



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: East Village N16

Thursday 12 January 2023

Glenn Howells Architects, Middlesex House, 34-42 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JE

Panel

Cristina Monteiro (chair)

Julia Barfield

Barbara Kaucky

Mike Martin

John O'Mara

Attendees

Sara Dawes

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

Josh Hackner

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

Frances Madders

London Legacy Development Corporation

Paul Taylor

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Patrycja Karas

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Cindy Reriti

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Apologies / report copied to

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Donald Roberts

London Legacy Development Corporation

James Bolt

London Borough of Newham

Ben Hull

London Borough of Newham

Deborah Denner

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Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from four pre-application reviews. Panel members who attended the previous meetings were: Mike Martin (chair); Cristina Monteiro (chair); Peter Studdert (chair); Julia Barfield; Simon Henley; Barbara Kaucky; Mike Martin; Ed McCann; John O'Mara; Johnny Winter.

Report of Formal Review Meeting

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QRP24_East Village N16

1. Project name and site address

Plot N16, Celebration Avenue, Zone 3 Stratford City Development

2. Presenting team

Glenn Howells	Glenn Howells Architects
Will Poole	Glenn Howells Architects
Nick Dodd	Glenn Howells Architects
Nick Rutherford	tp bennett
Ibrahim Diaz-Vera	Grant Associates
Simon Jenner	Get Living
Steffan Rees	Quod

3. Planning authority briefing

Plot N16 at East Village sits within part of Zone 3 of the overarching Stratford City Outline Planning Permission, which sets out key principles for development thresholds, land uses, building heights, massing, location and quantum of open space. The site benefits from Reserved Matters Approval (ref:14/00056/REM) for primarily residential uses, with non-residential uses at ground floor, for 188 market housing units.

The LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team have been in pre-application discussions with the applicant for new applications for Plot N16, N18/19 and Victory Park and The Belvedere public realm. This review relates to N16 only. The Quality Review Panel reviewed the emerging N16 scheme in May, June, and more recently in September 2022. The applicant intends to submit a new standalone full planning application, which would need to be accompanied by applications to 'slot out' Plot N16 from the Stratford City Outline Planning Permission and remove it from the Zonal Masterplan, for approximately 500 student housing units.

Planning officers ask for the panel's comments on whether the changes to the massing, architectural expression and materiality meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5 for Tall Buildings. Comments are also sought on the changes to the plan and layout, the quality of student accommodation, and the landscape design.



4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel thanks the design team for a clear and comprehensive presentation and acknowledges the collaboration between Glenn Howells Architects and TP Bennett to address many of the panel's comments from the previous review.

The panel feels that the scheme now meets the criteria for exceptional design, as set out under Local Plan Policy BN.5. The design solutions respond well to the surrounding East Village context and the panel is supportive of the scheme with minor comments for the design team to consider, in consultation with planning officers. The developing architecture and materiality have the potential to be successful, with the specification of high-quality materials and carefully considered detail design. The panel supports planning officers' use of Section 106 requirements to ensure that Glenn Howells Architects is retained, to ensure that the scheme's aspirations are delivered.

While the panel supports the design team's strong landscape design concept, it is unable to comment fully on whether the external amenity spaces will adequately accommodate students. Detailed analysis should be provided for planning officers, including the views of the students who will be living here, to give confidence that a range of uses can be accommodated in the spaces provided.

Architectural expression and materiality

- The panel acknowledges the positive collaboration between Glenn Howells Architects and TP Bennett, and commends the work that the design team has undertaken to address many of the panel's comments from the previous review meeting.
- It supports planning officers' use of Section 106 requirements, to ensure that Glenn Howells Architects is retained post submission of the planning application, through to construction, to ensure that the aspirations illustrated in the drawings are delivered onsite.
- The panel welcomes the fluted concrete façade, and its subtle reference to fabric. It encourages the design team to continue to test the size and type of aggregate, suggesting that higher quantities, and irregular-sized aggregate, could make the texture of the fluting more interesting, and reduce embodied carbon.
- The panel feels that the 'tougher' quality illustrated in earlier drawings – an 'elephant' rather than 'needle' cord – has the potential to provide welcome variation in the façade.



- The panel welcomes the improved calmness of the massing along De Coubertin Street, but further work is needed to refine the materiality and detailing of this elevation, to ensure a positive pedestrian experience, due to the limited opportunity for activation along this street frontage.
- The panel requests further detailed drawings of each elevation, to illustrate the variation in the depth of façade, as each orientation responds to the need for solar shading.
- Further consideration should be given to the generosity of the windows of the student bedrooms located in the base section of the building, to ensure that they are as generous as those proposed on higher levels.
- The panel suggests that the design team test moving the horizontal element of the façade to sill level, to avoid splitting the spandrel panel, as illustrated in the Louis Sullivan reference presented.
- It applauds the double height of the undercroft, the improved open space due to the reduction in the number of columns, and the detail of the coffered soffit that extends from the outside to the building into the exhibition space.
- The design team could test the potential for extending the corners of the façade down to ground level, where they could incorporate seating that would help to help activate De Coubertin Street.

