



London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Legacy Wharf Phase 3

Thursday 25 August 2022

Auditorium 2, Level 10, 5 Endeavour Square, Stratford, London, E20 1JN

Panel

Hari Phillips (chair)
Julia Barfield
Teresa Borsuk
Keith French
Barbara Kaucky

Attendees

Alexander Cameron	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Mo Aleshinloye	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Pippa Henshall	London Legacy Development Corporation
Patrycja Karas	Frame Projects
Cindy Reriti	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Frances Madders	London Legacy Development Corporation
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Declarations of Interest

Hari Phillips, Bell Phillips Architects, is currently working on a project with Paul Shirley-Smith, Camlins Landscape Architects.

Teresa Borsuk, Pollard Thomas Edwards, is working on a project in Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, with Bellway Homes Eastern Counties.

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from two pre-application reviews. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Julia Barfield; Teresa Borsuk; Catherine Burd; Keith French; Barbara Kaucky; and Johnny Winter.

1. Project name and site address

Legacy Wharf Phase 3, Pudding Mill, London, E15 2PW

2. Presenting team

Harrison Thomas	Bellway Homes Limited Thames Gateway
Robert Maxwell	Allies and Morrison
Adam Hewgill	Allies and Morrison
Paul Shirley-Smith	Camlins Landscape Architects
Diana Thomson	Savills
George Daniel	Savills

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is located within the Pudding Mill area, in sub area 4 of the Local Plan, and is identified in site allocation SA.4.3 Pudding Mill, including an area to be provided as open space. The site is currently vacant, but formerly contained a waste transfer centre.

A hybrid application was submitted in October 2021 and it has resolution to grant permission. Block A, a stand-alone nine storey mixed-use building, comprising ground floor commercial and nursery uses, with 56 residential units above, was submitted in detail. The other buildings, formed of multiple blocks with heights from eight to thirteen storeys, as well as an 18 storey tower, to provide commercial floorspace and circa 381 residential units in total, were submitted in outline and include the development specification, parameter plans, and design code.

Planning officers expressed concerns with this proposal and advised the applicant that it could not be supported. Officers ask for the panel's comments on scale, height and massing, as well as public realm and landscape design. Comments were also sought on the ground floor plan, layout and use, particularly the new lane concept, and the quality of residential accommodation.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel is unable to support the proposals for Legacy Wharf Phase 3 and considers that a fundamental rethink of the proposed scale, height, density and massing is needed. Additionally, the overall identity and placemaking for the scheme needs to be more rooted to its location.

Given the prevailing height of 21 metres, and the height of recently consented tall buildings within the immediate area, the panel has concerns that the 18 storey tower and the other blocks, all of which are over 21 metres, are not aligned to the vision for the Pudding Mill Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for a medium density mixed-use neighbourhood with a significant element of family housing. The proposals are too tall and too dense for this location, outside the area designated as the local neighbourhood centre in the Pudding Mill SPD.

As stated in the two previous review meetings, the panel recommends that a detailed application should be submitted for all of Phase 3. Additionally, all relevant information must be provided, to demonstrate that buildings above the prevailing height will positively contribute to the surrounding townscape, public realm, and quality of accommodation, including daylight / sunlight, microclimate studies and illustrations of the experience at ground level. Furthermore, the panel has not been provided with evidence that the design code and parameter plans will guarantee delivery of a high-quality design.

The panel offers comments on other aspects of the design, but until the fundamental issues of scale, height, density and massing are addressed, it cannot support the scheme.

Scale, height, density and massing

- The panel previously expressed concerns for the height across Phase 3, at the July and December 2020 reviews, and it still feels these comments have not been addressed.
- The panel flagged that all blocks were well above the prevailing height of 21 metres, specified in the Pudding Mill Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) vision, and all blocks still continue to measure well above this mark.
- Further, the proposed 18 storey tower is well above recently consented points of height within the immediate area, including Bridgewater, at 11 storeys, and Vulcan Wharf, at 14 storeys. These tall buildings were submitted in detail and each scheme was well-considered, including the variation in building heights, to give confidence that what would be delivered onsite would meet Local Plan Policy BN.5.

- The panel is opposed to the 18 storey height of the tower on the northeast corner of the site. As previously expressed, it believes that a case could be made for a height of up to 14 storeys on this corner, subject to exceptional design being demonstrated.
- The point of primacy for height and density in this area should be located adjacent to the Pudding Mill Lane DLR station, to mark the key nodal point.
- Any building over the prevailing 21 metre height must be justified in terms of its positive contribution to townscape, public realm and high-quality design.
- The panel has not been given the opportunity to review the design code and parameter plans associated with this development. The quality of these documents will be critical in securing the quality of the development.

