

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Chobham Manor Zonal Masterplan

Wednesday 28 August 2013, 10.00 – 11.30

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

Attendees

Peter Studdert	Chair of the LLDC Quality Review Panel
Vivienne Ramsey	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Liz Fisher	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Kathryn Firth	London Legacy Development Corporation
Deborah Denner	Fortismere Associates

Report also copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions
Sebastian Balcombe	Taylor Wimpey
Simon Baxter	London and Quadrant Housing Trust
Frank Filskow	Make
Matthew Sherwood	Quod
Stephen Wilkinson	Lea Valley Regional Parks Authority
Chris Gascoigne	London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a formal review of proposals for the Chobham Manor Zonal Masterplan, which were presented by the design team at a pre-application stage. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Edward Jones; Kirsten Henson; Neil Deely; John Lyall; Peter Lainson; Lucy Bullivant; and Lindsey Whitelaw

Quality Review Panel comments on the Chobham Manor Zonal Masterplan

Planning application reference: 13/00236/AOD

Summary

The panel supports the Chobham Manor Zonal Masterplan for planning approval. As the first new residential community to be built in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park following the Games, the panel would like to see Chobham Manor become an exemplar for the design of relatively high density family neighbourhoods. The Zonal Masterplan provides a framework within which it should be possible to achieve this. In particular, the panel welcomes the carefully considered layout of streets and spaces, varied in use and character, but forming a coherent whole. Whilst offering its support to the Zonal Masterplan, the panel notes that it leaves some design challenges to be resolved at the detailed design stage. Some complex urban blocks are proposed, and the success of these will depend on skill and creativity in their architecture. Collaboration with the Lea Valley Regional Parks Authority will be needed to achieve a high quality Velodrome Plaza. The panel also offers some comments that could inform the detailed design of streets; edges; the community hub; parking, bikes and bins; sustainability; and inclusive design.

Urban blocks

- Several of the urban blocks at Chobham Manor are complex in their mix of housing typologies, access and massing.
- For example, two blocks to the south of the site include: mews houses, terraced houses, apartments; mansion block apartments; and a podium accommodating parking.
- Ensuring that these different housing typologies work well together, and create high quality townscape, will require skilful architectural design.
- Drawing views from street level, as well as street elevations and sections through courtyard spaces would help illustrate how each block contributes to the neighbourhood.

Velopark Plaza

- The design code for PDZ6 which forms part of the outline planning approval for the Legacy Communities Scheme describes the creation of a public space at the entrance to the Velodrome – described as a Velopark Plaza.
- Land ownership means that this public space will need to be created through a partnership between Chobham Manor and the Lea Valley Regional Parks Authority.

- The panel suggests that a landscape design should be jointly commissioned for a coherent, high quality Velopark Plaza.
- This design should reconsider the bland and unrelieved strip of parking that faces the northern edge of Chobham Manor, the western end of which also cuts across the view up the street leading to the Velodrome through Chobham Manor.
- A significant number of coaches will use the Velopark Plaza to drop off school children using the Velodrome. The design of this space should avoid coaches having to reverse, to minimise risk and noise.

Street design

- The panel is generally supportive of the arrangement and character of streets at Chobham Manor.
- The concept of 'Streets Interrupted' is a creative means of ensuring the east west street at the centre of Chobham Manor is not used by through traffic.
- As detailed designs are developed for this east west street, shared space principles could be applied to prioritise pedestrians, and slow traffic.
- A shared space approach could work particularly well in this location, as an alternative pedestrian-only route is available on the other side of the public space.
- As part of this process, subtle means of slowing cyclists and other traffic before junctions without obtrusive signage should be considered.
- Responsibility for the design and maintenance of streets in Chobham Manor is split between the LLDC, London Borough of Newham and the Lea Valley Regional Parks Authority.
- A co-ordinated approach to street construction and management will be a critical factor in creating a high quality environment at Chobham Manor.

Edges

- As detailed design work continues, the panel would be interested to know how the architecture of different edges of the development will vary.
- The panel supports the application to vary the parameters of the outline planning approval, to allow corners to be emphasised with greater height, on the western edge facing the Park.
- The edge facing Honour Lea Avenue promises a welcome mix of active uses and front doors to residential units.

- Hoardings will form the western edge of Chobham Manor for several years, until the later phases of development are completed.
- Tree planting in front of these hoardings would therefore be welcomed, even if these trees are later thinned to provide unobstructed views of the North Park.

Community hub

- The creation of a courtyard garden that could serve the nursery in this building is a positive move, but daylight and sunlight analysis will be needed to ensure this is not a dark space.
- The location of the community hub in the masterplan means it has a particularly strong townscape role, which should be reflected in its brief.
- Drawing views of the hub from the central green space would be valuable to inform its design.

Parking, bikes and bins

- The panel supports the pragmatic approach to parking, with a mix of on street, on plot and undercroft parking.
- Careful thought has clearly been given to accommodating bikes, designing this into homes where possible, and providing communal storage elsewhere.
- Further thought about accommodating bikes and bins is still needed where there are double stacked maisonettes, to ensure streets do not become cluttered.

Sustainability

- Chobham Manor will benefit from its integration into a park wide strategy for sustainability across the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
- It would be interesting to explore the particular areas in which Chobham Manor could go beyond these park wide strategies.
- Clear thinking about the particular opportunities for the sustainable design of each housing type could inform the briefs for their architects.
- Daylighting considerations have influenced the massing of the scheme, and this approach should continue to avoid creating gardens that never receive any sun.
- The panel continues to think that aiming for Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 is not ambitious enough.

- Several zero carbon 'Exemplar Homes' are planned for the first phase of development. If these prove to be popular and commercially successful, the panel would hope to see more built as part of later phases.

Inclusive design

- Innovative thinking about the design of housing to meet diverse needs is apparent in the scheme, for example in the provision of multi-generation houses.
- The panel would encourage similar innovation as a marketing strategy is developed for Chobham Manor, to ensure wheelchair accessible units are available to those who need them.
- A carefully thought through evacuation strategy will also be essential for the safety of residents with reduced mobility who may live on upper floors.