

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

Nicola Zech-Behrens,
Bishopsgate Goods Yard Regeneration Limited

16th April, 2019

Dear Nicola,

London Review Panel: Bishopsgate Goodsyard

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of Bishopsgate Goodsyard on 18th March 2019. On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer our ongoing support as the scheme develops.

To note, after this review the panel met on 26th of March 2019 to discuss the Draft Design Guide. Please refer to the note in the appendix that captures our comments on the Guide.

Yours sincerely,



Joanna Averley
Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Debbie Jackson, Interim Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA



**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Bishopsgate Goodsyrd**

Thursday 18 March 2019

Buckley Gray Yeoman, The Tea Building, 56 Shoreditch High Street, E1 6JJ

London Review Panel

Joanna Averley (chair)
Sowmya Parthasarathy
Tom Holbrook
Roger Hawkins

Attendees

Pooja Agrawal	GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
Jamie Dean	GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
Paul Roberts	GLA Planning
Nick Ray	GLA Planning
Clare Brady	GLA Planning
Michael Ritchie	LB Tower Hamlets
Barry Coughlan	LB Hackney

Report copied to

Debbie Jackson	GLA
Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Confidentiality

Please note that while schemes not yet in the public domain, for example at a pre-application stage, will be treated as confidential, as a public organisation the GLA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review.

Project name and site address

Bishopsgate Goodsynd, Braithwaite Street

Presenting team

Nicola Zech-Behrens

Kevin Fraser

Ben Sykes

Giles Charlton

Chris Dyson

Amr Assaad

Julian Shirley

Eric Parry

Robert Kennett

Bishopsgate Goods Yard Regeneration Limited

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Eric Parry Architects

Robert Kennett Architects

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The London Review Panel thanks the applicants for the presentation and materials that were provided at and following the review. The panel acknowledges the complexity and multi-layered constraints on this site and, overall, feels positively about the approach the scheme has taken. Whilst offering support at a strategic level, the panel continues to raise the critical importance of using the planning process to ensure high quality design is protected through to detailed design and implementation. The quality and role of the design code is therefore critical.

Whilst there is much to commend, the panel does have a concern that the scheme has become more inward looking, with limited external activation onto adjacent streets. The connections with the local setting was not addressed sufficiently in the material presented. A more outward-looking approach is encouraged, that re-addresses the public accessibility at the ground and deck level.

The panel supports amendments to the massing and scale made since the previous application. The bold architectural approach to Building 2 is welcomed, as it helps to carry the significant mass of the building. However, its impact on the streetscape needs further exploration, notably its impact on local environmental conditions (including wind, sunlight and glare). The panel remains concerned by the dominance of Buildings 1, 2 and 3. Their impact on the pedestrian experience and their relationship to Oriol Gateway, needs more consideration.

The other buildings presented at the review, Buildings 4, 5 and the Cottages, are much less resolved. The buildings need to be considered strategically in the wider context of the city, alongside the complex infrastructure and the historic elements of the site using view corridors from its surrounding streets and buildings. The panel questions how the architecture of the north-facing blocks reflect the unique qualities of this location. The relationship between the overground, elevated viaduct (which was designed to be enclosed within development) creates several difficult relationships and results in leftover spaces that will become problematic over time.

The panel applauds the increase in open and public space. The panel urges the applicants to consider the public realm strategically to enable a common approach to the complex conditions that result from integrating railway infrastructure and historic structures with the built form. The landscape design underplays the uniqueness of the scale and elevated position of the public realm on the deck. The function and design of different spaces at ground and deck level could be further developed, critically developing what will bring people up onto the deck or through the site. With the bold design approach to Building 2, the panel recommends refining the masterplan to ensure a clear and cohesive vision for the site and the development in its context.

Planning Process

- The panel encourages continued discussion between the planning authority and the applicant to ensure design issues are safeguarded through the planning process.
- The design approach to Building 2 is applauded. However, mechanisms must be secured through the planning process to retain this level of quality through to delivery.
- The quality of the detail design will make a significant difference to the overarching scheme and having a robust design code will be critical to this process.

