



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Westfield Plot M2

Thursday 4 April 2024

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

Panel

Hari Phillips (chair)
Jane Briginshaw
Russell Curtis
Kate Digney
Jonathan Hagos

Attendees

Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Donald Roberts	London Legacy Development Corporation
Halil Yorel	London Borough of Newham
Cindy Reriti	Frame Projects
Eleanor Schone	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

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

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from one pre-application review. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Hari Phillips (chair); Jane Briginshaw; Russell Curtis; Jennette Emery-Wallis; and Jonathan Hagos.

1. Project name, site address and application reference

Westfield Plot M2, Westfield Stratford City, 157 Montfichet Road, London E20 1EJ
24/00113/FUL

2. Presenting team

Marc Williams	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Julian Lewis	East
Penny Cameron	Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is located within the Stratford Metropolitan Town Centre and relates to the Stratford International station end of Westfield Shopping Centre, fronting onto Hitchcock Lane service road. Westfield Shopping Centre sits in Zone 1 of the Stratford City Planning Permission. Reserved matters applications for the various shopping centre plots, M2 to M8, were approved in 2008 to 2010, with the Shopping Centre completed in 2011.

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield intends to submit a full planning application for purpose-built student accommodation, to provide 530 bed spaces in a new building on top of the shopping centre. The proposal includes amendments to the shopping centre roof, a reduction in shopping centre car parking spaces, new community sports / leisure facilities and new public realm and landscaping, including a public route at roof-level.

Planning officers welcome the panel's comments on whether the scheme meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN. 5. This includes the scale, massing and materiality of the architecture, the generosity and quality of the public realm and landscaping, including the publicly accessible route, and sports / leisure facilities at roof level. Comments are also sought on the quality of the student accommodation, as well as access and servicing.



4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel is supportive of the improvements to the architecture and suggests a few further refinements that could be made. However, the success of the scheme is contingent on the public realm and landscape and a much greater ambition with bolder gestures is needed to strengthen the proposals at ground level, with detailed drawings provided to give confidence that it will be delivered, if the scheme is to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5. A similar joyful approach should be taken as that applied to the podium proposals. The podium has the potential to be an exciting space. The student's courtyard garden, and the improvements that have been made to the rooftop public realm, as a result of the design team's engagement with members of the various communities who will use the facilities, is to be commended. The proposals will transform a car park into an exciting, green space that has the potential to benefit the wider community from day one and also has the flexibility to adapt over time. However, it is essential that a wayfinding strategy is provided, to ensure the space will be successful, and illustrations should be provided to show how the landscape integrates with the architecture.

The panel supports the use of the white precast concrete and feels that the full-height dual stair cores, on the north elevation, will provide a welcome marker for the building. It also welcomes the improvements to the east and west elevations. Given that all four sides of the building will be visible, further work is needed on the south elevation to ensure that it will make a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape.

The quality and variety of internal amenity space will provide a great place for the students to live. Consideration should be given to the potential to provide a great amenity space, with far reaching views, at the top of the building.

Public realm and landscape at ground level

- Further thought is needed to provide a safe and accessible pedestrian route along Hitchcock Lane that is as successful as the green and animated mirrored route proposed on the rooftop. The panel references Allies & Morrison's light tunnel at King's Cross as an example of how a long pedestrian route can be positively transformed.
- Further exploration should be undertaken on the type of mirrors to be used and what they will reflect. Consideration should be given to integrating colour and light, in line with the Gasholder Park reference, which uses mirrors like a kaleidoscope to dramatically reflect the colours of adjacent planting, buildings, people and activity.
- A multifaceted mirror would provide dynamic reflections and refractions, and will also be more forgiving to wear and tear.