Unified neighbourhood

- The panel finds the scheme lacks a place-specific sense of identity and encourages the design team to consider how it can feel more rooted in the local area.
- It continues to encourage a joined-up approach with the neighbouring Vulcan Wharf and PDZ 8 sites, to ensure that Legacy Wharf contributes to the family character envisioned for Pudding Mill. As noted in the previous reports, the emerging design code for PDZ 8 is setting a 5-7 storey scale along its interface with Legacy Wharf.

Landscape and public realm

- The panel welcomes the continued development of the ground plane and public realm with an appropriate offer for the local area.
- It also welcomes the considered landscape and generous urban realm design, including the extensive sustainable drainage system.
- It is pleased that the urban greening factor for the scheme is higher than required, and encourages the design team to set a similarly high aspiration for biodiversity net gain.
- The design code should be used to protect the delivery of these positive design aspects of the scheme.
- The panel feels that the concept of the lanes needs further research and development. For example, their width should be considered in proportion to the height of the buildings.

- The panel believes that orientation of the blocks would be more successful if aligned orthogonally, in relation to Legacy Wharf Phase 2.
- It has concerns that the experience at street level may be uninviting. The panel would like to see views from street level both from within the development, and from the surrounding streets, to be able to assess the quality of the townscape.
- In addition, it feels that the way that Blocks C and G meet the corner of Barbers Road and Cook's Road, and Barbers Road and Bow Back Street, respectively, could be improved.
- Similarly, the pedestrian experience on Barbers Road should be improved to give priority to pedestrians, given that this will be a route to the Pudding Mill Lane DLR station.

Plan, layout and use

- Overall, the panel supports the mix of ground floor uses and believes the interesting mix will animate the streetscape.
- While the panel acknowledges that the inclusion of deck access, for Blocks D and E, has increased the number of dual aspect homes, it feels that the long building that has resulted presents an unrelenting frontage and could be substantially improved.
- Further consideration must be given to the internal arrangement of the units, to ensure that they do not overlook each other, particularly given the close proximity between blocks.
- Consideration should also be given to reducing the number of north-facing single aspect flats in Block G.
- In addition, analysis should be undertaken to assess the internal quality of the flats including daylight / sunlight and overheating.
- The panel supports the visual connectivity that the proposed external stair will create from the street up to the podium.

Detailed application for Block A

- The panel feels the architectural quality of Block A is disappointing. Further consideration must be given to the specification of quality materials and to the detailed design. The quality of accommodation to be provided and the scheme's environmental sustainability should also be considered rigorously. Detailed drawings must be submitted as part of the application, to demonstrate exceptional design quality.

- The design of each elevation should be specific to its orientation, to manage solar gain and to maximise daylight.
- Greater differentiation should be made between the base, middle and top of the building.
- The panel feels that the first floor terrace is too narrow, and significantly overshadowed to be usable, and that further consideration should be given to the provision of public and private space.
- The proposed balconies remain underdeveloped, both in terms of design quality and their position.
- The external space associated with the children's nursery is small and the panel is not convinced by the quality of the boundary condition between this space and the public realm.
- The panel notes discrepancies between the plans and elevations of the proposed building, in regard to the location of the lift over-run and stair windows, which need to be resolved.

Environmental sustainability

- Detailed information on environmental sustainability must be submitted, to demonstrate that the proposals do not have a harmful impact on the surrounding townscape, public realm and amenity, and on the accommodation provided.
- The panel would like to see an environmental sustainability strategy with high aspirations that respond to the climate emergency. For example, careful consideration should be given to structure and materiality, with the aim of reducing whole-life carbon, and a greater improvement on Building Regulations Part L should be targeted.
- It is noted that the target improvement on Part L is less than that for Phase 2, whereas the panel would expect a greater level of ambition as the climate crisis becomes more acute.
- Daylight / sunlight and microclimate analysis must be undertaken, and used throughout the design development, to mitigate adverse overshadowing and downdraughts. These studies must include the public realm and streets, as well as the communal amenity associated with the development.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel's position is unchanged from the two previous reviews, in July and December 2020. It feels the applicant needs to revisit the parameters set out in the Pudding Mill SPD and review the submission in the context of the emerging design code for PDZ 8 and the proposals for the neighbouring Vulcan Wharf and Bridgewater, particularly in relation to scale, height and density. It refers the applicant to the recent Planning Inspectorate's decision for the Marshgate Lane site which is also relevant.
- The panel continues to encourage a detailed planning application for all of Phase 3. This could give a greater level of confidence that the quality of development will satisfy Policy BN.5 of the Local Plan and allow time for co-ordination with other elements of PDZ 8.
- The panel would welcome an opportunity to comment again on the detailed design for Phase 3 of Legacy Wharf, once substantial changes have been made to the scheme.