

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Strand East Plot MU2

Thursday 13 August 2015

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

Panel

Julia Barfield (chair)
Lindsey Whitelaw

Attendees

Will Steadman	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Pippa Gueterbock	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the reserved matters proposals for Strand East Plot MU2. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Catherine Burd; Lynne Sullivan; Tom Lonsdale; and Mark Brearley

1. Project name and site address

Strand East / Sugar House Lane redevelopment: land to south of High Street, Stratford, east of River Lea Navigation and west and north of Three Mills Wall River

Planning application reference: 15/00250/REM

2. Presenting team

Sam Walker	Vastint UK B.V.
Zara Bloomfield	ARC-ML
Mike Lees	ARC-ML
Anthony Nelson	Planit-IE
Jennie Bean	GL Hearn

3. Planning authority's views

The Quality Review Panel had strongly supported the architectural treatment of the buildings proposed for Plot MU2 at its previous review, but had made suggestions for a more positive response to Stratford High Street; introduction of greening and planting to soften the Stratford High Street edge; and development of a strategy for roof spaces.

Since submission of the planning application, the planning authority has had two meetings with the applicant. An argument has been made against introducing trees into the alleyways between the buildings, with preference given to Chimney Walk. The planning authority welcomes proposals for green roofs.

The principal issue remains incorporating entrances to the buildings on Stratford High Street. The design code for Strand East specifies entrances from both Chimney Walk and Stratford High Street – which is not the case in the current design of all three buildings. With envisaged future improvements to the public realm along Stratford High Street, it would appear logical to include entrances onto this street at this stage. If not insisted upon now, there may be little incentive to introduce changes in the future.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel repeats its strong support for the architectural quality of the three buildings included in Plot MU2. It thinks, however, that the opportunity to contribute to improvements of the environment along Stratford High Street should not be lost. It therefore supports inclusion of entrances on Stratford High Street. This appears to be particularly appropriate for the largest of the three buildings – block MU2.3. It therefore recommends that appropriate amendments be made at this stage rather than at a later date. The panel also thinks that the landscape design of the alleyways between the buildings needs further thought. These comments are expanded below.

Architectural expression

- The panel strongly supports the simplicity and robustness of the scheme's architectural expression, which responds well to both its location and proposed use.

Frontage to Stratford High Street

- The panel agrees with planning officers that including entrances to the three buildings of Plot MU2 on Stratford High Street would contribute positively to the quality of the environment along this street. This would also conform to the design code that formed part of the outline planning approval.
- In the case of block MU2.1, the main entrance opens towards both Chimney Walk and Sugar House Lane, and is therefore visible from Stratford High Street. The panel thinks that this is an acceptable solution.
- There is, however, a strong argument for including an entrance to block MU2.3 – the largest of the three buildings – on Stratford High Street.
- The current proposed primary entrance to this building is not on Chimney Walk but in the building's central courtyard. Access to the courtyard from both Stratford High Street and Chimney Walk could therefore be successful.
- The panel would therefore recommend that the design of block MU2.3 be revised at this stage to include an entrance on Stratford High Street – rather than delaying this to a future date.
- If this can be achieved, the panel thinks that it could be an acceptable compromise for the design of block MU2.2 to allow for an entrance from Stratford High Street to be implemented at a later date.

Landscape design

- The panel acknowledges that tree planting in the two alleyways between blocks MU2.1 / MU2.2 and MU2.2 / MU2.3 has been considered, and decided against in order to maintain clear views through to Chimney Walk.
- It thinks, however, that low level planting, such as shrubs, would be appropriate in the alleyways.
- Rather than in the centre, however, planting should be to the sides – possibly including climbing plants against the buildings – leaving the centre of the alleyways clear.
- The panel welcomes the concept of tree planting at the end of the alleyways, on Chimney Walk – but thinks that more evidence of how this will be achieved should be shown on the landscape plans.

- The panel strongly supports including green roofs on each of the three buildings –and would encourage consideration of bio-diverse or living roofs, rather than sedum.

Next steps

- The panel recommends amendments to the design of block MU2.3 to incorporate an entrance to Stratford High Street at this – rather than a future – stage.
- It also supports the planning authority in seeking commitments to eventual provision of additional entrances to blocks MU2.1 and MU2.2 on Stratford High Street.