



FRAME PROJECTS

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

### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: Strand East Plot R5**

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 R5 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 R5 follows those of several other plots, many of which have now been approved. The planning authority's principal concern in relation to Plot R5 is the daylight and sunlight levels, including to the central courtyards, that result from the scheme's configuration of perimeter blocks and central mews houses.

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

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel finds much to admire in the proposal for Strand East Plot R5. The architectural expression of the scheme is well conceived – although the panel suggests that it might be lifted a little. The treatment of the chamfered corner of perimeter block B could be even more successful with some refinement. The mews street might risk appearing rather austere; incorporating some more permanent planting would help to mitigate this. The panel welcomes measures taken to maximise daylight and sunlight to residential accommodation – and particularly commends the avoidance of any single aspect units. It remains concerned, however, about overshadowing to the perimeter block courtyards, especially that of perimeter block A. Assurances are sought that the access ramp to the basement car park will allow vehicles to enter and exit safely. These comments are expanded below.



### *Architectural expression*

- The panel commends the design team on a particularly well considered and well crafted scheme. The proposal for Plot R5 rises admirably to the challenges posed by the masterplan for the wider Strand East development.
- The architectural expression of both the perimeter blocks and the mews houses, including choice of materials, shows much promise.
- While the panel agrees with a calmer, pared down approach to the predominantly brick façades of the perimeter blocks, it asks whether the scheme might be enriched by some more playful elements.
- In this context, the panel strongly supports the articulation in coloured brick of the chamfered corner of perimeter block B at Sugar House Lane and the east / west route.
- The change in materiality at this point, where a café / retail is envisaged at ground floor level, could work particularly well – including as a response to the proposed ‘pocket’ square at this junction.
- The panel suggests, however, that its impact could be strengthened if it was expressed more overtly as an integral but distinct element of the building, rather than perceived as being simply applied. This might be achieved, for example, by continuing the coloured bricks through the full height of the building.
- The panel also suggests that entrances to the perimeter blocks may present an opportunity to introduce some small flourish to lift the scheme.
- While fully supporting the use of bricks for the ‘part in / part out’ balconies of the perimeter blocks, a lighter treatment of the soffits could reflect more light into residential units.
- The ‘bridged’ gatehouses at the northern end of the mews street add significantly to the character of the mews – as well as providing generous private roof top terraces. Any perceived austerity and bleakness along the mews street could be mitigated by additional planting (see below).

### *Residential accommodation*

- The configuration of the scheme – perimeter blocks with a central mews – poses some challenges in securing adequate daylight and sunlight levels.
- The panel commends the skilful plan of a scheme where all residential accommodation is dual aspect. It also welcomes interventions designed to maximise light to the mews houses. These include breaks between the third storeys of the mews houses, and also roof lights to extended kitchens at the rear of the houses.



### *Landscape design strategy*

- The landscape design strategy follows the principles established by previously approved reserved matters applications.
- There is some concern about the low levels of sunlight and daylight to the residents' communal courtyards, particularly the courtyard of perimeter block A, much of which will be in shade for much of the year. The panel questions how well planting will thrive in this environment.
- Using a lighter coloured brick for elevations onto the courtyards could help to mitigate low light levels.
- The panel suggests that the character of the mews street could be improved by some planting. Planting against the walls will help to soften the street – but relying on residents to add planting in pots is unlikely to be a successful, or permanent, solution. Some encouragement for residents to initially introduce their own planting may be needed, for example raised beds.
- The gatehouses at either end of the mews street could be a suitable location for introducing planting.

### *Public realm*

- The ramp providing access to the basement car park meets the street abruptly – with vehicles entering and exiting having to negotiate a tight corner. The panel seeks assurances that this allows sufficient visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.
- As noted above, the chamfered corner of perimeter block B will be important in contributing to the character of the 'pocket' square. Emphasis should continue to be given to ensuring a successful relationship between the building and the public realm at this point.

### *Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel thinks that the proposal for Strand East Plot R5 promises to be highly successful. It is confident that the design team will be able to refine the proposal in the light of the comments above, in consultation with planning officers.