Environmental sustainability

- Further consideration should be given to the proposed use of tinted glass and/or glazing with a higher g-value, including the impact on the appearance of the facades, and the students' views out of the building.
- Overheating analysis should be undertaken, particularly for rooms on the west elevation, to ensure that adequate comfort levels will be met in the event of prolonged periods of high temperatures.
- To help to keep heat out, the panel suggests that consideration be given to the use of an external integrated treatment, that could also add interest to the west façade.
- An ambitious circular economy strategy should be produced, to cover all aspects of the design and construction of the scheme, including responsible specification and sourcing of materials, ambitious embodied and operational carbon targets, off-site assembly, and end-of-life disassembly.



- The panel encourages the design team to aim beyond an 800kg/m² embodied carbon target, to provide an exemplar building that will set a standard for other purpose-built student accommodation in the LLDC area, and beyond.
- Given the amount of concrete that will be used for the building's precast frame, the panel encourages further investigation into low carbon concrete, including the use of irregular-sized, and higher quantities, of recycled aggregate.

Landscape design

- The panel is disappointed that the design team has not provided any analysis on the proposed program of uses for the shared outdoor amenity spaces, or of the students' views on how they would like to use the spaces. Without evidence, the panel cannot comment fully on whether the proposed spaces will provide adequate high-quality amenity space for the 500 students who will be living here.
- As noted in the previous report, the panel supports the principle of the three courtyards and terraces at first, second and top floor level, each having its own distinct character and use, and likes the way that the Sun Terrace and Courtyard are linked – one busy, one quiet in mood.
- Given that student bedrooms are typically small in size and there is no private external amenity provided, it is essential that the shared amenity spaces offer the flexibility to accommodate a range of uses, including large gatherings, activities such as yoga classes, and also provide an opportunity for students to take ownership of some areas through, for example, moveable seating and furniture.
- As such the panel suggests that further thought be given to the way residents can use the Sun Terrace, to ensure that it provides more than just circulation spaces around a central planting bed. It should provide a slightly bigger space for socialising or an activity such as table tennis.
- It would be helpful to provide overlays showing the different activities each space can accommodate, including the number of people that regulations permit in each space.
- Given the site constraints, the panel thinks it is acceptable for the scheme not to achieve the recommended UGF of 0.40 in this context and given the proximity of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The priority should be providing usable outdoor space for the students.
- The panel requests that detailed information and drawings of the planting be provided for planning officers, to give confidence that resilient and shade tolerant plants have been specified, that will thrive in the long-term. The panel suggests that trees should also be included in the courtyard planting.



- Further consideration should be given to the materiality of the landscape design. Detailed information and drawings should be provided for planning officers, to illustrate how key aspects of the paving, including laying, joints, and drainage, will be achieved.
- 3D drawings of the courtyards should also be provided to show the spaces in use.
- The panel questions how the colour of the paving will be achieved, and if it will be easy to maintain in the long-term. Sustainable sourcing and consideration of carbon content should be applied to both landscape and building materials equally.
- While the colour of the paving is the design team's decision, the panel suggests that green offers many health benefits, and bold colours, such as red, are typically used for highlights. It supports the use of beige and yellow tones, which it feels will lift a space that is in shade.
- Consideration should also be given to the impact of plants and materials on health and wellbeing.
- Further thought is needed on the lighting for the courtyards and the public realm, including the soffit of the undercroft, as soft lighting can lift spaces.

Student accommodation

- The panel welcomes the proposal to provide students with furniture in a 'kit of parts', to allow each person to arrange their space as they wish.
- It also welcomes the improvements to the size and layout of shared amenity spaces, particularly the triple-aspect kitchen/dining/living spaces at the north end of the west wing that provide views of Victory Park.

Ground floor use

- The panel acknowledges the design team's decision to locate the café and exhibition space on the corner of Celebration Avenue and De Coubertin Street, respectively. However, it feels that there is a missed opportunity to activate Fashion Square and suggests that an opening be provided, to the north, to allow the café to spill out into the public realm.
- The panel commends the improved ground floor plan and layout that has resulted from extending the east wing, to the north, and from the removal of some of the internal and external columns. These moves provide a larger exhibition space and a shallower, but more usable, undercroft.



- The provision of a secondary access to the cycle store off De Coubertin Street is also welcomed.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel considers that the scheme will meet the criteria for exceptional design, as set out under Local Plan Policy BN.5, if the comments above are addressed, in consultation with planning officers.

