

## **8 Power Road, Chiswick**

00890/8/P2; P/2017/4132

### **Comments from the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society**

1.WCGS strongly supports the retention of the existing employment B1 uses of buildings within the Power Road Industrial Estate; we recognise the importance of the estate and the current mix of SMEs that it contains. The Society is pleased that an existing business wishes to remain and expand; we therefore support their wish to renovate and extend their current premises in Power Road.

2. On the understanding that the overall height of the extended building is not more than 16 metres\*, the Society would not object, in principle to the addition of a two-storey roof extension. However, such a significant increase in the height of the building requires very careful attention to the design, especially of the front elevation and the materials used. We consider that the current proposals are unacceptable in this respect and would have a negative impact on the regeneration of the Power Road estate envisioned by the Council in its Local Plan Review of the Great West Corridor and in the associated Brentford East SPD (currently under consultation). We fully endorse the statements in the draft SPD (4.30) “New development along Power Road and its internal plots should not exceed 16 metres (4 commercial storeys). The relatively fine grain and intricate character of this areas should be respected by any new development.”

3.If the Power Road estate's role as a "creative hub" for SMEs is to be enhanced, as proposed in the above documents, we need to celebrate not denigrate its heritage. It is important therefore to get the expansion at this site right within the overall context of the Power Road estate. Approval of the current proposals would undermine the Council's vision for this important area located between the main artery of the Great West Corridor and the Chiswick Business Park.

4.We object to the following elements of the current proposals.

#### **Design and materials for frontage**

4.1We consider that the existing 1970s front elevation has a certain style with attractive echoes of the older Art Deco buildings in the estate. The arrangement and style of windows, in particular the large central windows with their decorative bars, provide the building with character and distinctiveness.

4.2 Unlike the previously consented scheme (00890/8/P1), the current proposal would result in the loss of these features and would present a bland and unrelieved 4-storey elevation above the largely glazed ground floor. The proposed set-back of the additional storeys is very shallow and lacks definition, in contrast to that in the consented scheme (see elevation from 00890/8/P1 provided as separate pdf). Cladding the entire façade in “light grey rainscreen cladding panel” would, as the applicant states, “give the building a modern and *homogenous* appearance” (*our italics*). This homogeneity would serve to negatively emphasise its greater height and scale.

4.3 The lack of articulation or any decorative features on a building of this size would have a negative impact on the building and on the surrounding street scene. Such a building would not “deliver design excellence and contribute positively to creating a strong sense of place whilst responding sensitively to the area’s heritage assets” (Great West Corridor Local Plan Review Preferred Options Consultation).



Current building: note windows and differentiation between ground floor and other 2 storeys.

4.4 The design of 8 Power Road should pay respect to the best of the surrounding buildings. The building is opposite Chiswick Studios, an attractive, low-rise building of heritage value, which the Society will be nominating for local listing as a good local example of Art Deco industrial architecture.



**5. Conclusion** Given the significant increase in proposed height of the building, it is particularly important that architectural features help to relieve the scale of the proposed building and that a clear hierarchy of base, middle and top is provided in order for the additional floors not to create a top heavy appearance. The retention of the central windows and their bars together with a more generous set back to the additional floors from the front elevation would help to achieve this. In these respects the previously approved scheme was far more appropriate. The current proposals do not take the opportunities available to enhance the appearance of the streetscene, contrary to the NPPF and would cause unnecessary harm to the character and appearance of the area.

\*Based on discussion with planning officer – no heights appear to be provided within text or elevation drawings etc of application.

WCGS November 2017