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Approval for Parry's hotel plans spells end for Brutalist gem

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COMMENT

Westminster Council has approved the demolition of an iconic Brutalist car park and its replacement with a luxury hotel designed by Eric Parry Architects

The authority's planning applications committee this week voted in favour of the plans for a 10-storey, 206-bedroom hotel with publicly accessible restaurant just off Oxford Street in central London.

It will stand on the site of The Welbeck Street multi-storey car park, built between 1968 and 1970 for department store Debenhams and designed by Michael Blomfield and Partners.

A report by planning officers said: 'The design of the replacement building is modern, using coloured ceramic cladding in a banded pattern which is considered a bold, eye-catching design of high quality and it is considered acceptable in this location.'

In 2013, the Design Museum included the car park, with its façade of prefabricated concrete diamonds, in an exhibition celebrating lesser-known architecture in London.

Nominated for the show by Sam Jacob, the structure was ranked alongside the likes of Stockwell Bus Garage and the Crystal Palace Subway.

However, in 2015 the building was assessed and rejected for listing by English Heritage (now Historic England).

Parry's application was opposed by nearby members club the Oriental Club, which complained about the potential loss of light to residential bedrooms in its property opposite the development site.

In a submission to the council, it said: 'Despite the efforts of the club and the owner/developer's representatives (Four Communications) there has been an evasiveness and arrogance surrounding the owners/developers communications – contrary to what was originally indicated by the owner/developer during a face-to-face meeting.'

Eric Parry Architects has been contacted for comment.

