

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: 75 – 89 Wallis Road, 59 Berkshire Road

Thursday 29 October 2015

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
John Lyall
Tom Lonsdale

Attendees

Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Sarah Jones	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Hannah Lambert	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates
Tessa Kordeczka	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
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Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the scheme for 75 – 89 Wallis Road, 59 Berkshire Road. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Adam Khan; and Alex Ely.

1. Project name and site address

75 – 89 Wallis Road, 59 Berkshire Road

Planning application reference: 15/00338/FUL

2. Presenting team

David Silk	M&D Silk Properties
Nigel Crawley	Stockwool
Tom Smith	Spacehub
Ray Rogers	Ray Rogers Heritage and Urban Design
Tim Gaskell	CMA Planning

3. Planning authority's views

The planning authority has welcomed the design team's cooperation with the LLDC, and other stakeholders. It is close to being able to support the development proposals. The current application includes revisions that take into account comments by the LLDC, the Quality Review Panel and others. Discussions have centred around the retention of existing heritage buildings, including restoration, repair and refurbishment. Refinements to the design of the two new blocks have also been considered.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel finds much to admire in the way in which the design of the scheme has developed. It will provide both employment use in retained historic buildings as well as high quality residential accommodation. The scale and massing are appropriate, and the architectural treatment of both retained and new buildings successful. The panel questions, however, whether retention of trusses in the yard is necessary. It also thinks that the distribution of photovoltaic panels on the roof might be reconsidered to avoid compromising the quality of residents' amenity space. These comments are expanded below, and those made at an earlier review that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

Context / Hackney Wick masterplan

- The Hackney Wick masterplan envisages the creation of a new route to the north of the site, running alongside the retained historic building.
- This creates an opportunity for windows and entrances to be inserted, enhancing the quality of the workspace.
- The panel therefore supports the proposed insertion of new windows into the north elevation of the historic building.

Response to heritage buildings

- The panel is unable to comment in detail on the restoration, repair and refurbishment of historic buildings; planning officers are best placed to assess how appropriately and sympathetically the scheme responds to retained buildings of heritage value.
- It suggests, however, that the most appropriate approach is to expose and celebrate the old but create new elements in a distinct way.
- In this context, the panel again questions whether the retention of the roof trusses in the yard is appropriate.
- The panel had previously expressed concern that the trusses could restrict daylight to what is an already fairly dark space. The revised design proposes retaining some but not all the trusses.
- The panel thinks that there is a convincing argument for omitting the trusses altogether; if they are retained, however, it would be more authentic to retain them all.
- Similarly, the panel does not think that imposition of a Georgian grid for windows to be punched into the proposed new north elevation is necessary.

Scale and massing

- The panel thinks that the scale and massing of the revised scheme is appropriate for the site.
- It supports the reduction in height by one storey of the block on Wallis Road, which should improve daylight and sunlight to the yard.

Architectural expression

- The panel strongly supports the architectural expression for both retained and new buildings. It thinks that the architectural language demonstrates a simple and honest treatment of both what is retained and what is new.
- The architectural treatment is sensible, solid and well modulated. The simple but robust 'squareness' – omitting gables – of the new buildings is successful.
- The panel supports the choice of textured brickwork – which will complement the simplicity of the building forms well – but advises against using this excessively.

Residential accommodation

- The panel welcomes the layout of residential accommodation – based around three stair and lift cores, each giving access to a small number of mostly dual aspect flats.

- It suggests that further thought might be given to the character and quality of the passageway leading from Berkshire Road into the central yard. This provides access to two of the cores, with cycle and refuse storage; careful thought will be needed to ensure that this space appears warm and welcoming.
- The panel suggests that the ground surface of the passageway might be made the same as the internal yard – to provide a continuous surface through.

Landscape design

- The panel supports the re-use of existing materials for the public realm.
- While the proposed simple palette of granite setts works well, the panel does not think that tree planting in the yard is appropriate.
- The panel welcomes the amenity space for residents provided over two levels on the roofs of both new buildings.
- There is, however, a large number of photovoltaic panels on both levels, which may compromise the use of roof terraces, for example as play space.
- The panel acknowledges that the proposed distribution of photovoltaic panels is informed by a wish to provide access to amenity space directly from each of the three cores.
- A clearer separation, however, between photovoltaic panels and amenity space would be more successful – for example by placing the panels on the higher level roof, with amenity space on the lower level.

Servicing

- The panel repeats the need for a clear strategy on servicing in order to avoid compromising the quality of the yard or streets around the site.
- It would be particularly unfortunate if the landscaping area shared with Central Books was dominated by cars and vans.

Next steps

- The panel is pleased to support approval of the planning application for the development at 75 – 79 Wallis Road, 59 Berkshire Road. This promises to re-provide employment space in retained buildings of heritage value and also high quality residential accommodation.