

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Wingate House

Thursday 27 June 2013, 15.00 – 16.30

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

Panel

Peter Studdert
Tom Holbrook
Alex Ely
John Lyall
Kirsten Henson

Attendees

Will Steadman	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Eleanor Fawcett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Chris Gascoigne	London Borough of Newham
Lyndon Fothergill	Greater London Authority

Declaration of interest

Deborah Denner is project manager for the Quality Review Panel. She is currently working on the Wembley French International School, for which Nathaniel Lichfield are planning consultants. Nathaniel Lichfield are planning consultants for Wingate House.

1. Project name and site address

Wingate House, 51 Warton Road, Stratford, London E15 2JY
Planning application reference: 12/00164/FUL

2. Presenting team

Nick Makasis	GML Architects
Iain Rhind	Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners

3. Planning authority's views

The application for this scheme was originally submitted to the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC). On 14 June 2012 the LTGDC resolved to grant planning permission subject to planning conditions and the completion of a S106 Agreement. The Section 106 Agreement was not completed, and the LLDC is now responsible for determining the application in accordance with the development plan and any new material considerations.

LLDC officers have concerns about the acceptability of the building height and its corresponding impact on the public realm, the streetscape and the amenity of neighbouring residents and the overall quality of the design. They have recommended that planning permission be refused, for reasons including:

- Height, massing and density, representing overdevelopment of the site and a poorly designed addition to the street scene
- Adverse impact on the daylight conditions and outlook enjoyed by the residents of neighbouring Azura Court and Sapphire Court and the use and enjoyment of the public realm
- Poor quality architecture that does not provide for the natural surveillance of the street, limits the internal daylighting conditions for prospective residents, fails to integrate successfully with the public realm and does not fully incorporate the principles of inclusive design

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review panel does not support the planning application for Wingate House, and shares planning officers concerns about the scale of development, and poor architectural quality proposed. This is an exceptional site, facing south west across the Bow Back River towards the Olympic Park. These natural and publicly funded advantages suggest that a high quality of development should be achievable. The panel think that the existing scale of development at the Stratford High Street end of Warton Road, where the plot depths are much greater, and the road wider, should not be replicated for Wingate House. This site is much smaller, at the narrower end of the road, and adjoins a site where four storey town houses have outline approval. As such, the panel think 6 storeys would be the ideal height in townscape terms, but that it may be possible to make a case for up to 8 storeys with high quality design and a careful assessment of daylight, sunlight and townscape impacts.

The panel think a fundamental rethink of the design is needed, and offer more detailed comments on the scale, massing and architecture of the scheme below.

Scale and massing

- The scale of development proposed has a negative impact on daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residential properties, which is not justified by architecture of outstanding quality or other public benefits.
- This is a small site, which suggests that a building of a single height would be more successful than a stepping form.
- On the basis of planning policy guidance for this area, an assessment of the townscape qualities of Warton Road, and the small size of the site, the panel feel 6 storeys would be the ideal height for Wingate House.
- With high quality design and a careful assessment of daylight, sunlight and townscape impacts, it may be possible to make a case for development up to 8 storeys.

Architecture

- The panel think that a fresh start is needed in the design of Wingate House, if architecture of sufficient quality for this exceptional site is to be achieved.
- Many of the design decisions on which the current scheme is based are in response to criticisms of earlier versions of the scheme. This reactive approach has resulted in a compromised design, lacking a clear architectural concept.
- For example, whilst the design of windows facing Warton Road to prevent overlooking is in response to an earlier comment, the panel think in an urban situation, and with a street of this width, windows looking directly onto the street would be normal and positive.
- The ground floor lacks generosity, both in terms of floor to ceiling heights and uses, with bike stores, bins, car park vents and steps up to accommodation above flood risk levels.
- Neighbouring developments have commercial units at ground floor level, and although these are not all currently occupied, demand is likely to increase once the Olympic Park reopens.
- Ground floor uses to create activity on the street should be considered.

Next steps

- The panel would encourage a redesign from first principles, reducing the scale of development proposed, retaining the generally dual aspect flat planning, with higher quality architecture, and a more generous and active ground floor frontage.