



London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Wickside, Bridge House

Thursday 10 November 2022

Video conference

Panel

Peter Bishop (chair)

Catherine Burd

Adam Khan

Ed McCann

Ann Sawyer

Attendees

Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Giselle Ottley	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Josh Hackner	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Donald Roberts	London Legacy Development Corporation
Paul Taylor	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Patrycja Karaś	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Rachel Hearn	London Legacy Development Corporation
Jerry Bell	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Jane Jin	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Cindy Reriti	Frame Projects

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from one pre-application review. Panel members who attended the review meetings were: Peter Bishop (chair); Peter Studdert (chair); Catherine Burd; Adam Khan; Ed McCann; Ann Sawyer.

1. Project name, site address and application reference

McGrath Works Depot Waste Recycling Station, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB
21/00500/REM

2. Presenting team

Mark Shaw	Studioshaw
Harry Thompson	Studioshaw
Charlotte Yarker	Daniel Watney LLP
Nadia Shojaie	Daniel Watney LLP
Patrick O'Sullivan	O'Shea
Cany Ash	Ash Sakula

3. Planning authority briefing

The Wickside Hybrid Planning Permission was granted on 21 January 2020, for the comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of a 2.88 hectare site comprising up to 475 residential units, 10,849 sqm of commercial and community uses (Class A, B and D), new open spaces, public realm and landscaping, and car parking.

Bridge House (Blocks P3 – P5) is a reserved matters application, pursuant to the outline permission. It permits up to three cojoined blocks comprising basement plus six to seven storeys on 0.25 hectares, including:

- up to 40 dwellings
- up to 1,440.8 sqm of commercial and community floorspace
- the creation of a northern bridge approach / abutment for a new canal crossing
- provision of new site access points
- new open spaces
- public realm and associated landscaping

Also relevant is the planning permission for Roach Point Bridge, granted on 26 October 2017, for the removal of the existing Roach Point pedestrian bridge and the erection of a replacement pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Hertford Union Canal, with new northern and southern approaches and associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Planning officers asked for the panel's comments on the scheme's compliance with the Outline Planning Permission – in particular, the minor exceedances proposed to the maximum height parameters. They also asked for comments on: the design, massing and materiality – with reference to policy BN.5 for tall buildings; design details and avoiding value engineering; the quality of the commercial space; the quality of residential accommodation – in particular, privacy to bedrooms facing the access deck; on inclusive access; and on sustainability.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel considers that the proposals can result in a high quality building, but feels that a further design iteration is needed to create more visual excitement, and to ensure designs are deliverable. It considers that the elements exceeding the maximum height afforded in the outline planning permission are justified. The architectural approach is thoughtful and has evolved well, but the panel suggests more colour, texture and decoration might prevent the building from appearing austere. The main elevation could be more clearly distinguished, and the canalside colonnade could add more drama to the building and create a stronger public space. The panel's main concern is that the building appears complicated and therefore expensive to deliver. It asks the design team to consider how it can be simplified to guard against value engineering. The quality of the building will depend on delivering the design detail presented, and strict conditioning will be therefore be an essential as part of planning permission. A construction team with the skills and resources to deliver the project will be essential. The panel suggests LLDC uses the design team's model to help inform conditions for any planning permission. More flexible residential layouts should be considered to allow residents to move bedrooms away from the access deck. The penthouse may be too exclusive a location for an accessible unit. The panel is impressed by the quality and variety of amenity proposed for the rooftop space and feels it could be very successful, subject to careful management. Chairs should be moveable to ensure the space can be accessed by wheelchair users. Design of the community space should be influenced by consultation with potential occupiers, and intentions for this space should be included in the planning application. The scheme should set sustainability targets that ensure it meets the Low Energy Transformation Initiative's (LETI's) Climate Emergency Design Guide standards. These comments are expanded below.

Height

- The panel understands that the proposals exceed the height limit afforded in the Wickside hybrid planning permission by a small amount, but considers this to be justified. The additional height provides important access to amenity space on the roof, and the lift overruns add beneficial sculpting to the roof line.

