



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: 90 Monier Road

Thursday 3 May 2018

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

Panel

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

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

90 Monier Road, Fish Island

2. Presenting team

Simon Barry	Taylor Wimpey
Sam Caslin	Taylor Wimpey
Philip Marsh	dRMM
Anna Siwik	dRMM
Judith Stichtenoth	dRMM
Tom Smith	Spacehub
Rosie Sargen	Spacehub
Tim Gaskell	CMA Planning

3. Planning authority's views

This is the second Quality Review Panel review of the scheme for 90 Monier Road. A number of revisions have been made to the design, including: the diagonal configuration of the blocks making up the scheme; the frontage along Monier Road; the pedestrian route through the development; and the triangular indents to accommodate existing trees. Some reservations remain about entrance sequences and the length of internal corridors leading to residential units.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The design for development at 90 Monier Road is progressing well. The Quality Review Panel supports the reconfiguration of the plan and layout of the scheme – although it raises a question about retaining a diagonal form for the block at the east of the site. The panel broadly supports the architectural expression proposed for the scheme, while advising care around the degree of variation and use of strong colour. It recommends some refinement of plans to simplify the sequence of residential entrances and improve the security and convenience of cycle storage. The panel commends the landscape design strategy – including retention of existing trees and attractive south facing podium gardens. Reducing the number of town houses could improve the amenity of the block A podium garden. Provision of disabled parking will be most convenient for residents in block B and block C; residents in block A could benefit from some Blue Badge parking on Monier Road. These comments are expanded below and those made at the previous review that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

Plan and layout

- The plan and layout of the scheme now conform to the southeast / northwest grain to the north of the site and the grid of Monier Road and Beachy Road. The panel considers this a significant improvement on the earlier iteration.



- The block to the east of the site (block C), however, retains a diagonal form, which may appear inconsistent with the other blocks. Aligning this block with the perpendicular blocks would have the advantage of a southwest facing elevation for residential units. The diagonal form also appears to compromise the podium garden, resulting in a narrower space between block B and block C.
- While not arguing strongly against the form of block C – which introduces an intriguing angle when viewed from Stour Road – the panel would recommend further exploration of its form to identify the best solution.
- The panel strongly supports the perpendicular pedestrian route that cuts through from Monier Road to Beachy Road.
- The panel suggests further consideration of the number of two storey town houses along Beachy Road – currently three. If reduced to two, this would provide more generous amenity space, including play space, for residents in the affordable units in block A, as well as allow more sunlight into the podium garden.

Architectural expression

- The panel supports in principle the variety proposed for the architecture of the scheme's various components – including form, materials and colour. It suggests, however, reconsidering the degree of variation to ensure an appropriate balance between diversity and coherence. This would apply, for example, where elevations of different coloured materials meet at the corner of the building.
- A palette of white, black and red bricks is proposed. The panel thinks that this could appear rather stark. A more nuanced treatment might be preferable, in particular to block C. This will be a prominent, highly visible building and, while distinctive detailing would be appropriate, a bright red might perhaps be best avoided, with interest deriving more from texture than strident colour.
- The colour palette should also be carefully considered in the context of neighbouring developments: how well will the colours proposed interact with surrounding buildings?

Residential accommodation

- The panel recommends some refinement to ground floor plans in order to achieve more direct, less circuitous residential entrances, with fewer doors to be negotiated.
- Although there are some single aspect units, these are predominantly west facing. The introduction of a saw-tooth façade along Monier Road is a clever device to maximise a west facing aspect.



- The panel suggests that the floor to ceiling heights of the town houses at ground floor level could be slightly more generous – to correspond to those of the commercial spaces.

Landscape design strategy

- The panel repeats its support for retaining existing London plane trees: these will add significantly to the attractiveness of the development's setting. Their retention, however, raises some issues that need to be carefully taken into account, for example: ensuring long term viability; considering any potential impact as a result of proximity to balconies; and thinking about the tree canopy in the event of Monier Road becoming a bus route. The panel encourages continuing close cooperation with an arboriculturist.
- The panel would recommend that the same species is chosen for any replacement or additional trees – although some variation may be appropriate in specific locations.
- The landscape design proposed for the podium gardens shows much promise. If the degree of richness and colour illustrated can be achieved, the podium gardens can be expected to be attractive, highly useable spaces. As noted above, the quality of the west podium garden would be improved if there were one fewer town houses along Beachy Road.
- Incorporating a stair from the street on Beachy Road to provide access to the podium garden at first and second floor levels is a successful intervention. The panel suggests that including planting that is visible from the street – possibly cascading – would signal the podium garden's presence more strongly.
- Where the single storey podium gardens open onto Beachy Road, the panel suggests that some form of enclosure – perhaps a wall or planting – would improve the quality of those spaces, including by offering some protection from wind.

Cycle storage

- To encourage cycling, cycle storage needs to be both convenient and secure. Access to cycle storage is, variously, directly from the street, from the entrance lobbies, and by lift to the basement. Access directly from the street may not be the most secure option and storage in the basement not the easiest or most appealing. The panel would therefore recommend including, as far as possible, access from entrance lobbies. As noted above, the design of entrance lobbies could be clearer and simpler.



Inclusive design

- The panel welcomes the generous provision of disabled parking, which will be easily accessible for residents in blocks B and C but less so for those in block A. It asks whether it might be possible to include some Blue Badge parking on Monier Road.
- While the retention of trees, and setting back the building line, are welcomed, assurances are sought that the trees will not obstruct pavements.

Next steps

- The proposal for development at 90 Monier Road shows much promise. The Quality Review Panel encourages the design team to continue to refine the proposal, in the light of the comments above and in consultation with planning officers.
- It would welcome the opportunity to provide further comments, after submission of a planning application.

