



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Strand East Plot R7

Thursday 6 April 2017

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

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Julia Barfield
Johnny Winter
Tom Lonsdale

Attendees

Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sophie Hockin	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Sophie Backhouse	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

1. Project name and site address

Strand East / Sugar House Lane redevelopment – reserved matters application for Plot R7 at: land to the south of Stratford High Street, east of the River Lea Navigation and west and north of the Three Mills Wall River.

2. Presenting team

Michael Westlake	ARC-ML
Alex Mann	ARC-ML
Hilary Boyle	Vastint UK B.V.
Antony Nelson	Planit-IE
Jennie Bean	GL Hearn
Christopher Schiele	GL Hearn

3. Planning authority's views

The reserved matters application for Strand East Plot R7 follows those of several other plots, many of which have now been approved. The planning authority would welcome the Quality Review Panel's views particularly on a narrowing of the distance between the two buildings that 'bookend' Plot R7 and Plot R8, and also the configuration of access to the basement car park from Hunts Lane.

LLDC Local Plan Policy BN.10 on tall buildings will apply to the scheme for Plot R7. This includes a requirement to exhibit 'outstanding architecture'.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel recommends that the design team continue to develop the proposal – and in particular the design of the tower block / podium – in order to arrive at the optimum response to the site context, and also to achieve exceptional architectural quality. This should include interrogation of the relationship between the proposed tower and podium, and also reconsideration of the building's silhouette. The panel supports the condensed space between Plots R7 and Plot R8, as well as the arrangement of the access ramp to the basement car park. These comments are expanded below.



Response to site

- The panel is confident that the distance between the buildings on Plot R7 and Plot R8 is acceptable and not overly narrow. It could contribute to a sense of drama with views glimpsed to the riverside park.
- The panel is satisfied that the access ramp to the underground car park – which serves both Plot R7 and Plot R8 – will work well. Entry at this point in Plot R7 provides a generous holding area at the approach to the ramp. It also provides a purpose to the triangular space created between the tower block / podium and the linear riverside block.
- The panel suggests considering some refinement to the geometry of the public realm in this space in order to maximise its appeal to pedestrians.
- The tower block / podium presents some challenges. This is a significant building that has to – on one side – successfully signal a connection from Chimney Walk towards the riverside park and – on the other side – create a landmark building in a prominent riverside location.

Architectural expression

- While there is merit in the design developed so far for the tower block / podium, the panel thinks that more work is required to reach the exceptional architectural quality prescribed by Policy BN.10.
- In particular, it thinks that further interrogation is needed of the form of the building expressed as a four storey podium with a tower above rising to 14 storeys. Further clarity of the narrative for this building would help to arrive at the most successful solution.
- An option could be to distinguish the two elements more strongly through their architectural treatment – so that the podium is perceived less as merging into the tower. Another option, however, might be separate the podium and the tower to create two independent buildings.
- In aspiring to achieve ‘outstanding architecture’, the panel also recommends further thought to the building’s silhouette. The arrangement of balconies on each elevation may be a factor to reconsider, as well as perhaps some gradation in the massing.
- The panel thinks that the sharply angled edge of the podium on Hunts Lane is effective architecturally – although an alternative view might be that a chamfered edge at this point could improve legibility and navigability, including towards the riverside park.



- The panel also suggests revisiting the architectural expression of the eight storey element of the linear riverside block. While it understands that the change from three structural bays to two at the upper storeys expresses the internal layout, this creates the need for a transfer structure. Exploration of other means of articulating the elevation could perhaps arrive at a more effective structural solution.

Residential accommodation

- The panel commends the design team on the highly efficient plan and layout of residential accommodation – which promises to provide high quality homes. It notes in particular the rational arrangement of cores and minimal number of single aspect units.
- The panel particularly welcomes the fact that all residential accommodation for Plot R7 will be tenure blind.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel encourages the design team to continue to develop the proposal for Strand East Plot R7 – much of which, including the quality of residential accommodation, shows promise.
- Particular attention should be given to refining the scheme's architectural expression, especially for the tower block, given that the scheme will have to meet the tests of Policy BN.10.
- The panel would welcome the opportunity to comment again on scheme's architectural quality, before a planning application is submitted.