- The draft design code was not subject to this review. The panel would welcome the opportunity to formally comment on it. It is critical that the applicants ensure enough time to develop the code with content that reflects the scale of this scheme, which may be delivered over a number of phases during which there could be a change of team. *See Appendix.*

Urban Integration

- Overall, the scheme has achieved a balance of development and public realm in this important part of the city where the built fabric transitions from the high-rise development of Broadgate to the Victorian scale and fine-grained uses in Shoreditch and Brick Lane.
- However, there is a concern that it has become increasingly inward looking and has lost its relationship to the wider city. The scheme needs to be considered within its wider context in terms of all its components, including its uses, views, routes, materials, etc.
- There needs to be a balance between designing for the pedestrian experience through an approach that is fine grain to an approach that can address the boldness of the infrastructure of the site.
- The connections through the scheme and onwards into the adjacent streets are currently unclear. The proposal should demonstrate the desire lines and routes coming to the scheme as a destination or using the scheme as a through route. For example approaches from Commercial Street, Braithwaite Street and Bethnal Green Road.
- Ground level views need to be developed to determine the relationship of the massing and local environmental considerations around the taller buildings. This should also consider pedestrian experience, comfort and safety at different times of the day and night.
- In general, the scheme has lost its active relationship to its surrounding streets as more access to residential units have been introduced at ground level. This needs to be reconsidered.
- The high street approach to Middle Road, however, is commended as being a well-articulated and activated space that cuts through the site and encourages permeability.
- Acknowledging the complexities of the infrastructure and accessibility, an issue that needs further resolution is the relationship between the ground level and the deck level. A strategy needs to be developed to invite people towards London Road or on to the deck, to ensure a more permeable scheme.
- Views and routes into and through the arches, and under the viaduct on all sides of the scheme need to be carefully balanced with occupying these spaces with development and retail.
- The staircases and access points are currently not clearly articulated. Their distribution across the site may not fully support the level of activity anticipated or hoped for on the deck level. Consideration should be given to a study of pedestrian flows and patterns that will be generated once the scheme is completed and that relates to the transport infrastructure as well as the uses in the development and public realm.
- The staircases need to be designed as key access points to the scheme, as they will be the primary means of access rather than the proposed lifts. The scale, design and position of the staircases need to be more generous in their expression, to ensure the site is seen as publicly accessible.
- The deck spaces also need to be reconsidered with the relationship to the wider context, and ensure they feel genuinely public in nature.

Scale and massing

- The tapering approach to the massing of the buildings facing Sclater Street is appropriate. When considering the massing of these buildings in elevation drawings, the buildings that sit behind them should be included.
- The increased height of the residential hybrid tower works within its surrounding context.
- The mass of Building 3 however feels quite dominant. The relationship to the Tea Building needs to be further developed.
- The scale and massing of Building 2 is quite dominant and is further discussed under 'Architecture and materiality'.

Integration of historic structures

- The relationship between Building 2 and Oriel Gate needs to be resolved as currently the cantilever is quite dominant.
- The bold colour of the structure of Building 2 is not seen as having a detrimental impact on the heritage elements of the scheme. (Further expanded in 'Architecture and Materiality')
- A night-time approach with use of lighting could help to develop the relationship between Building 2 and the historic structures like the wall and Oriel Gate. For example, the building could be designed as a lantern placed on a darker wall, or the wall lit in such a manner that the building recedes in the background.
- More emphasis should be given to the historic walls, that tie the whole scheme together.

Architecture and materiality

- In general, the relationship between the buildings and their surrounding infrastructure needs to be developed at both a strategic and detailed scale. Awkward relationships between the proposed buildings and existing infrastructure are emerging that need careful consideration.
- It appears the buildings are being developed in isolation to one another, and more collaboration in their respective development would be a positive way forward.
- A strategic approach is required to how these buildings relate to the street, the ground, the plinth level and the complex infrastructure.
- The approach to materiality in general is quite busy and needs to be considered with its relationship to the arches, the historic walls and Oriel Gate, and surrounding buildings; both at the ground level and the plinth level. This has been further highlighted by the introduction of a more singular material palette for Building 2, in contrast to other buildings which pursue more than one architectural or material approach at the same time.
- The overall unifying approach to the site needs to be resolved. It might be about using the existing historic elements (for example the wall), or the approach to the public realm, or the architectural language and materials.
- More long views from a pedestrian level could help develop the architecture and material approach to the buildings.

