



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Stratford Waterfront: residential

Thursday 22 February 2018

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Teresa Borsuk
John O'Mara
Mike Martin
Jayne Earnscliffe

Attendees

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Richard McFerran	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Grant McClements	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sophie Hockin	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Leona Roche	London Legacy Development Corporation
Rachel Meunier	London Legacy Development Corporation
Melanie Lamb	London Legacy Development Corporation
Paul Dever	London Legacy Development Corporation
Steve Tomlinson	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

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
John Tuomey	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Eimear Hanratty	O'Donnell + Tuomey
Duncan Price	Buro Happold
Peter Maxwell	London Legacy Development Corporation
Irene Man	London Legacy Development Corporation

3. Planning authority's views

The proposal for residential development at Stratford Waterfront has evolved since the previous review in November 2017. This will be the illustrative scheme for an outline planning permission, which will inform a series of parameter plans and design codes. It will be essential at this stage to secure issues such as overall urban form, including heights and massing; quality of residential accommodation; and the quantum and location of commercial uses. The planning application will be submitted in October 2018, with a decision anticipated by May 2019.

The planning authority stresses the imperative of achieving outstanding quality. The proposal will be required to comply with the Mayor of London Housing SPG. (At the moment, the scheme fails to comply in relation to the number of units per core). The scheme will also be required to meet the criteria of LLDC Local Plan Policy BN.10 on tall buildings.

The planning authority confirms that it is possible to specify retention of the design team in Section 106 agreements.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel finds the scheme presented for residential development at Stratford Waterfront to be persuasive. It regrets that it does not include affordable housing – but accepts that this is informed by other priorities. An outline planning application is proposed and the panel questions how aspirations for high quality will be guaranteed. Highly prescriptive parameter plans and design codes will be required. The panel broadly supports the scheme's scale and massing, which results in a successful townscape, and also the plan and layout. The panel sees merit in the different architectural treatment applied to the different blocks. It will be essential that the public realm and landscape design be carried through consistently across the entire Stratford



Waterfront development. These comments are expanded below, together with comments on inclusive design and environmental sustainability.

Planning process

- The panel has concerns that an outline planning application is being developed for residential development at Stratford Waterfront; a detailed planning application for a scheme such as this would be more appropriate. It understands, however, that this is dictated by the timing of the programme for development.
- While the panel finds considerable merit in the illustrative scheme, this process could in fact result in a very different scheme.
- The panel asks how, for example, with an outline planning application, it will be possible to guarantee high quality design, including compliance with Local Plan Policy BN.10. Equally, to what extent will the environmental sustainability objectives established for the illustrative scheme be applied to the designed scheme?
- Effective translation of aspirations for high quality into parameter plans and design codes will be essential. It is not clear, however, that this can be achieved without making design codes highly prescriptive – balancing ‘*must*’, ‘*should*’ and ‘*could*’, for example. Unless design codes are prescriptive, the desired outcome may not be achieved. On the other hand, some flexibility should be allowed if it can be justified by a better solution. The panel stresses the need for exacting scrutiny of the design codes. The degree of sophistication evident in the illustrative scheme must be followed through in the designed scheme.
- The planning permission must be robust – with design standards guaranteed and enforced by a legally binding agreement.

Tenure mix

- No affordable accommodation is currently included in the scheme – which runs counter to London Plan policy. Receipts from residential development at Stratford Waterfront are required to fund the cultural and education district – which is a priority for the Mayor of London.
- The panel thinks that it will be regrettable if the scheme precludes mixed tenure – but accepts that there is a political decision to be made, informed by both wider public benefit and financial considerations.



Scale and massing

- The panel broadly supports the scheme's scale and massing, which results in a successful townscape. The depth and relief of the overall composition – which avoids the perception of a wall – works well. Parameter plans and design codes will have to be sufficiently specific so as not to lose the scheme's attractive features.
- The massing – already complex – works well and the panel sees no need to further complicate it. All elements of the scheme come together as a convincing whole: changes to one or more of these would detract from its integrity.
- Parameter plans should secure the prominence of the prow building, distinguishing it from the other three residential towers. Overall, the panel thinks that the three residential towers should be the same height.
- While the panel reviewed the proposal for residential development specifically, it is noted that its hierarchies of scale relate also to the cultural and education buildings. These relationships should be specified clearly in the design codes.

Plan and layout

- The plan and layout of the scheme have been carefully thought through – with a successful 'push and pull' between the different blocks. Breaking the massing down into taller and lower blocks, and offsetting them, will maximise views and daylight / sunlight levels. The panel would like to see details of the building lines of each block.
- The proposal complies with applicable housing standards, with the exception of the number of units per core: 24 per cent of units are configured with more than eight units per core (with a maximum of 10 units per core).
- If a principal planning objective is to maximise ground floor active frontages, a compromise may be required on the number of units per core. A trade off may be needed between providing the required amount of active frontage and meeting policy requirements. The panel suggests that some flexibility may be acceptable if greater activity is created and mitigating factors, such as corridors with natural daylight and ventilation and two lifts per core, are introduced.
- The strategy for ensuring active frontages needs to be identified at this stage.



Architectural expression

- The panel sees merit in the different architectural treatment applied to the different blocks. It welcomes, in particular, the articulation of depth in the façades.
- The design codes should set out the fundamental principles underlying the scheme's architectural treatment. These should, however, also allow for interpretation of illustrative designs and nuancing of architectural expression. This will encourage a richness of character and also, for example, drive choices of materials.

Public realm and landscape design strategy

- The panel points out that the design of the public realm is invariably the subject of a detailed planning application.
- It is essential that the public realm and landscape design strategy be carried through consistently across the entire Stratford Waterfront development. The panel therefore welcomes assurances that the landscape design associated with the residential development will be integral to that of Stratford Waterfront as a whole – making it feel like one place. The specification of, for example, materials and street lighting should be followed through across Stratford Waterfront.
- The panel suggests consideration of the relationship between the character of the public realm at the residential end of Stratford Waterfront and that at the cultural end. For example, is a more civic character appropriate for a largely residential area? Broad, paved areas are currently shown. The eventual uses of the units designated as active frontages at the corners of the blocks will also influence the character of the public realm.
- Technical aspects of the public realm and landscape design will have to be built in at this stage. This would include, for example, a strategy to accommodate the weight of the raised landscaped communal courtyards between the blocks.
- The panel suggests that the planting in the communal courtyards could be more dense, and also that the two cross streets could benefit from being greener – heralding the transition to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Inclusive design

- The panel welcomes the fact that the number of Blue Badge parking bays will be specified in the outline planning application.
- Ten per cent of units are wheelchair accessible. The panel recommends that these include a range of unit types and be distributed across the scheme, rather than concentrated in one location. This should be included in the design codes.



Environmental sustainability

- Further testing of the environmental sustainability strategy would be helpful – especially to ascertain if equally high standards could be attained by a scheme other than the illustrative scheme.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel supports the illustrative scheme for residential development at Stratford Waterfront, as presented. It would welcome a further opportunity to comment on details of how the quality implied by this scheme will be effectively interpreted by parameter plans and design codes.

