

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Strand East Plot R8

Thursday 30 April 2015

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Catherine Burd
Liam Bond
Andrew Harland

Attendees

Will Steadman	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Pippa Gueterbock	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Allison De Marco	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Steve Tomlinson	London Legacy Development Corporation
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

1. Project name and site address

Strand East/Sugar House Lane – Plot R8

2. Presenting team

Michiel van Soest	Vastint UK B.V.
Hilary Boyle	Vastint UK B.V.
Richard Lavington	Maccreeanor Lavington
Ken Thompson	Maccreeanor Lavington
Jennie Bean	GL Hearn

3. Planning authority's views

LLDC planning officers have attended one pre-application meeting to discuss the reserved matters proposals for Strand East Plot R8. This plot includes one of the two tallest buildings in the approved masterplan for the site – a 16 storey tower. Planning officers will be interested in the architectural relationship between this and the linear block occupying the remainder of the site. The scheme will also need to respond successfully to different contexts on each side of the site, including Hunts Road and the proposed bridge, and the riverside park.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel finds much to admire in the proposals for Strand East Plot R8, which are based on rigorous thinking about residential typologies, and the design of homes from the inside out. The architectural expression of both the tower and linear block is developing in a positive direction, although the panel offers some comments on potential refinements. Limited information is available at this stage on the landscape design. This will be critical to making the most of the riverside park, and ensuring this is a welcoming, accessible and high quality space. This may require some adjustment to the layout of buildings, to create a generous and legible route from Hunts Lane to the park. The panel would welcome further information on the landscape design at a future review. More detailed comments are provided below.

Bridge on Hunts Lane

- The parameters of the outline planning approval for Strand East create a tight relationship between the buildings and the proposed bridge over the Lea Navigation.
- This has already informed the design, but the panel think this could be taken further – to provide a positive setting for the bridge, and/or enhance access to the riverside park.

- One approach would be to create a densely planted bank between the buildings and bridge, to provide a green setting for the elegant bridge structure.
- Alternatively, stepped access to the riverside park could be provided in this location.
- The panel recognises that equality of access would be an issue if stepped access to the park is provided, but thinks this could be addressed by nearby ramped access, between the tower and linear block, and on neighbouring sites.
- Discussing this issue with the LLDC's Built Environment and Access Panel could help reach a solution.

Tower

- The panel admires the simplicity and elegance of the architecture proposed for the 16 storey tower.
- This also promises to provide high quality living accommodation, with two or four dual aspect flats per floor, planned with skill and care.
- The indoor / outdoor quality of the apartments is particularly attractive, with glazed corners designed to open up in smaller flats, and winter gardens in larger ones.
- At ground level, a spacious lobby / reading room is provided for residents. The panel think this will be a fantastic facility, and would encourage Vastint to allow use of this by the wider community.
- A small podium block is proposed at the base of the tower. The panel thinks that the relationship between the podium and tower would benefit from further exploration in plan and elevation.
- At a detailed level, a strategy for window cleaning will be needed to ensure ease of maintenance – either from inside or outside.

Linear block

- As with the tower, the residential layout of the linear block promises accommodation of the highest quality.
- The architecture seems slightly less well developed, but the panel is confident that this will evolve to match the quality of the tower before a reserved matters submission.

Affordable housing

- No information on the distribution of affordable housing across the Strand East site has been provided – and the panel notes this should be clarified to ensure good integration, and timely delivery.

Landscape design

- Limited information on landscape design was provided at this review, and the panel would welcome further information on the design of the riverside park, and spaces around the site.
- Analysis of wind conditions, sunlight and daylight would be valuable to inform the landscape design.
- The panel think that access from Hunts Lane to the riverside park should be improved.
- Adjusting the layout of the linear block and tower, could help achieve views between these buildings towards the park and river, from Hunts Lane – drawing people through.
- One possible means of achieving views and access towards the riverside park would be to carve out a generous colonnaded undercroft.
- Illustrating pedestrian views from Hunts Lane towards the park would be valuable in support of the reserved matters submission.

Car parking

- The design of car parking to slightly raise the ground floor residential accommodation above street level is welcomed.
- This both creates an opportunity to bring light and ventilation into the car park, and improves privacy for ground floor accommodation.
- The panel also supports the decision to extend car parking onto the neighbouring Plot R7 – but thinks some plot testing will be required to ensure this does not place unforeseen limitations on future design work for this site.

Bin stores

- The proposed below ground bin stores at Strand East promise to significantly enhance the quality of the public realm.
- As currently shown, residents of Plot R8 would have to cross Hunts Lane to deposit their waste in the nearest bin stores.

- The panel would encourage the provision of a refuse collection point on, or closer to this site.

Next steps

- The panel offers its warm support to the proposals for Strand East Plot R8, and would welcome a further opportunity to comment on the landscape design and access to the riverside park.