Building 2 (Full Planning)

- Building 2 has developed as the set piece within the scheme and, in general, its bold approach is welcomed.

- The contemporary nature, industrial connotations and clever mechanisms to lift the building from ground level is commended.
- However, the mass and scale of the building is currently dominant and needs to be considered in closer detail, especially in relationship to Oriel Gate and pedestrian views.
- The material approach to the cantilever, including its mirrored underside and the choice of landscaping, needs further development to ensure the building does not have a negative impact on the historic structures.
- The height, orientation and form of the building needs to also be considered in relationship to other existing and proposed tall buildings at Liverpool Street Station.
- More development is also required whilst thinking of the quality of pedestrian experience in approaching and walking around the building. The relationship of the building to ground level and plinth level also needs more careful consideration at a masterplan scale, as well as the landscape treatment and features.
- The bold colour of the structure of Building 2 refers positively to the industrial heritage of the site.
- The architectural elements, including the brise soleil and the curtain wall, bring an interest to the façade of the scheme. However, there is a concern that compromising the quality of these elements through value engineering could undermine the hierarchy of the red structure.
- Another concern is the impact this tall building will have on the tight surrounding urban grain. A thorough wind and daylight analysis is required to ensure negative impacts are identified and mitigated.

Building 1 & 3 (Commercial centre)

- The mass and scale of Building 1 and its relationship to the Tea Building needs more sensitive consideration. For example, the elevation of the core onto the street frontage is a lost opportunity and could alternatively add light and animation onto the street frontage.
- In general, Buildings 1 and 3 need more resolution, in particular the challenging relationship of Building 1 and its surrounding infrastructure. The in-between spaces that are emerging need careful consideration in terms of their functionality and experience. A strategic approach to these spaces could be taken at the masterplan level and considered as part of the design code.
- A hierarchy of materials needs to be defined, along with a clear definition of the shoulder line.

Buildings 4, 5 and Cottages (Sclater Street)

- The panel were concerned by the negative impact the change of use to residential has had on Sclater Street, resulting in the reduction of active frontage.
- Rethinking the multiple cores, multiple entrances and the 'splitting' of Buildings 4 and 5 needs to be resolved.
- There are currently multiple materials proposed for this northern edge, and a hierarchy needs to be developed. There is a concern that value engineering could result in the use of brick slips, which would create an insubstantial feeling along what should be a strong edge to the scheme.
- Single aspect residential units are strongly discouraged.

Public realm landscape design

- In general, the scheme has made a lot of generous moves to enable more open space. The panel supports the removal of a previously proposed building as it allows space for 'The Field', a more cohesive public space.
- However, the design, role and management of the public realm would benefit from further development. The relationship with adjacent, potentially conflicting uses in Brick Lane, Spitalfields and Shoreditch during both day and night, needs to be resolved.
- A pedestrian diagram showing all the walking journeys on the ground floor and the deck level, as well as the adjacent uses, will help rethink access points and public permeability routes to ensure the site integrates into the rest of the city.
- There is also a lack of strategy that ties all the public realm together, demonstrated in leftover spaces among the railway infrastructure, and the approach to historic elements of the site.
- The approach to the landscape in general is quite domestic and naturalistic but could perhaps more strongly reflect the character of the site with its complex lofty infrastructure. A clearer narrative needs to be developed about what is truly public and visible and what attracts people into the space.
- A bolder strategic approach is required to resolve the disjunction of the landscape at ground level and on the deck level. It needs to speak to different historic or contemporary structures and deal with different wind and daylight conditions.
- The surface landscape needs to be developed and defined, referring to obvious precedents such as the High Line in New York.

Mixed uses

- In general, the panel supports the residential optimisation of the scheme. The integration of the hotel is a positive move to bring pedestrian activation at the deck level of the scheme.
- Reduction of retail use on the outer edges of the site due to introduction of access to the residential schemes is of concern, and consolidating the access points and cores could re-activate the outer edge.
- The proposed event space needs further exploration and clarification on whether it is public, when it is open and who manages it. In its current form, it removes a key connective route through the scheme.
- The cultural building also needs more definition with regards to its management, programming, relationship to the wider area and the night-time economy. Conversations with nearby cultural organisations could potentially lead to alternative approaches.

