



Mr Robin Sedgwick
Planning and Building control
Southwark Council
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Sent by email: Robin.Sedgwick@southwark.gov.uk

26 February

Our ref: 97 01 18

Dear Mr Sedgwick

SKIPTON HOUSE, 80 LONDON ROAD, PERRY LIBRARY, 250 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD; & KEYWORTH STREET HOSTEL, 10 KEYWORTH STREET, LONDON SE1. Application Ref: 15/AP/5125

Thank you for consulting the Twentieth Century on the above planning application. Metro Central Heights is a prominent grade II listed building which lies to the east of the proposed development site, directly across Newington Causeway. The Society wishes to object to the proposals for the reasons outlined below.

Significance

Metro Central Heights, built as offices for the Ministry of Health, was designed by Erno Goldfinger and built in 1959-62 and 1964-66. It is a landmark building on a corner site which was converted to residential use in 2002 and listed at grade II in 2013 in light of its national historic and architectural significance. The principle reasons for listing include: Plan and structural interest: four linked blocks of unequal height, on a scale and plan reminiscent of the work of the Russian Constructivists, built on a precise grid using the classically informed post and beam vocabulary propounded by Goldfinger for commercial buildings, all governed by the proportions of the Golden Section; External design interest: deeply modelled facades created by forward and recessed window bays within the grid. It was critically acclaimed when it was built and received the highly prestigious RIBA Bronze Award in 1964.

National Policy

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It adds that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, decision makers should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.

Twentieth Century Society comment

We have major concerns about the impact of the proposed development. In our view it will cause significant harm to the architectural significance of Metro Central Heights by virtue of its considerable height, design and massing. This is particularly relevant when seen in longer distant views which show the proposed development appear as an extension to Metro Heights, diminishing its current landmark status and visually competing with and overwhelming the existing building. We consider that this harm to the setting of Metro Central House has not been justified and we therefore recommend refusal to the proposals in their current form.

I trust our comments are useful to you in your consideration of the proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Henrietta Billings
Senior Conservation Adviser
Twentieth Century Society

Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.