Architecture

- The panel considers the architectural approach to be thoughtful, subtle and carefully detailed. Changes made since the previous review have had a positive effect by improving the proportions of the main, western elevation and breaking down its length.

- The addition of more colour is also a successful move. However, the architecture is still very restrained, and the panel suggests that a little more could be done to ensure the building adds excitement to the neighbourhood. More colour would be beneficial, for example to distinguish and highlight dados or windows. Texture could also be used, for example to give dados a smoother expression. Decoration could be considered for the floor of the western colonnade.
- Although residential entrances have been made more prominent since the previous review, the panel still feels that they could be hidden in shadow under the western colonnade. It suggests they should be made even more visible, to counter this.
- The panel also feels that it is unclear whether the western or the southern elevation is the building's main frontage. Consideration should be given to distinguishing the main elevation more clearly.
- This could be helped by adjusting the way the canalside colonnade meets the canal towpath, to create a more dramatic moment. The panel feels that this junction, which is currently articulated in a benign way, could add more active excitement to the canalside frontage.
- The panel also encourages consideration of how the space between the building and the canal can be given as distinct an identity as possible, embracing the space as clearly as possible to create a small waterside piazza.
- The panel notes the need for careful design of the western colonnade, to ensure difficult junctions are managed where the slope flattens outside each front door.

Amenity space

- The panel is impressed by the design of the roof terrace amenity space, and thinks that the way it has been broken down into different functional areas could work very well. The success of this space will be subject to an appropriate and sustainable management regime.
- The panel notes that the chairs surrounding the table on the roof terrace should not be fixed, and should be adjustable to ensure they are wheelchair accessible. A high chair could also be provided.

Delivery

- The panel's main concern is that the proposals are complicated and expensive to deliver, and therefore vulnerable to value engineering. The quality of the proposals depends on delivery of design details as presented. However, the

façade seems potentially difficult and expensive to build, with expensive elements such as the slim mullions, while additional features such as the hanging colonnade lights are also costly. The panel therefore asks for thinking on how costs can be managed through adjustments to the design, to ensure the proposals are viable.

- The panel also suggests that greater clarity is needed about the relationship between the in situ concrete frame, precast elements and the thermal line, for ease of construction.
- It is also important that the contractor has both the skills and resources to build the approved designs, to avoid an insufficient build which would seriously undermine the project's quality.
- The panel is disappointed not to be able to view the architects' model in person (which was not possible because the review meeting had to be held online). It recommends that LLDC officers view the model in person to check design detail, and consider using it to condition designs as part of any planning permission. Design details should be submitted as part of the planning application, for example with a detailed bay study.

Layout

- The panel considers that the privacy issues caused by bedrooms overlooking deck access, raised at the previous review, are not yet entirely resolved. An option could be to allow residents the flexibility to alter the layout of their flats as they choose, by reversing the location of bedrooms and living space. RCKa's Horstley retirement scheme in Seaford provides a precedent for designing living space in this way. The location of the central core may need to be adjusted to enable this flexibility.
- The panel supports the provision of accessible units, but suggests that allocating the penthouse for accessible living will exclude the majority of potential occupants. If the affordability of this unit cannot be conditioned, a different location should be considered within the building, or in the broader development.

Community space

- The panel considers it important to research potential occupiers of the community space. Currently, the space is not specifically designed for community use, but it is important to ensure it will work for those who eventually move in. Changes to the designs could be identified through discussions with future occupiers who, for example, may require space that is easier to divide. Potential occupiers should be sought and discussions held to understand their requirements. The overall

intention for these spaces, and the way they will be made available and affordable for community use, should be included in the planning application.

Sustainability

- The panel asks the applicant to identify and commit to embodied and operational carbon targets for the development as part of its planning application. These should reflect the standards set out in the Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Climate Emergency Design Guide, to ensure the development meets the level of quality required.
- The requirements of Building Regulations Part O: Overheating should also be checked, to ensure solar gain is reduced and managed effectively.

Next steps

The panel is confident that the issues it raises can be resolved in discussion with planning officers.