

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: 33 – 35 Monier Road

Thursday 25 June 2015, 16.00 – 17.00

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Catherine Burd
Lindsey Whitelaw
John Lyall

Attendees

Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Erin Byrne	London Legacy Development Corporation
Will Steadman	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Esha Banwait	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Gareth Gwynne	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the proposals for 33-35 Monier Road. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Neil Deely; Tom Lonsdale; and Mark Brearley.

1. Project name and site address

33-35 Monier Road, Fish Island, London, E3 2PR

Planning application reference: 15/00212/FUL

2. Presenting team

Laurence Quail	Aitch Group
Jamie Macarthur	Aitch Group
Nicolas Khalili	HWO Architects
Ben Kelway	Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners

3. Planning authority's views

The planning application for 33-35 Monier Road has recently been submitted, and is currently out for consultation. Planning officers would welcome the panel's comments on the layout, architecture and quality of residential accommodation. There is an existing outline planning consent for a primary school, as part of the Neptune Wharf development. In terms of the information provided for 33-35 Monier Road, planning officers are likely to request further information on landscape design, either through the current application, or as a condition of any approval.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel finds much to admire in the planning application scheme for 33-35 Monier Road. A development of appropriate scale and massing is proposed, with high quality architecture, based on a deck access typology, which the panel thinks is a successful response to the proportions of the site. Detailed comments are provided below on potential refinements to the layout, architecture, courtyard / light well, landscape design, materials and construction. The panel has every confidence that the design team will be able to respond to these points.

Layout

- The panel supports the layout of development, which provides a refreshing example of how deck access flats can help achieve dual aspect flats, making the most of the proportions of the site.
- The one aspect of the layout that the panel think should be adjusted is the relative generosity of the public space to the north, and the courtyard / light well.
- The panel thinks that a small adjustment to the layout, to slightly increase the generosity of the courtyard, would significantly improve the quality of this space, without detriment to the public space outside the building.

- At a detailed level, there may also be scope to revisit the location of lifts, to provide more windows onto the courtyard for corner flats.
- Some further comments are provided below on potential improvements to the detailed design, to make the most of the potential advantages of the proposed layout.

Architecture

- The panel finds much to admire in the architectural expression proposed, and offers some detailed comments below on potential refinements.
- Where staircases are located in 'slots' between the brick elements of the building, the panel thinks designing these without glazing would bring light and air into the courtyard.
- The main area in which the panel think there is scope for refinements to the architecture, is the internal courtyard / light well, as discussed below.

Courtyard / light well

- Where timber decks are proposed to provide access to flats, the panel think open mesh should be considered, as an alternative that would allow better light penetration to lower floor levels.
- High level windows are currently proposed facing onto the access decks – and the panel think it would be a shame not to provide more generous windows.
- Whilst the panel acknowledges concerns about overlooking, allowing views into the courtyard could both increase the security of the development, through informal surveillance, and give benefits of light and views to the flats.
- In general, the panel thinks that the access decks should be thought of as 'verandas' for the flats – maximising connections between outside and inside, and a sense of ownership by residents.
- Using pale coloured bricks to internal elevations, would also help reflect light in the courtyard.
- Visualisations illustrating views inside the courtyard would be helpful to show the quality of this space, and give confidence that it will feel welcoming and convivial.

Landscape design

- The panel thinks that it is essential that detailed designs for the landscape design of the courtyard and roof terraces are submitted as part of the current application – rather than being dealt with through conditions.
- Given the density of development proposed, the quality of these spaces will be essential to the success of the scheme.
- A generous public space is proposed to the north of the site, providing a route to the future school to the west – and there is more of a case for this to be designed in detail at a later date.
- The panel agrees with planning officers, that it should be possible for the design of the space between this development and the school to be brought forward through a collaborative process.

Materials and construction

- The panel would encourage submission of further information to demonstrate the quality of construction materials, detailing that will be delivered on site – for both buildings and landscape design.
- The quality of bricks will also be essential to the success of the development, and the panel would encourage planning officers to use planning conditions to secure this.
- For example, panel members think that the horizontal bands at floor levels, continuing around projecting balconies, should be constructed in a consistent material – whether pre-cast concrete or bronze cladding.
- Detailing at the top of the buildings, where a set back wall encloses roof top gardens and play spaces, will also need careful thought. This should avoid increasing the apparent height of the building, or making the terrace feel too enclosed.

Next steps

The panel is pleased to support the planning application for 33-35 Monier Road on the basis that the project team should be able to address the points above, in consultation with LLDC officers.