

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Marshgate Business Centre and 14 Marshgate Lane

Thursday 10 September 2015

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Alex Ely

Attendees

Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Steve Tomlinson	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from two pre-application reviews of the proposals for Marshgate Business Centre and 14 Marshgate Lane. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Lindsey Whitelaw; John Lyall; Lynne Sullivan; and Liam Bond.

Declaration of interest

Deborah Denner is project manager for the Quality Review Panel. Her husband James Denner is a Director at Squire and Partners, who are the architects for Marshgate Business Centre. James Denner is not involved in this project.

1. Project name and site address

Marshgate Business Centre and 14 Marshgate Lane, London E15 2NH

14/0422/FUL

2. Presenting team

Ian Dubber	Workspace 14 Limited
Barnaby Johnston	Squire and Partners
Kathleen Hallquist	Squire and Partners
Alex Comrie	Barton Willmore
John Haxworth	Barton Willmore
Laura Jenkinson	GVA

3. Planning authority's views

The proposals for Marshgate Lane include demolition of existing commercial buildings and construction of 8 new buildings ranging from 2 to 12 storeys. Since the previous Quality Review Panel (QRP) meeting to discuss the scheme, the overall quantum of residential accommodation has been reduced, and family homes increased. The amount of workspace proposed is particularly welcome. LLDC officers would like more information on delivery and access arrangements, and would welcome the QRP's comments on the detailed design. In particular, the 12 storey building 1 is taller than the prevailing heights identified for this site in the Local Plan. The design of this building will therefore need to be tested against Policy BN10, which includes a requirement for outstanding design.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel finds much to admire in the planning submission for Marshgate Lane, both in terms of its brief, including a welcome mix of residential and workspace accommodation, and also in its design. The scheme has progressed in a positive way through pre-application discussions with LLDC officers. The panel supports the scale and massing, residential typologies, and architectural expression proposed. The landscape design also promises a variety of high quality spaces with varied character and use throughout the scheme. The main area in which the panel think there is scope for further refinement is the facades of the workspace in buildings 1 and 2. The panel questions the value of the crystalline screen in front of the glazed façade, and would encourage a simpler approach. More detailed comments are provided below.

Workplace façade

- The main aspect of the design that the panel thinks could be improved is the façade of the workplace building.

- A decorative screen with a crystalline pattern is proposed to the base of buildings 1 and 2. The panel understands that this draws inspiration from the history of the site as a glassworks – but thinks if this is purely decorative, it may be best omitted or at least reconsidered.
- This screen seems an unnecessary complication to the design and is likely to weather badly and make the glazing behind more difficult to clean.
- A better approach may be to design a simpler, more robust base and invest in high quality materials that will stand the test of time.

Residential development

- The panel supports the design of the residential development, which appears well resolved, in terms of both internal layout, architecture and landscape design.
- Whilst reservations about the façade of buildings 1 & 2 are raised above, in other respects the panel supports their design – and feels the scale, proportions, and the architecture of the upper floors is successful.
- Where residential units face the bus way, some further thought could be given to maximising privacy for ground floor accommodation. In this location the panel would encourage as much space as possible to be allocated to private front gardens.
- There may also be scope to design the duplex units facing the bus way, to allow flexibility for use as live work units.

Landscape design

- The panel welcomes refinements that have been made to the landscape design, in particular the creation of a continuous public riverside walk.
- The nature of the yard between buildings 1 and 2, facing south over the river would benefit from further exploration.
- This has the potential to be a pleasant sheltered sunny space for residents and the public to enjoy. However, it is not clear how car parking, and use by the workspace will be managed to achieve this.

Next steps

The panel is confident that the project team will be able to address the points above, in consultation with LLDC planning officers, and looks forward to seeing this project built.