

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Moxy Hotel

Thursday 2 October 2014, 15.45 – 17.00

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)

Adam Khan

Attendees

Anne Ogundiya

Deborah Denner

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth

Allison De Marco

Chris Gascoigne

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the Moxy Hotel. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: John Lyall (chair); Adam Khan; Dan Epstein and Peter Stewart.

1. Project name and site address

Moxy Hotel, Great Eastern Road, Stratford
Planning reference 14/00310/FUL

2. Presenting team

Simon Lee	Vastint
Chris Sutton	Suttonca

3. Planning authority's views

LLDC Planning officers have some concerns that the method of construction proposed for the Moxy Hotel, using cross-laminated timber, is compromising the quality of its design. They would welcome the views of the Quality Review Panel on this. They would also like more information on servicing access and how blue badge drivers will access parking spaces.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel does not support the planning application for the Moxy Hotel. In the panel's view, the scheme is of poor quality, both in terms of its architecture, and the hotel accommodation that it would provide.

Notwithstanding the generally low quality of recent development in the vicinity of Stratford High Street, the panel would encourage the LLDC to demand higher quality design. Aspirations for the quality of development in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and other parts of the Development Corporation area such as Hackney Wick and Fish Island are high. The panel thinks high quality development will be equally important to the future success of Stratford town centre.

More detailed comments on architectural expression, quality of accommodation, sustainability and inclusive design are provided below. Comments made at the previous review, which remain relevant, are repeated for clarity.

Architectural expression

- The panel thinks that the architecture of the Moxy Hotel is not of sufficient quality for this prominent location in Stratford town centre.
- A decision has been made to clad the cross laminated timber (CLT) construction in brick, except for the top two floors, which are clad in opaque glass and glass fins.
- The panel think the resulting architecture is over complicated, lacking in elegance.

- The panel would encourage the team to test whether an approach that more honestly expresses the construction of the building would be more successful.
- Alternatively, if brick remains the preferred external material, the panel think this should be allowed to continue full height. The hotel is lower than its neighbouring buildings, so there is no need to mitigate its scale through the use of different materials to its top floor.
- However, it will be for the design team to demonstrate that architecture of a quality appropriate to this location is achievable using CLT modular construction as is proposed.

Quality of accommodation

- Whilst the panel understands that the Moxy Hotel is primarily intended to serve business travellers, they never the less think the quality of the hotel rooms could be improved.
- For example, the extremely tight proportions of the internal courtyard would afford little to the rooms, in terms of light and views. The panel does not think the proposed mirrored cladding will be successful in mitigating this cramped arrangement.
- Even business travellers may appreciate a pleasant view, for example when working at a desk in their room during their stay.
- The hotel may also have different clientele at weekends, and better quality rooms would support this, as well as potential changes in use over time.

Sustainability

- The proposed use of CLT construction is welcome, in terms of its low embodied energy and use of renewable materials.
- The panel would encourage the design team to consider leaving the CLT exposed internally in places – and thinks this could create characterful interiors.
- However, the risk of off-gassing from formaldehyde in the resins used in CLT construction will need to be addressed.
- The panel thinks that targeting BREEAM very good or LEED gold is not sufficiently ambitious, especially as the site can be connected to an existing CHP system.
- The ecological value of roofs should also be maximised, with green or brown roofs.

Inclusive design

- The scheme is currently designed to provide 5% wheelchair accessible rooms, which is below the 10% recommended by the London Plan.
- The panel understands that this decision has been made based on a survey of take up of wheelchair accessible rooms in the nearby Holiday Inn.
- The modular nature of CLT construction will make it relatively difficult to alter the internal arrangement to provide additional accessible rooms at a later date. The planning authority should therefore satisfy itself that sufficient wheelchair rooms are provided for the life of the building.

Next steps

- The panel recommends a fundamental rethink of the design of the Moxy Hotel, and would welcome an opportunity to comment on revised proposals.