

Power Road – Context and character



Chiswick Studios Locally Listed building CH84



Chiswick Studios next to Clayton Hotel extension (4 storeys)

Hounslow's Local List CH84 The building is a good example of Art Deco industrial architecture and is important in illustrating the industrial/employment history of Power Road as a planned suburban industrial estate built during the interwar period. The building is an attractive, single-storey Art Deco industrial building. It has a very distinctive roofscape consisting of gables with circular metal windows and a parapet which is painted black in contrast to the façade which is grey. Some metal windows also survive at ground floor level on the front elevation between the original vehicular openings.



Clayton Hotel extension (4 storeys – 5 storeys refused and appeal dismissed)



6 Power Road (3 storeys)



8 Power Road before recent unconsented demolition (3 storeys)



8 Power Road - frame of new building (5 storeys < 16m)





107 (2/3 storeys)



111 (2 storey)

Corner of 111 showing closeness to houses in Thorney Hedge Road CA

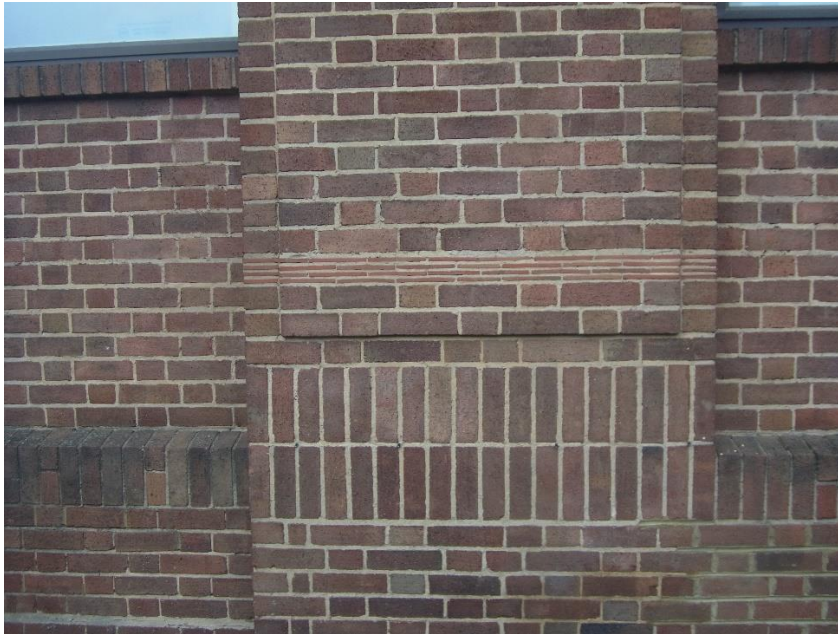


Power Road Studios, Studio 1 (3 storeys with permission for additional storey)

Locally Listed building CH85



Power Road Studios – new entrance and landscaping of Studio 1



Power Road Studios - detail of intricate decorative brick work of Studio 1

Hounslow's Local List CH85 The main building (Studio 1) of Power Road Studios is a substantial brick building of three storeys plus basement, which is arranged around a central courtyard on the eastern side. The Power Road frontage features the original Art Deco brick wall, gate piers, gates and railings. Studio 1 is in a pleasing, if somewhat austere, Art Deco style, befitting its industrial/employment use. Studio 1 was originally built in the 1930s as a warehouse for the American Singer Sewing Machine Company. In the 1950s, following the modernisation of the Scottish Singer factory, the London warehouse was no longer needed and the building became the home of the BBC Equipment Department from 1958 to 1993. The building is a fine example of Art Deco industrial architecture and is important in illustrating the industrial/employment history of Power Road and the development of purpose-built factories on planned industrial estates in the expanding suburbs during the interwar period.

WCGS Commentary

The Power Road estate is a well-defined area distinct from the main artery of the Great West Corridor and of a completely different character. It is located between this artery and the low-rise residential Thorney Hedge and Wellesley Road Conservation Areas of Chiswick to the east. It runs between Chiswick High Road and Gunnersbury Avenue.

The above photos show the low-rise and fine-grained character of the estate and the attractiveness of several of the buildings within it, especially the two Locally Listed ones. The second photo of No. 111 shows the building running along the western boundary of Thorney Hedge Road Conservation Area. The photo of the frame of the new building at No. 8 shows how, a building of 5 storeys (less than 16m) in height dominates its neighbours. A building of 28 m occupying the whole of the application site would be a totally alien intrusion into the heart of the estate. The current 12m building occupies the Gunnersbury Avenue front of the site only; the rear of the site provides ground-level car parking.

Council's vision for Power Road (as expressed in Local Plan Review for Great West Corridor and associated documents)

- The Power Road quarter will become a key employment hub for creative industries providing affordable workspaces for smaller and creative industries.
- **Our Approach** Proposals should plan positively to deliver the place vision by: (c) Strengthening Power Road as an employment location and an enhanced hub for creative industries
- 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.
- The council will encourage the reuse and recycling of older, existing industrial stock over new development in order to retain and enhance the character and 'creative feel' of the area.
- Should new development be considered acceptable, it would need to protect and enhance the special mix and unique existing character of the area all the while providing for an intensification of the existing uses and activities. New developments should also demonstrate how they can incorporate office and creative (light manufacturing) spaces.
- New development should contribute to an improved public realm.

A building of the design and scale proposed (a very large rectangular "tin shed") would have an extremely negative impact on the surrounding townscape and 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". Approval of the current proposals would therefore undermine the Council's vision for this important area located between the main artery of the Great West Corridor and the Chiswick Business Park. If the Power Road estate's role as a "creative hub" for SMEs is to be enhanced, as proposed in the Great West Corridor documents, we need to celebrate not denigrate its heritage. It is important therefore to get any development at this site right within the overall context of the Power Road estate.



It is difficult to appreciate from the perspective in this visual from the application that, at 28 m high, the Shurgard building would be very significantly higher than the 19 m blue fin which rises above the main roofline of its neighbour at No. 272 Gunnersbury Avenue.



Power Road Studios are located on the northern (right-hand) side of this arm of Power Road; Studio 1 (the Locally Listed building) is directly opposite the proposed building with the recently refurbished more modest Studio 2 adjacent to it to the west.

The design of any new building on this site should pay respect to the best of the surrounding buildings. To be consistent with the Council's vision for Power Road any such new building needs to be of high design quality and of an appropriate scale and height. We would suggest that a building with the following features might meet the Council's objectives:

an attractive, mixed-use building* which

- uses high-quality materials such as brick and stone,
- has an active frontage on the current building line on Gunnersbury Avenue,
- has a front elevation height of no more than 20 m stepping down successively along Power Road to no more than 16 m and then 12 m.
- features a high level of design detail/articulation on all elevations

*A mix of affordable workspaces and storage for SMEs might be a good combination offering employment and complementing the high-end show cases of the Tech Centre (4th Mile) at 2 Larch Drive.

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