

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Monier Road (West)

Thursday 4 December 2014, 15.45 – 16.45

Level 10, 1 Stratford Place, Montfichet Road, London E20 1EJ

Panel

John Lyall (chair)
Adam Khan
Neil Deely

Attendees

Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Hannah Lambert	London Legacy Development Corporation
Paul Buckenham	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Amy Thompson	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the proposals Monier Road (West). Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Julia Barfield (chair); Adam Khan; Lindsey Whitelaw and Ann Sawyer.

1. Project name and site address

1 Smeed Road, 79-85 Monier Road, London E3
Planning reference: 14/00374/FU

2. Presenting team

Russell Brown	Hawkins\Brown
Phil Catcheside	Hawkins\Brown
Glen Charles	City and Suburban Homes
Charles Moran	CMA Planning

3. Planning authority's views

The planning application for Monier Road (West) includes generous provision of employment floor space, in a stand-alone building. Planning officers are also supportive its architectural expression.

However, concerns remain about the quality of the central courtyard, due to the site layout and height of buildings proposed. Daylight and sunlight will be assessed as part of the planning application process.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

While the Quality Review Panel is unable to support the planning application for Monier Road (West), due to continuing concerns about the height of the blocks and courtyard typology on this narrow site. Some elements of the scheme, such as its architectural character and the layout of the residential units, are successful. The panel also agrees with planning officers that the provision of employment floor space in a stand-alone building is positive. However, the proportions of the internal courtyards mean that it will have limited sunlight and daylight. Both employment and residential accommodation on lower floor levels facing onto these spaces will receive limited light. The panel also thinks that the provision of children's play space requires further thought. Detailed comments are provided below, and comments made at the previous review which remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

Density and height

- The panel thinks that the narrowness of the site does not support the proposed height of the perimeter blocks at 4 to 7 storeys.
- Accommodation, especially on lower floors, and the central courtyards will be unacceptably dark.
- The panel also questions the justification for the 7 storey block along Smeed Road which will exacerbate overshadowing.

- The proposed stair and access bridges will further prevent views of the sky and daylight penetration in the courtyard.
- The panel recommends that for the scheme to be successful, the height to width ratio would have to be modified by a reduction in the number of storeys.

Mix of uses

- The panel supports the concentration of employment use in one block, providing workshop/studio spaces.

Residential units

- Generally, the panel thinks that the layout of the units is successful.
- The panel welcomes the fact that wheelchair accessible units are distributed throughout the scheme.
- The panel also strongly supports the intention to make accommodation tenure blind.

Architectural expression

- Skilful design is evident in the quality of architectural expression - demonstrating that subject to adjustment of the scale and massing as described above, this scheme could be successful.
- In addition to reducing the height of the blocks surrounding the courtyards, different materials and colour could also help maximise the sense of light and space.

Amenity space

- Generally, the panel thinks that there is inadequate open space, particularly for children's play.
- The private courtyards will not provide bright, attractive places to be enjoyed by residents, including children.
- These narrow, dark courtyards will also be cluttered by the lift towers, stairs and bridges proposed.
- Whilst the provision of amenity space on roof terraces is welcome, the panel questions whether the roof terrace of a 7 storey block is a realistic location for 'doorstep play'.

- Where trees are shown on roof terraces, the planning submission should demonstrate that sufficient depth of soil will be provided for these to be delivered.
- The panel recommends that the amount of open space be increased and include doorstep play for small children.

Next steps

- The panel is unable to support the current planning application for this scheme - in particular due to the height to width ratio of the scheme.
- An opportunity to comment on revised proposals would be welcomed.