

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

### **Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Strand East Plot MU5**

Thursday 29 October 2015

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)

John Lyall

Tom Lonsdale

#### **Attendees**

Will Steadman

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions

Natalie Dobraszczyk

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions

Deborah Denner

Fortismere Associates

Tessa Kordeczka

Fortismere Associates

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

Anthony Hollingsworth

LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions

Allison De Marco

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Eleanor Fawcett

London Legacy Development Corporation

Pippa Gueterbock

London Legacy Development Corporation

James Bolt

London Borough of Newham

Ben Hull

London Borough of Newham

#### **Note on process**

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the reserved matters proposals for Strand East Plot MU5. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Catherine Burd; Adam Khan; Dan Epstein; and Peter Lainson.

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

Strand East / Sugar House Lane redevelopment: land to south of High Street, Stratford, east of River Lea Navigation and west and north of Three Mills Wall River

Planning application reference: 15/00359/REM

## **2. Presenting team**

Michiel van Soest	Vastint UK B.V.
Hilary Boyle	Vastint UK B.V.
Keir Alexander Regan	Duggan Morris Architects
Adam Eckworth	Duggan Morris Architects
Antony Nelson	Planit-IE
Jennie Bean	GL Hearn
Christopher Schiele	GL Hearn

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

The planning authority questions the inclusion of a private communal garden for residents of Block A; and thinks that this space would be more appropriately incorporated into the public realm. In particular, it offers an opportunity to resolve the level difference between the planned bridge and the Three Mills Wall River towpath. This would add significantly to the quality of the public realm and legibility of pedestrian / cycle routes. The original masterplan had envisaged this space as part of the public realm.

The planning authority also advises against an arrangement of lobbies within Blocks A and B that might be perceived as long corridors.

The planning authority clarifies that Block C – which forms part of Plot MU5 – is not included in this reserved matters application. Block C is proposed as a community amenity; public consultation is now envisaged to help to define the brief for this building.

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

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel repeats its strong support for the scheme for Strand East Plot MU5. It admires the strikingly original aesthetic created by the form, massing and materials. The quality and durability of materials will be essential to preserve its distinctive and attractive appearance. The one area where the panel recommends further thought is the design of the proposed private communal garden for Block A. The panel questions how well used this might be. It suggests that this space might be better incorporated into the public realm, in particular to facilitate a connection between the planned bridge and river towpath. These comments are expanded below, and previous comments that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

### *Architecture, detailed design and materials*

- The panel repeats its admiration for the proposed design – this results in a beautiful, sculptural and intriguing composition, which is particularly appropriate for this plot and can expect to be a source of delight to both residents and others.
- The panel welcomes the attention to detail and generosity of spaces, including for entrance lobbies and apartment interiors.
- The proposed palette of materials – some of which find inspiration from local historic buildings – is attractive and appropriate. It will be important, however, to ensure the quality and durability of materials so that the scheme retains its particularly distinctive and attractive appearance over time.
- Solutions to avoiding solar gain, including blinds, will have to be integrated sensitively and unobtrusively in order not to detract from the buildings' attractive, sculptural quality.

### *Layout / public realm*

- The panel has reservations about the appropriateness of the proposed private communal garden. This will be highly visible from the route from the landing of the planned bridge – and therefore offer little privacy to residents.
- Use by residents may also be deterred by having to leave Block A and reach a garden with railings / fencing through a separate gated entrance. A strong indoor / outdoor flow would be more successful.
- The panel thinks that this space could be better suited to creating a generous public realm enjoying views across to Three Mills. This could also provide a more direct and easy route between the bridge and the towpath for pedestrians / cyclists.
- Incorporating this space into the wider public realm would add to its generosity and quality – to be enjoyed also by residents of Blocks A and B.
- In view of these comments, the panel suggests that the ground floor flat adjacent to the proposed communal garden might be designed to be adaptable to more public uses.
- The panel welcomes revisions to the ground floor arrangement of Block A, which extend private external space to apartments, reducing vulnerability to noise from the adjacent public space.

### *Landscape design*

- The panel suggests that the large area of public realm could be improved by increased soft landscaping.

### *Cycle storage*

- The scheme is intended to be largely car free; provision of cycle storage therefore needs to be as secure and easy to access as possible.
- Access to cycle stores for both Blocks A and B is currently directly from the street. The panel suggests access to cycle storage from a semi-private area might be preferable.
- An option would be access to cycle stores from the lobby of residents' entrances. This would, however, change the character of the lobbies – they would need to be more robust.

### *Next steps*

- The panel strongly supports the proposal for Strand East Plot MU5 – which demonstrates exceptional architectural quality.
- The panel is confident that the design team will be able to address the comments above on public space, in collaboration with planning officers.