



FRAME PROJECTS

## **London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel**

### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: Stratford Waterfront: masterplan / landscape / public realm**

Thursday 12 April 2018

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Teresa Borsuk  
Adam Khan  
Mike Martin  
David Gilpin

#### **Attendees**

Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Richard McFerran	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Grant McClements	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Rachel Meunier	London Legacy Development Corporation
Ruth Holmes	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

#### **Apologies / report copied to**

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sophie Hockin	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Greg Smith	London Legacy Development Corporation
Leona Roche	London Legacy Development Corporation
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

## 1. Project name and site address

Stratford Waterfront, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

## 2. Presenting team

Kirsty Leslie	Allies and Morrison
Andrew Harland	LDA Design
Peter Maxwell	London Legacy Development Corporation
Irene Man	London Legacy Development Corporation
Duncan Price	BuroHappold

## 3. Planning authority's views

The planning authority is encouraged by the way in which the masterplan for Stratford Waterfront, and public realm and landscape strategy, have evolved. It thinks that further consideration of the following issues would be helpful: the larger Waterfront Square which will need to respond to the staging of events as well as quieter times; sufficiently robust landscaping and effective management and maintenance; the approach taken to Carpenters Road; how well the more fluid zone in front of Sadler's Wells might work; and measures taken, including by planting, to mitigate wind levels across the Stratford Waterfront site.

Designs for the public realm – as well as the cultural and education buildings – will be submitted as a full planning application.

## 4. Quality Review Panel's views

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel welcomes the progress made in developing the masterplan – and public realm and landscape design strategy – for Stratford Waterfront. It thinks, however, that further refinement is required to create a stronger identity and character for what will be a major cultural destination. While movement through Stratford Waterfront generally works well, a significant shortcoming at the moment is the lack of legibility of the route through Stratford Waterfront to Carpenters Land Bridge. The panel also suggests further thought to the public realm at the southwestern point where Stratford Waterfront meets Bridge F10. The approach to the Carpenters Road public realm appears sound. The panel suggests that a more muscular landscape design strategy is needed to respond to the scale of the buildings at Stratford Waterfront. A less fragmented approach would be preferable – with an increase in the amount and scale of the planting. The panel broadly supports the proposed materials and recommends incorporation at this stage of a lighting strategy and details relating to accessibility. These comments are expanded below.

This report should be read together with the separate report of the review on 12 April 2018 of the cultural and education buildings: Sadler's Wells; BBC Concert Studios; London College of Fashion; and V&A East.

### *Masterplan approach*

- The panel commends the depth of analysis that has informed further evolution of the Stratford Waterfront masterplan. This has progressed considerably – but the panel thinks that it could be further improved.
- A significant weakness is the current lack of clarity of the route through Stratford Waterfront from Bridge F09, coming from Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, to Carpenters Land Bridge leading to International Quarter London (IQL).
- It is unclear that those arriving at Stratford Waterfront would be aware that a route through existed. Rather, there would be a point of indecision, with an inclination to turn to the right or to the left from Bridge F09, rather than progressing through to the London College of Fashion and on to Carpenters Land Bridge.
- The panel thinks that a larger gesture within the public realm is required to ensure that this route is legible. It therefore recommends further scrutiny of the masterplan – and the public realm and landscape design strategy – to identify how this might be better resolved.
- With this significant exception, movement through Stratford Waterfront appears to work well.
- There are some reservations about activation of the public realm being over reliant on retail, including along the waterfront lower promenade, which is designated entirely as retail.
- The panel would strongly support initiatives aimed at ensuring that retail units contribute as far as possible to the special character of Stratford Waterfront as a cultural destination. It welcomes assurances from the applicant that this is the intention.
- While diagrams show extensive public areas within the buildings at podium level connecting through to the public realm, it needs to be demonstrated that this merging will work well in practice.
- Locating an entrance to Sadler’s Wells from Bridge F10 will contribute to animation along the bridge.
- The panel is not yet convinced, however, that the southwest approach / entrance to Stratford Waterfront from Bridge F10 is satisfactorily resolved. It recommends further thought to the public realm, notably the surfacing, at this point to signal more clearly the entrance to Stratford Waterfront. This could be achieved, for example, either by extending the concrete surfacing proposed for Waterfront Place onto the bridge, to create a clear threshold to the south side of Stratford Waterfront, or by possibly bringing the resin surface of the bridge into Stratford Waterfront.



### *Public realm / landscape design*

- While much progress has been made in developing the public realm and landscape design strategy – including identifying moments that will bring life to Stratford Waterfront – a clear identity and character have yet to emerge strongly.
- Stratford Waterfront will include four large, impressive buildings: Sadler's Wells, BBC Concert Studios, London College of Fashion and V&A East. The panel is not yet convinced that the public realm adequately responds to the scale and distinction of these buildings.
- It suggests that the landscape design should demonstrate increased muscularity and robustness. For example, London College of Fashion is a very substantial building, with a large portico: a grander statement, of a commensurate scale, within the public realm is needed.
- The panel agrees with the need to avoid a sense of an uninterrupted 'plaza' along Stratford Waterfront and to define smaller spaces; it questions, however, whether the public realm needs to relate so closely to Sadler's Wells, BBC Concert Studios and London College of Fashion. A less fragmented approach might be more successful. The landscape design should stand as an identifiable podium for all three buildings – with a unique, strong character across the podium.
- While many of the ideas that go to make up the public realm have merit in themselves, the panel remains to be convinced that all elements come together as a harmonious composition. The panel suggests that this could possibly be achieved by blurring the edges between the landscape's various components.

### *Carpenters Road*

- The panel generally supports the approach taken to the public realm in Carpenters Road, including the incorporation of a rain garden.
- It finds the indication of various uses along the frontage of Carpenters Road particularly helpful. These promise to go a considerable way to activating this road.

### *Materials and planting*

- The panel thinks that the proposed terraces down to the waterside have the potential to be successful. It has some concerns, however, about the amount and scale of the planting proposed for the terraces and suggests that the proportion of planting in relation to the uses around it might be increased.
- The panel stresses that the success of the public realm and landscape design will require rigorous management and maintenance – and welcomes the intention to appoint a management company for Stratford Waterfront.



- The panel generally supports the choice of materials, including the use of concrete and timber – with planting. It sounds a note of caution, however, about the extensive use of timber which in wet weather could lose its appeal.
- As the landscape design is taken forward, details relating to accessibility, for example handrails and paving, will need to be carefully considered and integrated. Balustrading needs to be thought about at this stage – to avoid it being clumsily incorporated at a later stage.
- A lighting strategy should also be included as the next level of detail of the public realm and landscape design strategy is taken forward.

#### *Microclimatic conditions*

- The panel is encouraged that considerable thought is being given to addressing wind levels across the Stratford Waterfront site. A particular concern is how the wind will play against the buildings. It would be helpful therefore to have a greater understanding of how buildings and landscape interact with each other to mitigate wind levels. While the principles appear sound, there is a need to be confident that their implementation will be effective.

#### *Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel encourages the design teams to continue to refine the proposals for Stratford Waterfront, taking into account the comments above.
- It would welcome the opportunity to again comment on the public realm and landscape proposals, before a planning application is submitted.