Phasing and delivery

- The phasing and delivery of the hybrid planning application is important to ensure the ambition of the masterplan is met.
- With Building 2 becoming a set piece element within the scheme, it is worth revisiting the masterplan ensuring the scheme remains coherent in relation to this change.
- Restoration of historic elements of the site including the Oriel Gateway, needs to be tied into the delivery of Building 2.
- Building 2 also needs to work as an independent structure both formally and functionally, allowing for the rest of the development to come forward in future phases.

- Mechanisms such as the retention of the architect through the delivery phase, and the development of robust design codes, will be critical to ensuring that high quality design percolates through every stage of development and delivery.

Next steps

- The London Review Panel welcomes the opportunity to review the emerging Design Codes and Guides, and feedback in a formal manner.
- The Panel also welcomes further opportunities to comment on forthcoming phases of Bishopsgate Goodsynd, which might be post-application due to tight timescales.

APPENDIX

Report of London Review Panel meeting Bishopsgate Goodsyard Design Code

Thursday 26 March 2019

Arup, 8-13 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 4BQ

London Review Panel

Joanna Averley (chair)

Sowmya Parthasarathy

Tom Holbrook

Attendees

Tom Bolton

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Spacehub

Chris Dyson Architects

BuckleyGray Yeoman

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Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

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Project name and site address

Bishopsgate Goodsyrd, Braithwaite Street

Context

This meeting was held to allow the Mayor's Design Advocate Panel to discuss the Draft Design Guide for Bishopsgate Goodsyrd, which was not available at the previous meeting held on 18 March 2019. It was arranged in anticipation of a further review meeting at which the information discussed will be presented to the panel by the applicants.

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel asks for clarification on a number of issues, and raises some concerns about the draft Design Guide and aspects of the scheme design, in addition to those noted at the previous review meeting. The Draft Design Guide provides a thorough description of the scheme elements, but does not fulfil the function of a design code. The document should embody the key masterplan principles and parameters for the majority of the schemes elements - buildings, public realm and infrastructure – that are only being submitted for outline permission at this stage. The design code should provide the right level and quantity of information to allow it to be applied to subsequent design phases by the planning authority. The panel therefore considers that a more concise document, with less information on design detail and clearer masterplanning and design principles, will provide a more effective tool for protecting design quality. The key parameters in the draft document should be reviewed, removing those that are only included for information, and ensuring that the remainder are given appropriate weight. The panel is also concerned that the Design Guide does not yet demonstrate a clear relationship between the development and surrounding infrastructure. It is essential that the site is integrated into the surrounding city, with clear connections to existing streets, based on analysis of the way pedestrians will access and use the development. The panel also reiterates the need for testing to ensure environmental conditions below Building 2 are not hostile to pedestrians. It also asks for more visualisations and views to explore the impact of the Building 2 cantilever on neighbouring streets, and to represent the building in protected views. It considers that the relationship of the building to ground level requires further resolution, and that the landscape designs need further work - both to justify the demolition of historic structures, and to create a response that is particular to the location. Clarity is required on the intended planning process for Buildings 1 and 3. The panel raises concerns about the quality of accommodation in Buildings 4, 5 and 10a-c, and on the lack of active frontage at ground level on surrounding streets. These comments are expanded below.

Draft Design Guide

- The panel notes that the draft Design Guide document is long and detailed, and is concerned that this will prevent it from fulfilling its primary function – as a strategic tool for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to judge design intent, as the development progresses. The current version is descriptive rather than strategic, and does not provide the clarity required for planners to make use of it. The guide should clearly distinguish between commitments and guidance. Chapters 1 and 2 appear to be the sections relevant to an LPA, but the elements applicable to future planning applications needs to be clearly identified.

