

From: Dalston Conservation Area Advisory Committee

To: Steve Fraser-Lim, Planning Department, Hackney Council

28th February 2014

Dear Mr Fraser-Lim,

Comments on: 2014/0323 48-76 Dalston Lane, London E8 3AH

Demolition and rebuild of front facade (including shopfronts, pilasters and piers).

Case officer: Steve Fraser-Lim

The Dalston Lane Terrace planning application

Following Murphy Homes Ltd's submission of planning application 2014/0323 to demolish the entire terrace at the above address, we are writing to you to register our objection to the application and to urge Hackney Council to recommend refusal, and commission a new alternative planning application for the Terrace. (Please note that the Dalston Conservation Area Advisory Committee includes two architects, one is qualified and accredited in building conservation.)

Our objections can be summarised under two areas. Firstly, the conservation implications of demolition. The terrace is the centrepiece of the Dalston Lane (West) Conservation Area. Its loss would render the claim that this scheme is "conservation-led" to be false. Secondly, there is no demonstration of the need to demolish the façade in the two structural appraisals contained in the application.

The conservation implications of demolition.

As you know, the Dalston Lane (West) conservation area was designated in 2005 mainly following acknowledgement of the architectural and historic values of this terrace. Our objection to wholesale demolition is based, among other factors, on planning policies recommending the protection of assets in conservation areas, for example:

- **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Chapter 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

130. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

- LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Dalston Area Action Plan, November 2009

Character Area 07: Dalston Lane

Policy 28:

DALSTON LANE CHARACTER AREA

1) Co-ordinated redevelopment of the opportunity sites within the Dalston Lane character area will be encouraged for predominantly mixed-use development.

Development proposals in this Character Area should have regard to the following:

a) A conservation-led approach for the refurbishment of Dalston Lane Terraces to retain retail, community and commercial uses at the ground floor with residential above and to the rear. The original form and rhythm of the Victorian and Georgian façades are to be retained and re-instated where necessary.

In spite of these policies, Hackney Council did not do enough to safeguard these buildings and as a direct result, they are now under threat of demolition. We think that the Council should now comply with national and local planning policies and commission a scheme that incorporates the retention of the original fabric.

No demonstration of need to demolish.

The façade does not need to bear the load of the new building work. More internal walls could be repaired and retained and new load-bearing structures could be introduced where necessary.

Alan Baxter Associates, in their structural report of October 2013 (responding to a narrow brief to “...independently review the structural condition appraisal produced by Peter Dann Ltd in June 2013”) demonstrate that some buildings’ facades can be retained (“numbers 66 and 56-48 which are in less degraded condition have some potential to be repaired”) particularly if the proposed plans were different. For example, if the shops were not to become open plan but retained as existing, the ground floor structure could support the facades above. No.58 is operating successfully as a shop in the existing building.

Cleaning of the facades could also threaten the stability of the brickwork due to the use of abrasives and large quantities of water. Cleaning is an aesthetic consideration that can be omitted to safeguard the higher priority of façade retention. (Also there is a piece by the artist Stik on one of the houses that the Council may consider worthy of conservation).

For these reasons, the planning application should be refused. A new planning application could either be a revised form of the original scheme submitted under application ref. 2012/1739 or an entirely new scheme. In either option the architectural proposal should be designed in conjunction with Baxter's structural consultancy or a similar specialist conservation engineer to ensure that maximum retention of the existing fabric is achieved. A 'conservation-led' development means that conserving the fabric should lead, dictate and inform the design of the rest of the development scheme.

We would also like to stress that when a conservation-led development is commissioned, a specialist conservation design team and contractor should be procured, particularly in cases where the historic fabric is in poor state of repair and is structurally at risk. This is the last opportunity to achieve a sensitive restoration of the buildings in the Terrace, and it requires the will to implement it and suitable skills to carry it out.

Please can you acknowledge receipt of these comments, and inform us of the date of the planning sub-committee when the application will be considered. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Ray Blackburn

Secretary

Dalston Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

28 February 2014