

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Roach Road

Thursday 12 September 2014, 16.30 – 17.30

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Peter Stewart
Mark Brearley

Attendees

Rachel Gleave	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Will Steadman	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Hannah Lambert	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Paul Buckenham	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Shay Bugler	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on a pre-application review of the proposals for Roach Road. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); John Lyall; Lindsey Whitelaw; Mark Brearley and Dan Epstein.

Declaration of Interest

Peter Stewart is a Quality Review Panel member. He is principal of the Peter Stewart Consultancy, who made representations in 2012 on behalf of a client against the Tower Hamlets proposed designation of the White Post Lane Conservation Area. Neither of the sites being considered at the QRP meeting lies in the White Post Lane Conservation Area as it was proposed at that time. He is also a friend of Christophe Egret at Studio Egret West.

1. Project name and site address

Roach Road
4 Roach Road, London E3
Planning application reference: 14/00260/FUL

2. Presenting team

Andrew Jay	Constable Homes
Christophe Egret	Studio Egret West
Will Edmonds	Montagu Evans

3. Planning authority's views

LLDC planning officers have a number of concerns about the planning application for Roach Road. The scheme is located on the edge of the Fish Island Conservation Area. The Fish Island Area Action Plan states that appropriate heights for this area are between 4 and 6 storeys. Development of up to 7 storeys is proposed, and planning officers think this will have a negative effect on the character of the conservation area. They are also not convinced that the bold architectural expression proposed is appropriate, particularly in view of the scale of development proposed. They also have concerns about the lack of affordable housing.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel (QRP) supports the planning application for Roach Road, and thinks this has the potential to set a much-needed precedent for high quality development in Fish Island. Whilst the proposed 7 storey development is in excess of the 4 – 6 storeys recommended by the Fish Island Area Action Plan, the panel think this is justified by the exceptional quality of the design. The panel recognises that there are planning issues outside its remit that remain to be resolved, such as the lack of affordable housing. It will be for the planning authority to make a judgement about the full breadth of planning issues. However, the reasons for the panel's support are set out in more detail below. Comments made at the previous QRP meeting are repeated for clarity.

Scale and massing

- The panel agrees that the scale of buildings along the canal side is appropriate – although noting that this is at the absolute limit of what would be acceptable.
- The exceptional quality and strong personality of the architecture, the welcome mix of uses, and the relationship of the tallest element of the scheme to the canal, all help justify the scale of development proposed.

- On Roach Road, the panel welcomes the reduction in height to five storeys, as an appropriate response to the finer street grain.

Architectural expression

- The panel is impressed with the quality of the design of the double-height spaces facing the canal. These have the potential to be highly successful spaces for performance, exhibitions and other events, as well as a café.
- The panel strongly supports a design where these double-height spaces feel 'outside': people should be drawn to the waterside, through the proposed 'colonnade' and into these spaces.
- The panel believes that the richness of the design comes largely from the way in which the volumes of the three proposed buildings interact.
- The limited palette of materials including charred timber, brick, and metallic balconies, promises to be both characterful and coherent.
- Maintaining the quality promised by the planning application drawings will be key to the success of the scheme, and conditions relating to the quality of materials and construction should be used to ensure this.

The new bridge

- The planning application includes convincing proposals for the design of a new all-modes bridge to the north of the site.
- Whilst the bridge will not be delivered as part of this scheme, an area of the application site has been set aside to allow the design of the bridge to be rationalised – and this is welcome.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel supports the planning application for Roach Road, and looks forward to seeing it built.