

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: 25 – 37 Rothbury Road

Thursday 23 June 2016

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Johnny Winter
Andrew Harland
Peter Lainson

Attendees

Hilary Wrenn	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Steve Tomlinson	London Legacy Development Corporation
Jerry Bell	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

1. Project name and site address

25 – 37 Rothbury Road, Hackney Wick

2. Presenting team

Phil Catcheside	Hawkins\Brown
Richard Smyth	Hawkins\Brown
Nick Lawrence	Aitch
Tim Gaskell	CMA Planning

3. Planning authority's views

Proposals for the scheme at 25 – 37 Rothbury Road are at an early stage; one pre-application meeting has so far been held with the applicant.

Among issues to be considered are re-provision of equivalent employment floorspace and / or community amenity. Consideration of the detailed design of this scheme should also take into account how it relates to adjoining developments (52 – 54 White Post Lane and 24 – 26 White Post Lane) which have received planning permission.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel offers its support to the proposals for the scheme for 25 – 37 Rothbury Road which it thinks has the potential to be highly successful. The proposed scale and massing respond well to the site, and the architectural expression, including extensive use of brick, is well considered. Meticulous detailing and application will be essential. Ground floor layouts, and associated public realm, will depend on eventual determination of ground floor uses, but the panel encourages active frontages to both the south and west elevations. It recommends further thought to ensuring that bin storage does not detract from the quality of the building's appearance, and also to creating more generous spaces in the residents' entrance lobby. These comments are expanded below.

Scale and massing

- The panel notes that the proposed height of the building – to include the parapet – exceeds the specified prevailing height for this location. It considers, however, that this is justified by the successful composition achieved.
- The proposed stepping back of the massing – six storeys to the Rothbury Road elevation, stepping down to four storeys to the east, and to two storeys to the north – responds well to both the site and adjacent developments.
- This contributes towards addressing overlooking and sunlight and daylight levels, and also provides residents' amenity space, both private and shared, on the lower roof level, as well as visual amenity for residents in adjacent developments.

- The stepping down to two storeys to the north also enhances the quality of the larger space at the heart of the new north / south public route through the development.

Mix of uses

- The panel notes that a decision on ground floor use has yet to be made. This could be employment space and / or a community amenity such as a health centre.
- Different options will therefore need to be reflected in the proposals – including in relation to the working yard to the east and north of building and new north / south public route between the site and the adjacent development at 24 – 26 White Post Lane.
- For example, if a health centre, consideration will need to be given to car parking for those using the centre.

Architectural expression

- The panel fully supports the proposed architectural expression of the building, including the extensive use of brick and proposed detailing. It thinks that this has the potential to enhance the quality of the streetscape.
- Its success, however, will depend on the rigour of detailed design and finesse of application.
- The panel in particular encourages the design team to ensure that the warm tones sought for the building are realised. This will require a careful choice of material for the proposed metal panels and lintels.
- The panel also suggests that entrances to the building might, through their detailing, be celebrated rather more.

Internal layout

- Bin stores are located in a prominent position next to the residential entrance on the south elevation.
- If located here, it will be essential that bin store doors are particularly well detailed, using a robust and durable material able to withstand potential damage as refuse containers are brought in and out, while retaining a lightness of touch. Otherwise, this bay could quickly become unsightly.
- The panel supports the principle of having access to cycle storage from the entrance lobby, rather than directly from the street.
- It thinks, however, that the layout of the entrance lobby could be improved by having a more generous space in front of the two lifts. This might be achieved by rotating lift entrances by 90 degrees.

Public realm

- The panel suggests that further thought be given to how the larger public space contained within the new north / south public route might be used.
- It supports creating active frontages to the south and west elevations. It will be important to animate the public realm, including the public route.
- It also fully supports the inclusion of the working yard to the north and east, for use by ground floor commercial units, to be shared with adjacent developments.

Environmental sustainability

- The panel welcomes the proposed green roofs and suggests that PV panels could also be included on the upper roof level.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel encourages the design team to continue to pursue the approach taken to developing the scheme for 25 – 37 Rothbury Road – which it thinks shows much promise.
- It is confident that any outstanding issues can be successfully resolved in consultation with planning officers.