



FRAME PROJECTS

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

### **Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Stratford Waterfront: masterplan / public realm strategy**

Thursday 13 December 2018

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Teresa Borsuk  
Adam Khan  
Mike Martin

#### **Attendees**

Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Richard McFerran	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Grant McClements	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Victoria Bates	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Rachel Meunier	London Legacy Development Corporation
Sophie Backhouse	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

#### **Report copied to**

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

#### **Note on process**

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from three pre-application reviews of the Stratford Waterfront masterplan and public realm. Panel members who attended the previous meetings were: Peter Studdert (chair); Teresa Borsuk; John O'Mara; Adam Khan; Jayne Earncliffe; Mike Martin; and David Gilpin.

## 1. Project name and site address

Stratford Waterfront, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

## 2. Presenting team

Kirsty Leslie	Allies and Morrison
Oliver Ralphs	Allies and Morrison
David Williams	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Peter Maxwell	London Legacy Development Corporation
Irene Man	London Legacy Development Corporation

## 3. Planning authority's views

The Stratford Waterfront hybrid planning application has been submitted. The detailed element comprises: four cultural / education buildings; the public realm; and Carpenters land bridge. The outline element comprises residential development of up to 600 units. The outline planning application for residential development was considered by the Quality Review Panel on 29 November 2018 (see separate report).

Designs for the public realm have been revised since the previous review by the Quality Review Panel in April 2018. A new element is incorporation of wind mitigation measures across the site, which is particularly exposed, following extensive analysis. The planning authority is confident that the measures proposed will be effective in mitigating wind levels.

The hybrid planning application is expected to be considered by the Planning Decisions Committee in April 2019.

## 4. Quality Review Panel's views

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel commends the design team for a comprehensive response to its previous comments. This has resulted in a much improved design for the public realm and landscape design, which successfully ties the components of Stratford Waterfront together. Rigorous management and maintenance will be critical to its success. The panel makes some suggestions for alleviating what might appear a rather open expanse in Waterfront Square in front of V&A East, including additional planting. It also suggests reconsidering the material proposed for this square to ensure that it is durable enough for the various activities envisaged to take place there. Planting should also be as robust as possible. The panel welcomes the detailed analysis undertaken of wind levels across the site and the comprehensive strategy devised for mitigation. It suggests some refinements to the interventions at Carpenters landing, along the UAL: London College of Fashion colonnade. It makes more substantial recommendations for those at Sadler's Wells and Stratford Walk. Care must be taken to minimise the intrusion of the proposed elevated cross hairs on the approach to Bridge F10; and an alternative solution to wind mitigation at the southwest corner Sadler's Wells – one that appears more integral to the building's architecture – should be sought. The panel strongly supports the proposed lighting



strategy. These comments are expanded below and those made at the previous review that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

This report should be read together with the separate report of the review, also on 13 December 2018, of the Stratford Waterfront cultural and education buildings.

### *Public realm and landscape design strategy*

- The panel welcomes the revised proposals for the public realm and landscape design – these respond well to its previous comments and result in significant improvements. A distinctive landscape for Stratford Waterfront is emerging.
- The landscape design seeks to respond to each of the four buildings, while at the same time creating a strongly recognisable character across Stratford Waterfront. This is largely successful. The panel suggests that there may still be some scope to blend / blur the edges between landscape's various components a little more to strengthen an integrated whole.
- The panel again 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.

### Waterfront Square

- The panel thinks that the spaces in front of Sadler's Wells (Waterfront Place), BBC Studios and UAL: London College of Fashion along the podium and terraces have the potential to work well.
- Waterfront Square – in front of V&A East – appears rather open, however, especially when compared with the landscape design proposed elsewhere. There appears to be an imbalance.
- The planting in Waterfront Square – currently shown as six trees – appears a little sparse and could perhaps be increased. A large empty space should be avoided. While acknowledging that significant numbers of visitors to V&A East are anticipated and also that a number of uses are envisaged for the square, this should not necessarily preclude additional trees.
- The panel also suggests some additional planting to more clearly define the edge of Waterfront Square and the transition to the residential component of Stratford Waterfront. A group of trees to the western edge of the square could be appropriate.
- The materials proposed for Waterfront Square extend to the public realm between V&A East and the residential blocks (Waterfront Way). The panel suggests that the square might take on a weightier, more distinctive character if there was a differentiation in the materials of the square, extending down to the waterfront, and those of Waterfront Way.



