

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Olympic Stadium Transformation

Monday 22 April 2013, 15.30 – 16.00

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

Attendees

Peter Studdert	Chair of the LLDC Quality Review Panel
Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Mick Gavin	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Alison Blom-Cooper	Fortismere Associates
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Vivienne Ramsey	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Selina Mason	London Legacy Development Corporation
Philip Johnson	Populous
Neil Mattinson	LDA
Chris Gascoigne	London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a formal review of proposals for the Olympic Stadium Transformation, which were presented by the design team at a pre-application stage. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Neil Deely; John Lyall; Peter Lainson; Alex Ely; Lindsey Whitelaw; Tom Holbrook and Julia Barfield.

Quality Review Panel comments on Olympic Stadium Transformation

Planning application reference: 12/00066/FUM

Summary

The Stadium in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is an elegant and skilful piece of design. Although originally designed as a temporary building, its retention is now proposed for use as a football ground during the winter and for athletics events and concerts during the summer. The original architects, Populous, have been appointed by the London Legacy Development Corporation to design the alterations required to achieve this. They have resolved the huge technical challenges of creating an extended roof and moveable seating, with innovative solutions that maintain the elegance of the Stadium structure. The design of the landscape around the stadium has also been redesigned by LDA to become a more integrated part of the Olympic Park.

However, the design quality of the scheme as a whole is not matched by proposals for gate line hospitality accommodation. Although small in scale, these will be important to the experience of visitors to the Stadium. Ideally, this aspect of the scheme would have been improved before submission of a planning application. However, it is acknowledged that a conditioned approval could also allow for higher quality designs to be developed.

The Quality Review Panel's comments on the roof and seating, landscape, gate line and hospitality facilities, bridges and future branding are provided below.

Roof and seating

- The panel welcomes the ingenious proposals for transformation of the Stadium for multi-purpose use.
- An innovative technical solution has been found to the challenge of providing seats that can be moved to accommodate football, athletics or concerts.
- The panel also supports the elegant design of the new extended roof, which will provide shelter to all seats during football matches.
- Extending the roof requires the lighting structures which give a distinctive silhouette to the Stadium to be removed.
- However, the memory of these will be reflected in the inverted triangles of new lighting structures along the inside perimeter of the roof.

Landscape

- Removing kiosks around the edge of the Stadium podium will open up fantastic views of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and beyond.
- Great care has been taken to reduce the width of the podium to avoid it feeling windswept and empty on non event days.
- This has allowed the creation of attractive new areas of green landscape to the north of the Stadium, sloping down with footpaths towards the City Mill River, which is a welcome refinement to the previous scheme.
- Pedestrian routes to the Stadium from the south east are likely to be increasingly important as developments in Newham come forward.
- The route between the community track and car park seems the natural route for pedestrians coming from the south east. The design of this area would benefit from further thought to achieve a generous ceremonial route.

Gate line and hospitality accommodation

- The panel supports the principle of arranging the gate line and kiosks for the Stadium directly around its perimeter, however the architecture of these new elements does not yet match the quality of the Stadium.
- The strength of the original design of the Stadium is based on an elegant superstructure supporting the roof in white steel, and secondary structure supporting the seating in black steel.
- The new gate line, kiosks, and extended hospitality accommodation could be designed as a third component of the Stadium design, of equal elegance and quality.
- The panel would encourage the designers to consider alternatives to the black brick proposed for construction of the kiosks.
- The scope to maintain views into the Stadium from the podium concourse should be investigated - for example by grouping exits opposite existing gaps.
- The panel recognises the difficulty resolving the junction between the V props of the Stadium, and the roof required to shelter the concourse behind the gate line.
- However, we are confident that Populous will be able to improve the design of gate line and hospitality accommodation, if planning conditions give them an opportunity to do so.

Bridges

- Bridges around the Stadium are constructed with part of their width as a temporary structure, intended for removal after the Games. The continuing use of the Stadium requires these bridges to be retained at their full width.
- A reasonable balance between cost and quality has been achieved in proposals to upgrade the temporary sections of these bridges.
- However, the design team should investigate whether temporary balustrades along the river's edge beneath the bridges need to be retained.
- If permanent balustrades are required, these should be of higher quality design.

Future branding

- It is likely that in future, there will be a desire to apply branding to the Stadium.
- The panel would encourage this to be achieved through creative lighting design, in preference to any wrap or painting the structure.
- As the Stadium is owned by the LLDC, it should be possible to achieve this through lease agreements.

Next steps

- The panel would welcome an opportunity to comment on revised proposals for gate line and hospitality accommodation, either as a revision to the current application, or discharge of planning conditions.