

## **London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel**

### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: 411 – 415 Wick Lane**

Thursday 25 September, 15.30 – 17.00

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
John Lyall  
Julia Barfield  
Catherine Burd  
Dan Epstein

#### **Attendees**

Rachel Gleave	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Hannah Lambert	London Legacy Development Corporation
Rebecca Miller	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

#### **Apologies / report copied to:**

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Amy Thompson	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Paul Buckenham	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## **1. Project name and site address**

411 – 415 Wick Lane, London E3 2JG  
Planning application reference: 14/00445/FUL

## **2. Presenting team**

Tim Midwood	Boyer Planning
Grant Leggett	Boyer Planning
Jay Williams	IDM Properties
Nick Rees	Claridge Architects
Andrew Thornhill	Churchman Landscape Architects
Dominic Cullinan	SCABAL
Lucy Markham	Montagu Evans

## **3. Planning authority's views**

The planning authority considers this to be a particularly significant site: it is planned to mark the transition between a predominantly industrial area and a more residential area. It is identified as an opportunity site within the Fish Island Area Action Plan and the Local Plan. Development is expected to be employment-led. Some mixed use is acceptable provided that sufficient employment space is guaranteed.

The planning authority has held discussions with the applicant's team on issues including employment use; scale and massing, including building heights; and the context of the site, including its relationship to the conservation area to the north, a landmark historic chimney and the Greenway. Discussions continue on the nature of the public realm within the development and how it might link to the Greenway.

The requirement for the development to be employment-led is proposed to be met by providing, in particular, affordable spaces for the creative and cultural industries, anchored around the existing studio of artist Gavin Turk.

## **4. Quality Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

The panel welcomes some of the modifications to the scheme, including building heights, since its previous review and thinks that there is potential for an interesting and successful scheme. It concludes, however, that further revision is required before it is able to support it fully.

The panel recommends that the balance between residential and workspace accommodation be reconsidered, to achieve a genuinely employment-led development. The panel also thinks that further reduction in building heights is required, particularly to the south of the site. In addition, the architectural language of scheme does not yet respond convincingly to the particular character of the site – which should mark a transition from a predominantly industrial to more residential area. More detailed comments are provided below.

### *Mixed use*

- While the quantity of residential accommodation proposed has been slightly reduced, the panel thinks that it remains excessive for a development intended to be employment-led.
- It notes that employment space is confined to plinth level and suggests that it could be extended to upper storeys currently allocated exclusively to residential accommodation, particularly on the Wick Lane frontage.
- The panel stresses the importance of employment space for the creative and cultural industries being affordable and would welcome further detail of how this will be ensured.
- It notes that early discussions have been held with artist Gavin Turk; the Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art (ACAVA); the Shoreditch Trust; and the House of Fairy Tales. It would, however, welcome further evidence that affordable employment space will be achievable and sustainable.
- The panel is disappointed that – at 25 per cent – the provision of affordable housing falls short of the Fish Island Area Action Plan requirements which specify 35 per cent affordable housing.
- The panel believes that the provision of affordable housing on this site should be increased to conform to planning policy.

### *Scale and massing*

- The panel welcomes the reduction in the height of some buildings since the previous review.
- However, the scale still appears overbearing. While higher buildings facing the Greenway may be acceptable, the panel thinks that the proposed heights along Wick Lane – at up to 9 storeys – remain hard to justify.
- The panel believes that strong arguments remain for substantially reducing the scale of buildings along Wick Lane, including making a more measured transition from the Greenway to the area south of the development; and ensuring acceptable levels of daylight / sunlight.
- Reducing the height of these buildings would also improve the quality of the internal courtyards and deck access to residential accommodation.

### *Architectural expression*

- Planning policy supports continuing industrial use to the south of the site, meaning that the context is unlikely to become smart or 'gentrified'; the development could therefore support a design with a less rigid, more robust and exuberant feel, particularly on the Wick Lane frontage facing the existing industrial area.
- The panel emphasises that this development, while marking a transition from an industrial to a more residential area, will have to sit comfortably in an area that retains a grittier feel.
- The panel suggests that more inventive, less standardised typologies be devised to reflect this particular character of the area and express more overtly that this is an industrial / artistic enclave.
- In this context, the panel suggests that the internal courtyards could be conceived as more informal work yards for use by the occupants of the employment spaces.
- The panel welcomes the additional attention given to creating flexible spaces specifically suited to artists and other creative industries – including spacious double height units and smaller studio spaces at mezzanine level – and how they might be integrated with residential accommodation.
- The intention to create active frontages along Wick Lane and the central space / route through the development is also welcome.
- The panel questions, however, whether double-height glazing to proposed artists' spaces at plinth level is appropriate: such a high degree of visibility may not be welcomed by occupants.
- It therefore suggests that the uniform full-height glazing to the employment spaces be reconsidered.

### *Sustainability*

- The panel welcomes strategies to maximise the environmental sustainability of the development, including the incorporation of blue roofs and potential connection to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park central energy network.
- The commitment to achieving BREEAM 'excellent' for employment space and the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 for residential accommodation is also positive.

### *Next steps*

- The panel recommends that the proposed scheme be revised in order to meet fully the requirement for the development to be employment-led.
- It recommends that the amount of residential accommodation provided be reduced but that the proportion of affordable housing be increased; and that an architectural language that more successfully conveys the area's particular character be developed.