

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

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

Thursday 28 August 2014, 11.45 – 13.15

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Adam Khan  
Tom Holbrook  
Liam Bond

#### **Attendees**

Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

#### **Report also copied to**

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
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: 14/00191/FUL

## **2. Presenting team**

Tom Slingsby	Bellway Homes
Jonathan Leadbetter	JWL Associates
Barry McCullough	Levitt Bernstein Architects
Neil Molloy	Levitt Bernstein Architects
Diana Thomson	Savills

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

The planning authority is encouraged by modifications made to the scheme following extensive pre-application discussions with officers, including ensuring the required level of employment floorspace. The planning authority has stressed the importance of creating an acceptable and attractive environment for residents in a former Strategic Industrial Location, which retains an industrial character. Concern remains that residential accommodation, in particular affordable housing, faces onto an existing waste transfer facility to the north of the site. Although it is uncertain how development of neighbouring sites might evolve, careful phasing of the development will be necessary to minimise the impact on residents of this and other continuing industrial use.

The planning authority welcomes the high quality open space created by the central 'neighbourhood wynd' and suggests that a similar quality be sought for the river frontage.

The planning authority draws attention to agreed planning policy that specifies a datum of 6 storeys for this site. The current scheme is substantially in excess of this at 6 – 9 storeys.

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

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel is impressed by the significant improvements made to the scheme since its previous review. In general, the proposal responds successfully to a challenging brief and has the potential to create an attractive environment for residents, including families, as well as employment space. It particularly commends the proposed central 'neighbourhood wynd' and communal courtyards. It thinks, however, that vehicle access to the 'wynd' would detract from its appeal and suggests that access to car parking be relocated to Cook's Road. The panel also notes that planning officers have some concerns about the scale of the development, particularly to the north of the site. In view of these outstanding issues, the panel recommends further information is provided on the proposed scale and massing, to allow the planning authority to determine whether this is acceptable.

More detailed comments are provided below on these issues, the revised plan and layout and the wider public realm.

#### *Pudding Mill Land Use and Design Framework*

- The panel is encouraged that the scheme has been revised to reflect the Pudding Mill Land Use and Design Framework being developed by Rick Mather Architects, which aims to guide future development proposals in this area.

#### *Plan and layout*

- The panel commends the revised plan and layout of the development. It thinks that it has the potential to support both employment use and housing – including family homes – in what is currently a hostile environment.
- The panel acknowledges that changes of level across the site – which require step access to the courtyards from the street – are necessary because of flood risk and notes that lifts will be provided in the blocks' cores.
- The panel also notes that all habitable rooms in the block to the north of the site along the 'commercial street', which faces a waste transfer facility, have a south orientation, looking onto the courtyard.
- Deck access to accommodation in this block will also provide a partial screen.

#### *Scale and massing*

- The development proposes blocks ranging from 6 to 9 storeys – exceeding the guideline of 4 – 6 storeys.
- The impact of the proposed density and height needs to be carefully considered but, generally, the panel thinks that the height to width ratio of the plan is well judged and should result in good levels of sun and daylight.
- However, the panel notes the concerns of planning officers that the scale of the development, particularly in relation to the 9 storey block to the north of the site.
- It would be helpful if the design team could provide a cross section across both the 'Commercial Street' to the west and 'Tertiary Street' to the north, to demonstrate their quality. This should also help illustrate the relationship between the development and the consented LCS scheme.

- The quality of the central spaces – the ‘neighbourhood wynd’ and two communal courtyards – will also remain critical in contributing the success of the scheme.

#### *Detailed design and materials*

- The panel supports the approach to create a distinctive character for each block by using a variety of materials such as a range of different bricks.
- It will be essential that the quality of architecture suggested by the planning application is followed though 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 central ‘wynd’.
- The panel believes that priority should be given to providing the best possible environment for residents, including families, and that providing access to the car park from the ‘wynd’ will compromise its quality.
- It recommends therefore that car park access be relocated to Cook’s Road. Although this would fragment the frontage of the block along Cook’s Road, the panel does not think that this will significantly detract from the architectural expression of the façade.

#### *Landscape design*

- The panel thinks that the ‘wynd’ and communal courtyards – which will incorporate large trees – will provide an attractive heart to the scheme, supporting the success of family housing.
- It thinks, however, that the character of the perimeter, in particular Cook’s Road and along the riverside, could be given further thought to create a more urban, less suburban, feel.
- The panel believes that these perimeter streets might be better expressed as a harder edge – drawing on precedents from other parts of London – in contrast to the greener character of the development’s internal public spaces.
- Creating a more London street-like character would also make it easier to successfully incorporate car park entrances into the street frontage along Cook’s Road.

### *Phasing*

- As the development will be built in two phases, careful consideration will need to be given to ensuring an acceptable environment for residents during completion of the scheme.
- The panel notes that it is planned to complete 75 per cent of the landscaping, including the 'wynd', during the first phase. The panel welcomes this as a means of providing a green buffer to the construction site for the second phase.
- The family houses will also have rear access to the communal courtyard during the first phase.

### *Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel would welcome a further desktop review to allow the design team to present further information on the scale and massing of the development, as discussed above.
- This would also provide an opportunity for any amendments to the car park access, and perimeter public realm to be presented.