

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Cook's Road (Bellway Homes)

Thursday 23 September 2015

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)

John Lyall

Attendees

Allison De Marco

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

Sarah Birt

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team

Deborah Denner

Fortismere Associates

Tessa Kordeczka

Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Esther Everett

London Legacy Development Corporation

Steve Tomlinson

London Legacy Development Corporation

Alison Rugg

London Borough of Newham

1. Project name and site address

Land at Cook's Road, London E15 2PN
Planning application reference: 15/00392/FUL

2. Presenting team

Phil King	Bellway Homes
Tom Harris	Bellway Homes
Jayne Mills	Levitt Bernstein
Tom Ginnet	Levitt Bernstein
Diana Thomson	Savills

3. Planning authority's views

During the planning application process for Cook's Road scheme, it emerged that the waste transfer site to the northwest of the site had a history of complaints about odours associated with its operation. The London Borough of Newham's environmental health officer had objected to the application on the grounds of its proximity to the waste site. Planning officers had also raised concerns about inadequate sunlight and daylight levels; the privacy of bedrooms where apartments have deck access; and the proportion of single aspect north facing apartments.

Results of further analysis by technical advisors on issues of environmental quality, including in relation to the waste transfer site, have yet to be received by the planning authority.

In the interim, a new planning application has been submitted. This relates only to the southern part of the development – that furthest from the waste transfer site. It comprises four blocks accommodating 194 residential units and commercial space. The scheme complies with requirements for homes of two or more bedrooms.

Revisions to elevations and layout have resulted in improvements to daylight and sunlight levels but some concerns remain and discussions with the applicant around environmental performance continue.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel supports the decision to proceed at this stage with a planning application for the southern part of the development only while analysis of environmental issues relating to the waste transfer site remain outstanding. The commitment of Bellway Homes to move ahead with this development – which will provide a large number of family homes – is welcomed as an important step towards transforming a former industrial area into a new residential neighbourhood. In the short to medium term, careful thought about landscape and boundary treatments will be needed to screen views of neighbouring industrial buildings. The panel also made some detailed comments on the design of the 'Wynd', architecture and construction.

These comments are expanded below, and those made at previous reviews, which remain relevant, are repeated for clarity.

Waste transfer site

- The panel notes that the planning authority awaits further analysis of the impact of the waste transfer site on the quality of residential accommodation; it repeats that it is unable to arbitrate on this technical matter.
- However, the decision to proceed with a planning application at this stage for the southern part, furthest from the waste site, seems appropriate.

Plan and layout

- The panel thinks that the layout of the development has the potential to support both employment use and housing – including family homes.
- The panel acknowledges that changes of level across the site – which require step access to the courtyard – are necessary because of flood risk and notes that lifts will be provided in the blocks' cores.
- To the north, the development faces directly onto a large existing warehouse; this will have a negative impact on views from both the 'wynd' and residential accommodation.
- The panel recommends that this be mitigated through the landscape design. For example, a wall / fence and planting could shield views of the warehouse, and this could be a condition of any planning approval.
- Although the number of single aspect apartments has been reduced, a small proportion – 20 apartments, east and west facing – remain. The panel continues to think that where ever possible single aspect homes should be avoided.
- Adjustments to elevations and internal layouts have improved levels of daylight and sunlight. The orientation of living rooms, length of balconies and depth of deck access have been designed to optimise sunlight and daylight.
- Thought has also been given to maintaining privacy for rooms facing onto access decks, and storage benches provide a buffer in front of windows.
- The panel agrees that benches in front of kitchen windows could be successful, and encourage social interaction, but thinks that planters would be more appropriate under bedroom windows.

Detailed design and materials

- The panel supports the approach to creating a distinctive character for each block by using a variety of materials such as a range of different bricks, and thinks that the proposed different shades of grey brick will work well.
- It will be essential, however, that the quality of architecture suggested by the planning application is followed through in the scheme's detailed design and construction.

Car park access

- It is proposed that access to the ground floor level car park will be from the 'wynd' – this will result in vehicles crossing an area designated for children's play.
- Whilst the panel's preferred option would have been to relocate the car park entrance to Cook's Road, if it is to remain on the 'wynd' further thought will be needed to resolve the landscape design.
- The section of the 'wynd' close to the car park entrance should not be counted towards requirements for play space, and further thought needs to be given to demarcation of vehicle access and safety.

Landscape design

- The quality of the landscape design for this part of this dense development will be critical to the success.
- The panel thinks that the 'wynd' will provide an attractive asset to the scheme, supporting the success of family housing, provided that concerns relating to access to the car park set out above are addressed.

Next steps

- The panel continues to defer to the LLDC's technical advisors on the issues of environmental quality that have emerged during the application process. It remains for planning officers to determine whether these issues can be adequately addressed.
- With this caveat, the panel supports the decision to proceed with the planning application for the southern part of this scheme – which demonstrates many positive qualities.