



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

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

Thursday 16 November 2017

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Teresa Borsuk
John O'Mara
Adam Khan
Mike Martin

Attendees

Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Richard McFerran	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Leona Roche	London Legacy Development Corporation
Thomas Powell	London Legacy Development Corporation
Carla Smyth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Yuan Sun	London Legacy Development Corporation
Rachel Meunier	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

1. Project name and site address

Stratford Waterfront, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

2. Presenting team

Alex Wraight	Allies and Morrison
Kirsty Leslie	Allies and Morrison
John Tuomey	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Sheila O'Donnell	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Eimear Hanratty	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Andrew Harland	LDA Design
Olga Felip	Camps Felip Architecturia
Duncan Price	Buro Happold
Peter Maxwell	London Legacy Development Corporation
Irene Man	London Legacy Development Corporation
Greg Smith	London Legacy Development Corporation

3. Planning authority's views

The revised masterplan for Stratford Waterfront continues to be tested and refined – and the planning authority considers that it is developing in the right direction.

Issues remaining under consideration include: scale and massing and the character of the townscape; movement patterns, including public transport, vehicles, pedestrians and cycles; the coherence of the public realm, including the relationship to the riverside and the spaces around and between buildings; the quantum, nature and location of commercial use, including retail; the quality of residential accommodation; and associated community amenities such as nursery and health care provision.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel appreciates the opportunity to make further comments at a strategic level on the evolving masterplan for Stratford Waterfront. It is developing well. Stratford Waterfront is a development of national and international importance, and the masterplan looks set to meet the high standards of design that will be expected in a scheme of such significance. Particularly encouraging are the distinct personalities that are emerging for each of the cultural and education buildings, as well as the residential buildings. The panel recommends continuing careful consideration of the interaction between the cultural and education buildings. It also suggests that the relationship between the cultural and education buildings and the waterfront might be strengthened. The proposal for the public realm, including Carpenters land bridge, is much improved – while interventions to soften the rather harsh environment of Carpenters Road should continue to be sought. These comments are expanded below.



This report should be read together with the separate reports of reviews on 16 November 2017 of the cultural and education buildings (Sadler's Wells; BBC Concert Studios; the London College of Fashion; and V&A East;) and the residential component of Stratford Waterfront.

Strategic approach to masterplan

- The panel commends the design teams on the clarity of their presentations – including the models. These demonstrate how important detail is for an effective assessment of a masterplan.
- The design teams have responded well to the panel's previous comments: the overall strategy informing the masterplan appears coherent, with a convincing configuration of its various components.
- Particularly encouraging are the distinct architectural personalities that are emerging for each of the cultural and education buildings, as well as the residential buildings. A skilful balance has been achieved between singular individual buildings and a coherent whole.
- The panel raises a question, however, about the abutment of the cultural and education buildings and suggests that increased space between the buildings – if possible within the demanding brief for Stratford Waterfront – could improve the masterplan.
- It also thinks that there could be a stronger relationship between the activities generated by the cultural and education buildings and the waterfront – which appears at the moment to be rather dominated by retail.
- The panel recommends exploiting to the full the opportunities presented by the riverside. It questions whether there needs to be quite such a sharp separation of cultural and commercial. An alternative approach could change the character of the waterfront.
- The panel also thinks that further clarification of how the cultural and education buildings might relate and interact with each other more strongly would be helpful.
- The masterplan should also continue to be seen in its wider context – in particular, International Quarter London (IQL) to which it will be linked by Carpenters land bridge. The recently revised masterplan for IQL is likely to incorporate residential accommodation to the north of the site – which will sit well with the Stratford Waterfront masterplan.



Public realm / landscape

- The proposal for the public realm at Stratford Waterfront shows much improvement since the panel's previous review of the masterplan.
- The layering of the public realm and landscape design – up from the waterfront, through the stepped terraces, and onto the buildings, for example the planted terrace of Sadler's Wells – is an exciting approach.
- There may be a case for making the places / spaces within the public realm more distinctive – but without fragmenting the public realm. If the cultural and education buildings have a strong architectural personality – which they promise to do (see separate report) – the spaces within the public realm will take on a distinct character. For example, the design of V&A East will lend much to the experience of Waterfront Square.
- The panel thinks that refinements made to the design of the stepped terraces since their earlier iteration work well. The complexity of their design works towards making the best use of the space between the buildings and the waterfront. They are now more fluid, readable and useable – and have the potential to become highly animated, including the space created at mid level.
- What will be important is ensuring the legibility of the route from IQL across Carpenters land bridge, through Stratford Waterfront to Bridge F09 and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park beyond (see below).
- The panel looks forward to seeing how the public realm is developed around the residential blocks – including to support a strong sense of place, with public and private spaces clearly delineated.

Carpenters Road

- The panel supports all efforts to improve the quality of the environment along Carpenters Road – which remains largely perceived as the 'back' of the development, although it will include entrances to the residential blocks.
- The panel acknowledges that tree planting is precluded but suggests that other interventions may be possible to soften what is currently a rather harsh environment.

Carpenters land bridge

- The panel thinks that the design of Carpenters land bridge has the potential to successfully integrate the bridge into the sequence of spaces from IQL through to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, across Bridge F09.



- It will be important to establish a 'promenade' – passing through the 'loggia' of the London College of Fashion, across Carpenters land bridge and to the landing point at IQL – that gives some sense of continuity.
- The design of the bridge – including the use of ceramics – is simple and beautiful. The robustness and durability of the materials will, however, have to be ensured. The panel is reassured that the London Legacy Development Corporation will assume responsibility for the bridge's management and maintenance.
- The panel recommends that seating at the approaches and along the bridge be incorporated – and integrated skilfully into the geometric pattern of the bridge's ceramic surfacing.

Materials and planting

- The panel supports the intention to bring materials and planting featured in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park through to Stratford Waterfront. It cautions, however, that these will need to be sufficiently robust to withstand what will be a heavily used public realm.

Lifts

- The panel agrees with the proposed location of lifts to accommodate the site's significant level changes. It suggests, however, that much could be made of the design of the lifts – perhaps conceiving of them as 'public art' to be integrated into the public realm, including as part of the wayfinding strategy.

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 masterplan and public realm and landscape proposals, before a planning application is submitted.