### Materials and planting

- The panel broadly supports the proposed materials for the Stratford Waterfront public realm and also the planting.
- Exposed aggregate concrete is proposed for Waterfront Square. This space is expected to accommodate a number of diverse uses, including, for example, markets. The panel questions whether concrete might be sufficiently durable, with its quality degrading over time. A less absorbent material, such as granite, would be preferable for spaces where significant activity is anticipated. The same might apply to the performance space included on the mid terrace.
- The panel stresses the importance of the planting being as robust as possible to ensure its long term survival and regeneration. This would apply in particular to the rain garden planting proposed on Carpenters Road around the cycle stands.

### Drainage

- The panel encourages careful consideration of drainage as details of the overall paving design are taken forward.

### Carpenters Road

- The panel again commends the design of the scheme as a whole – both buildings and public realm – for a particularly successful response to the challenge of activating Carpenters Road.

### Carpenters land bridge

- The panel repeats its earlier support for the design of Carpenters land bridge which will link Stratford Waterfront to International Quarter London (IQL). The bridge shows considerable promise.

### *Microclimatic conditions*

- Extensive analysis has been undertaken on wind levels across the Stratford Waterfront site. Designs – integrated into both the buildings themselves and the public realm – have been developed for measures to provide effective mitigation.

### Location 2 – Carpenters landing

- The panel thinks that the five, quite substantial, screens incorporated into the UAL: London College of Fashion colonnade appear as additions to the building's architecture, rather than an integral part of it. These screens will be deployed only when necessary. The visual impact of the screens when closed could be perceived as more intrusive and at odds with the architecture than when open.



- The panel accepts that the design of the screens remains work in progress and encourages the design team to continue to develop its ideas. It asks, for example, whether the suspension cables are needed, and also whether it might be possible to incorporate screens on the inner face of the colonnade's columns. This might assist in identifying a solution that appears more integrated.
- The panel supports the principle of the two free standing sculptural elements at the end of the colonnade. It notes that the design of these sculptures – as well as the screens – will be considered as reserved matters and will be conditioned in the planning consent.

### Location 3 – Sadler's Wells and Stratford Walk

- The mitigation measure expected to be the most conspicuous – and potentially intrusive – is the elevated cross hairs on Stratford Walk by Sadler's Wells. The vista from this point along Bridge F10 towards the London Aquatics Centre and the London Stadium is of real significance and needs to be safeguarded.
- The panel strongly recommends that any form of advertising on the elevated cross hairs be discounted. They should be conceived of as public art – and definitely not as potential billboards.
- The panel acknowledges that the proposed wind mitigation measures are identified as the minimum required – but would encourage a comprehensive approach that goes further towards reinforcing placemaking. This might include, for example, exploring a more obvious integration of the elevated cross hairs, tree planting and lighting, and perhaps forging a language to be replicated more generally across Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Simplifying and rationalising any interventions on Bridge F10 could contribute towards a more successful integration with the wider context.
- As a detailed point, the panel agrees that pines would be an appropriate species for tree planting as a wind mitigation measure in this location – but advises that they would work better as a denser group.
- The design of Sadler's Wells has also been revised to meet the need to address wind mitigation in this location. A concrete screen has been incorporated, as an extension to the canopy above. The panel is not convinced that this integrates well with the building's architecture. It recommends exploring alternative solutions that would appear as a more integral component of the building (see also separate report on the Stratford Waterfront cultural and education buildings).



### *Lighting strategy*

- The panel welcomes the helpful illustrations of the lighting strategy – which show how the buildings will appear at night. It strongly supports the proposed strategy – it has the potential to result in a beautiful, atmospheric environment.
- It encourages the design team to continue to give careful thought to balancing the need for illumination during the evening and at night with avoiding visual clutter during the day time.
- On Carpenters Road, if incorporating existing pedestrian level lighting into the strategy, it will be important to ensure that the columns of any supplementary lighting that may be required is consistent with those already there.
- The panel thinks that the sky signs on each of the four buildings are of a broadly appropriate scale.

### *Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel is pleased to support approval of the hybrid planning application for Stratford Waterfront – it promises to be a highly successful addition to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
- The panel encourages the design team to continue to make refinements to the public realm and landscape design, including wind mitigation measures, in line with its comments. It would welcome another opportunity to comment on an alternative approach to the wind mitigation measures for the southwest corner of Sadler's Wells.

