



FRAME PROJECTS

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

### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: 60 Dace Road / Swan Wharf**

Thursday 3 May 2018

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

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Simon Henley  
Mike Martin  
David Bonnett  
Kelvin Campbell

#### **Attendees**

Richard McFerran	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Gwenaël Jerrett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

#### **Report copied to**

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Jerry Bell	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Jane Jin	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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

60 Dace Road, Swan Wharf, Fish Island

## **2. Presenting team**

Christophe Egret	Studio Egret West
Nathan Humfryes	Studio Egret West
Tom Pike	Constable Homes
Richard Coleman	Citydesigner
Gillian Nicks	CBRE

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

This is the second Quality Review Panel review of the revised proposal for development at 60 Dace Road. This is a challenging site with a number of constraints, including a retained former stable block (a non-designated heritage asset); location in a conservation area; a requirement for re-provision of employment space; and the adjacent Ironworks.

The planning authority is not yet confident that all outstanding issues have been satisfactorily addressed. These include the quality of residential accommodation and how well the courtyard space might work.

While the planning authority considers that the new building to the south of the site – the wharf building – is successful, it has some reservations about how well the additional storeys on the retained warehouse building relate to other elements of the scheme.

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

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel commends the design team's creativity in responding to this complex and challenging site. While residential and employment uses have been successfully combined, the panel suggests some possible reconfiguration of uses within the scheme. It supports, if a little cautiously the scale and massing of the development. Revisions to the design have responded well to concerns arising from the proximity of the Ironworks. The panel supports the architectural expression of the scheme's new components and also the interventions made to retained buildings. The design of the courtyard is much improved – but the panel recommends careful consideration of the impact of vehicle access to the courtyard and whether it might be possible to confine servicing and Blue Badge parking to Dace Road. These comments are expanded below and those made at the previous review that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.



### *Mixed use development*

- The panel acknowledges the challenges of successfully combining employment and residential uses on this site – and of achieving an appropriate balance between affordable workspace and affordable housing.
- The panel had previously supported the proposal to provide affordable workspace at the ground floor of all buildings.
- There is a perceived uneasiness about the relationship between the stable block and the new courtyard block to its rear – but the panel thinks that this relates more to the mix of uses than the scale and massing or architecture.
- For example, locating employment space throughout the stable block, rather than only on the ground floor, could avoid the risk of compromising the quality of residential accommodation (see also comment below). Also, redistribution of residential cycle and bin storage to the ground floor of the stable block could result in a more active frontage within the courtyard.
- The panel supports the suggested inclusion of a café on the ground floor of the retained warehouse building, with the possibility to spill out into the courtyard. The café can be expected to be popular and careful thought about management of potential noise and nuisance to residents is therefore needed.

### *Scale and massing*

- The panel repeats, if somewhat cautiously, its support for the scheme's scale and massing.
- There are some reservations about the relationship between the stable block and the new courtyard block. The panel supports the move to separate these two blocks, rather than adding an extension to the stable block, and creating a space between them. To be successful, this space will need to be detailed and constructed with great care. The panel thinks, however, that the height of the courtyard building – at six storeys – could appear overbearing in relation to the stable block.

### *Response to site constraints*

- The design team has responded creatively to the site's constraints. The tightness of the plan poses considerable challenges – not least the narrowness of the distance between the new courtyard building and the Ironworks.
- The revised design of the courtyard building is much improved. The staggered elevation and angled windows are an effective response to the proximity of the Ironworks, minimising overlooking – and also resulting in a simpler and calmer architecture.



### *Residential accommodation*

- The quality of residential accommodation, in particular levels of daylight and sunlight, in the stable block could be a concern. The arrangement of bedrooms around the light well is acceptable, however, and, if technical requirements are met, the panel is satisfied that residential accommodation will be of a sufficiently high standard.
- The panel welcomes assurances that assessments of daylight and sunlight levels to both residential accommodation and employment space will be undertaken.

### *Architectural expression*

- The panel supports the architectural expression proposed for the scheme's new elements – the courtyard building to the rear of the stable block; the wharf building; and the additional storeys to the warehouse building – as well as the interventions to the retained buildings.
- Overall, the panel considers that the proposal has the potential to meet the requirement of LLDC Local Plan Policy BN.10 on tall buildings for 'outstanding' architecture. The scheme will result in an impressive piece of townscape along the canal.

### *Landscape design / public realm*

- The panel welcomes revisions to the design of the courtyard – many of which respond to its earlier comments.
- It agrees with a simple approach of one surface material, and the choice of light, feathery trees. It suggests that fewer of the proposed raised timber platforms might be preferable in order to provide more open space for play.
- There is some ambiguity around ownership of the courtyard; there may be a risk that it becomes too public. It will be important that residents also have a sense of ownership.
- There are some reservations about combining vehicle access – for two Blue Badge parking spaces and for servicing to employment spaces – together with children's play space. The courtyard is not a large space and there may be a risk that it is misused, to the detriment of residents' amenity. The panel questions how great the demand for vehicle access might be and whether servicing and Blue Badge parking could be confined to Dace Road (which is a dead end).
- In addition to effective control of vehicle access through the gate from Dace Road, the panel recommends that the design of the courtyard provides more protection to those areas anticipated to be used by children.



- The courtyard appears attractive and welcoming from the canal side. Incorporating a cut back and overhang in the three storey component of the wharf building, allowing views through to the interior of the courtyard, is a successful move.
- The existing graffiti-covered boundary wall in the courtyard could rather detract from its quality. The panel suggests that the presence of this wall might be negotiated with the owners of the adjoining site at some future date. This would result in a considerably larger courtyard space.

*Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel thinks that the development at 60 Dace Road has the potential to be an attractive place to live and to work. It encourages the design team to continue to refine the scheme, in the light of the comments above and in consultation with planning officers.