- Consideration should be given to any impact that a mirrored walk will have on people with impaired vision and people who are neurodiverse.
- A strong link could be created between the building and the landscape by extending the mural from the undercroft, or some of the colours, alongside the mirror.
- Further consideration could be given to increasing the height of the balustrades, and changing the materiality of the guard railing.
- Any provision of greening along Hitchcock Lane would be welcomed, as would some seating to provide a place to rest along this long stretch of pavement.
- An illustration looking down Hitchcock Lane toward Montfichet Road should be provided. The panel also suggests that a large truck should be included in all visuals, to show the effect that it will have on the space.
- The lighting of the service bay numbers along the length of the lane, the yellow marker, and the light box above the Westfield shopping centre entrance are working well.
- Further thought should be given to strengthening the proposals through the provision of more substantial greening, particularly in Hitchcock Square. In addition to the size of planters, consideration should also be given to their location, to ensure that they will benefit from rainfall, reducing the amount of irrigation needed
- The proposed sculptural platform, on Celebration Avenue, provides welcome seating and greening, but the panel feels that the platform would provide a more attractive destination if one of the ramps were replaced by additional seating and greening.
- Ongoing discussions with HS1 Ltd are encouraged as it is crucial that all of the landscape proposals in the drawings, including those outside the red line boundary, are delivered. The panel supports officers' use of conditions to secure their delivery.
- Further thought should be given to creating a sense of place in Roundhouse Lane and the Stratford International forecourt. For example, the popular play area could be further improved and linked into the surrounding public realm through the provision of a new fence.
- Further detailed drawings should be provided, including a plan that shows the areas of constraint in the public realm, and technical details that give confidence that the proposals can be delivered.



Public realm and landscape at podium level

- The transformation of the car park into an adaptable and flexible area of public realm, offering a variety of spaces and uses to suit a range of people, is commended.
- Further details are requested as to how the public realm at podium level will announce itself within the shopping centre and/or the access cores to encourage the public to make the journey to the rooftop. The panel feels that innovative means, beyond signage and wayfinding, will be essential. For example, cores that provide access to the podium could be distinguished from the other cores in Westfield Stratford City. A wayfinding strategy should be provided to officers, to demonstrate how this will be achieved, and the panel supports planning officers' use of conditions to ensure that the strategy is implemented.
- The consideration given to greening and animating the long east-west walkway is welcomed, as is the strong greening along the south edge of the rooftop. Further details and drawings are requested to show the condition and quality of the parapet.
- Drawings should be provided, to show the quality of the space, including visuals to show how the landscape design works with the architecture at podium level.
- Details are requested on the contribution that trees and plants will make to ecology and biodiversity net gain.

Entrance

- The panel welcomes the celebratory student entrance, but further drawings are requested to show how the building will meet the ground plane in Hitchcock Square. The panel feels that a sense of arrival is needed for the students who will be living here and suggests, for example, a playful welcome mat could be provided that could be linked to the sculptural platform on Celebration Avenue.
- Further thought should also be given to the ground plane in front of the glazed area between the stair cores, so that it is clear that the entrance is not located here. The current approach with a modest planter in front of the glass feels tentative.

Architecture, materiality and tone

- Further thought should be given to improving the south elevation of the building. For example, the proportions of the bays could be adjusted and more use made of colour. Amenity spaces could be celebrated through variation in fenestration,



- Additional night views should be produced, as the lighting and illuminated signage could provide valuable clues to the appropriate use of colour in this commercial context.
- The painted mural on the undercroft will be integral to the success of the building. The panel supports planning officers' use of conditions to ensure that high-quality artwork, by a local artist, is secured.
- The mural could extend into the public realm to be used as a linking element, and into the lift areas of the shopping centre, as part of a wayfinding strategy.

Quality of accommodation and internal amenity

- Given the far-reaching views from the car park, the panel feels that the top of the building would provide a great location for an internal amenity space, for example, a lounge, gym, study space, that could also act as a lantern to mark a key moment in the arrival sequence.
- The additional generosity afforded to the circulation and corridors will provide welcome opportunities for chance encounters between students.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel would welcome the opportunity to comment again, in a chair's review of the public realm and landscape, to assess the scheme against the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5.

