

THE REGENTS NETWORK

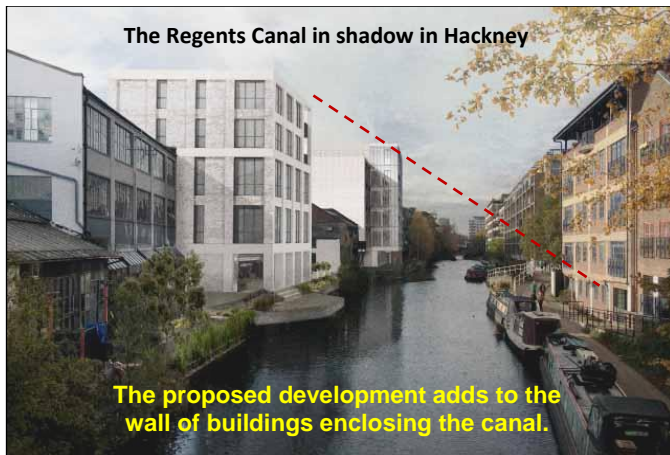
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LB Hackney Planning Application Ref: 2019/4090 **OBJECT**

2-4 Orsman Road, N1 5QJ
Regent's Canal Conservation Area
Kingsland Conservation Area

A REGENTS CANAL RESPONSE TO ANOTHER UNSUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AT ORSMAN ROAD

1. The illustration below is from the Regents Network 2018 objection to the previous planning application that was turned down for a number of planning and heritage reasons, and showing the negative effect on the canal.



2. Below is the current revised 2019 proposal . . . The slightly less bulky replacement building still throws the canal into shadow and encloses the Regent's Canal. NOT MUCH CHANGE THERE THEN.



Important and valuable open space

The Regent's Canal in London is designated as 'open space' which gives it exactly the same consideration and protection as a park (London Plan, Policy 2.18, and Para 2.86). This applies to all London's rivers, waterways, canals, reservoirs, docks, ponds and open water spaces. They are a valuable, treasured asset for London. This stretch of waterway in Hackney is no less important, and it is up there with the Thames.

The canals were never intended to be enclosed with walls of warehouses, and nothing like the pool of London on the Thames. There were a number of wharfs, but mainly on the off side opposite the towpath, and they were typically open spaces beside the canal where the freight was loaded and unloaded, and often with a warehouse, storage or offices at the rear of the wharf.

The applicant is incorrect in stating that their large building "is the reinstated canal frontage" (D&A Page 15) as a canalside building never existed at that location. If there had been a building or shed, it would not have been large and not anywhere near the edge of the canal which would have interfered with the use of the wharf. The applicant's 'Design Approach' (Ibid) is a weak and distorted fabrication.

Illustrations (right) show that a large new block just does not fit in even if its scale is reduced a certain amount. It is still totally out of place.

There are many misplaced buildings beside the canals in London that close them in (see above), and too many buildings that rise up along the back of the towpath. Our canals have been seriously degraded by gross property developments, and exploited by developers who have been assisted by weak planning authorities for far too long.





Not a pretty sight!

The visualisation of the view from one of the proposed offices (D&A Page 16) shows the sad result of negative planning in the past that provides a wall of flats and offices along the Regent's Canal towpath. What a disgrace.

Now consider the view the occupants of those buildings will have if the proposed Orsman Road block is built, and pushed out towards them rather than set back in any way to lessen the negative impact.

Exploitation?

In spite of the over development in the canal corridor, there is some benefit to be gained by the proposed development from the restricted but open space of the Regent's Canal, which is calm and not a busy London road. The applicant and their tenants in the proposed offices will gain greatly from the proximity to our Regent's Canal and the benefits of the key conservation areas. There would certainly be financial spin-offs.

However, what benefits will the Regent's Canal accrue? Precisely nothing. Not one penny, or any prospects.

So, as usual, the developer and occupants **take, but give nothing back!** It is not just thoughtless and selfish, it's detrimental to the long term reliable future of London's Canal Network. There are important responsibilities that are not being addressed by the administration and authorities, and short-term commercial exploitation is sucking the heart out of our heritage and environment.

Unreliable and misleading

In their Design and Access Statement the applicants state that their design approach is "improving the Regent's Canal" which is patently deceptive, and go on to say that their proposed prominent block will "greatly enhance not only the canal but the wider conservation area" (D&A, Page 15). Who do they think they are fooling?

Summary

It is still the wrong building in the wrong place. It may be a bit less bulky and reduced in height, but it still over-powers the Regent's Canal, and further degrades the conservation areas and heritage.

Any more said would only be repetitive of the previous objections in 2018. The negative effect on the canal and environment is still not addressed.

Refer to the Regents Network 2018 response where more details and policies are considered, including:

- A national heritage asset
- A public asset
- NPPF Para 129 etc
- Canals at risk in Hackney
- Bi-Centenary and the next 200 years
- Potential to bring the canals back to life, and more

Refer to the LB Hackney reasons for refusing planning consent 2018, including a long list of policies:

- Fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation areas
- Overbearing appearance
- Increased sense of enclosure
- Unacceptable loss of light and outlook
- Inappropriate feature on the Regent's Canal, and more

DEL BRENNER

Regents Network and

associate of Just Space and London Forum and

member of the Regents Canal Conservation Area Advisory Committee January 2020

