 17th January 2012 to which we are pleased to have the opportunity to respond in connection with the architectural design of the submitted scheme.

Firstly we welcome your agreement to the improvements in the design and the resolution of issues regarding the residential amenity of neighbours.

With reference to your detailed advice, please be assured that your earlier comments on the outline design have not been disregarded. Throughout this lengthy consultation much of your advice has been welcomed and has contributed towards the final design that has now been submitted. Other comments have been found to be less appropriate, which would not be surprising in any design review – opinions on these issues are often subjective and can legitimately vary in consideration of any design solution.

Ultimately however it is we who are responsible for presenting a design that is both coherent in itself and respectful of its surroundings, which we are satisfied is well represented in our current planning application.

Throughout this lengthy consultation there has been frequent reference to the importance of a '*main corner feature*' in this location, to which we all agree. We are concerned however that you may be misinterpreting our intentions in this respect.

In recognition of its location overlooking the spacious junction of three major boulevards, competing in scale with the existing built environment and mature tree planting, the size and scale of any corner feature needs to be significant to have the necessary visual impact.

The submitted design includes a tower feature on the western most corner of the building group overlooking Park Avenue, Park Crescent and Cambridge Road. The tower is taller than the main

building, with a raised eaves height and a dominant cornice that is reminiscent of older buildings in the vicinity. The expression of this element as a separate tower is articulated by a raised pyramidal roof and the use of full height glazing to the adjacent main elevation overlooking Cambridge Road. The dominance of the tower is further emphasised by the use of contrasting secondary materials to the upper storey of the main building (as a visual ‘back drop’) and the addition of projecting bays with full storey height glazed openings to the tower itself, also in contrasting but primary materials.

In other words the tower is the ‘main corner feature’ – anything less would be inadequate in scale.



In connection with your preference for ‘a splayed or curved corner’; we have considered this issue at length but have not found any architectural justification for its application in this instance, either in its relevance to the design itself or indeed to the surrounding built

environment. A splayed or curved corner would undermine and diminish the impact of the tower as the dominant corner feature which needs to be bold in this location, as well as being detrimental to the integrity of the overall design.

You have also suggested that ‘*the bays may benefit from continuing in height*’. Our design shows the projecting cast stone bays to the tower deliberately terminating one storey below eaves level to create important graduation of height and scale, providing vertical perspective which again gives emphasis to the height of the tower. To extend the bays to the full height of the tower would undermine this important architectural principle.

Elsewhere, the bays are terminated one storey below the change in external material for similar reasons, which again provides further emphasis to the height of the tower and clarity to the overall composition particularly in terms of articulation and the use of external materials.

We are satisfied therefore that the treatment of the bays is appropriate as currently designed.

We are intrigued by your comment '*that juliette balconies (are) not appropriate*' and have researched this issue in some detail both before and after our receipt of your recent letter. In terms of our design this feature is an essential functional and decorative component of the full height window openings. These tall window openings are deliberately included in the design of both the tower and the projecting bays in recognition of their vertical emphasis, and to lend importance to those elements accordingly. The external balustrade is therefore an essential component of this architectural feature.

We are satisfied therefore that the incorporation of *juliette* balconies is entirely justified in architectural terms.


With regard to balconies generally, there is a wide range of balcony styles and designs to be seen in the immediate vicinity. The existing (contemporary) apartment buildings on either side of the development both exhibit generous balconies with architectural metalwork balustrades and supporting structures. The *juliette* style of balcony can be seen on a number of traditional and contemporary buildings in the immediate area, most particularly further along Park Avenue.

Please refer to the examples shown in the photographs below.



Examples of contemporary and traditional *juliette* style balconies in the immediate surrounding area (along Park Avenue)





The use of balconies in general and the *juliette* style of balcony in particular is therefore well established in the immediate surrounding area.

In conclusion

You have already agreed that “... *there are a number of elements which are an improvement on the original scheme and have helped to resolve concerns regarding the residential amenity of neighbours. The siting of the building and reduction in height to the link are positive amendments to the scheme*” much of which is in response to your previous advice.

All of the architectural features referred to above have been carefully considered in respect of their individual design as well as their contribution towards the overall composition. We are satisfied that the current scheme responds successfully to your earlier policy objections and presents a coherent design that is appropriate and fitting in that location.

We would be very pleased if you would represent our views to your meeting on the 6th February, including circulating a copy of this statement to the members of the Visiting Panel.

AA Design Ltd

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