- The focus of the guide is on the detail of individual buildings, whereas the panel thinks it should focus on the principles and parameters for delivery of buildings and spaces within the masterplan. The right balance should be struck between detailed requirements for the design and materials of individual buildings and design principles relating to aspects of the development such as elevations, active frontage, roof lines and scale.
- An overall narrative explanation should be provided as context for the parameter plans, to explain how the designs have reached this point, and how overall intentions translate into site parameters.
- The panel asks that the guide includes the information needed to protect aspects of the design intent that are vulnerable to becoming diluted or lost over time, particularly the public realm design for the scheme.
- The panel suggests that a set of diagrams are needed to explain the masterplanning principles for the site, describing the overall approach to access, movement, visibility and urban integration.
- Clarity on pedestrian movement is also needed, to show how people will access and move around and through the site. The guide should set rules and parameters to ensure the scheme relates to its surrounding context at an urban scale, and is part of a wider movement network. It should knit the scheme into its context, providing a framework to allow the architecture of individual buildings to develop over time.
- The panel asks whether the red line maximum parameters shown for individual plots, for example on page 94, are intended to define the limit of deviation, and how this will inform detailed designs?

Building 2 (full planning application)

- The panel asks for clarification on the extent of the 'red line' boundary around the detailed planning application being sought for Building 2, and on exactly what will be submitted.
- It reiterates the need to demonstrate wind tunnel testing, as raised in the previous review meeting to provide assurances that the pedestrian environment at street level will not be adversely affected by downdraughts from Building 2.
- As well as the street level environment beneath Building 2, the panel also asks that more consideration is given to the experience of walking under the building. Street level views should be provided to show the building from all angles, especially Shoreditch High Street and Commercial Street.
- The designs for Building 2 result in a building that appears to rise from platform level upwards, rather than from the arches beneath, where its true ground level will be. The panel suggests further thought about the way the building relates to ground level.
- The building will appear in the Westminster Pier and King Henry VIII Mound London View Management Framework corridors. The panel would welcome an opportunity to comment on verified views illustrating the impact of the development from these viewpoints.
- The panel finds the pedestrian access for the site as a whole, and for Building 2, confusing. It is concerned that the building will be insular rather than part of an urban movement network. It suggests that detailed designs are required for the public realm surrounding Building 2, to provide assurance that its setting will be well connected to the city.
- There is a significant contrast between the demonstrative architecture of Building 2, and the small pedestrian entrances from the street network: these should be more visible. An entrance to Building 2 could be considered via the arches from Commercial Street.
- Information should be provided on the materials proposed for the reflective elements of the Building 2 structure. Studies of the way curved or overhanging surfaces reflect on to surrounding streetscapes would be advisable.

Public realm landscape design

- The panel suggests that the landscape design approach does not do enough to reflect the unique character of the location. There is a risk that reusing elements such as railway lines, will seem tokenistic rather than fundamental part of the design approach. Salvaged material could be used to create contemporary elements, rather than replicas.
- The panel is not convinced that the proposed replacement for the ramp is preferable to the existing historic fabric, and feels that breaking the area up into small garden sections may not create a successful area of public realm.
- The panel also questions the inclusion of exhibition space under the platform, without more clarity about why it is needed, or who is expected to use it.
- The proposed undercover route to the cycle stores to the west of Building 2, seems likely to be a constrained and unpleasant environment, and should be reconsidered. The building should aim to positively address the street on this side, as well as to the north.

Buildings 1 and 3

- The panel asks for clarity on the planning status of designs for Buildings 1 and 3. The information provided is more detailed than a masterplan, but lacking the placemaking principles that should be secured at this stage. If the designs are to be submitted for detailed planning permission, the panel asks for a separate review meeting to consider them.

Buildings 4 and 5 and cottages (Sclater Street) and 10a, 10b and 10c

- The panel expands on comments made at the previous review session, registering concern about the lack of active frontage on Bethnal Green Road, Sclater Street and Commercial Street. The current design approach resolves pressure on ground floor accommodation by pushing less desirable accommodation to the edges. A clearer ground floor strategy is needed.
- It asks to discuss of the buildings facing on to Sclater Street in more detail, as there was little time in the previous review meeting to understand the extent to which their design is resolved.
- The panel also requests more information on the size, quality and intended use of the accommodation in Buildings 4, 5 and 10a-c, which includes a number of very small bedrooms.
- It asks for more information on the way the roof of the station box, between blocks, is to be treated. It notes the risk that the rooms overlooking this area will be low quality north-facing units.

Next steps

The MDAs ask to review the proposals, including the draft Design Guide, at a further meeting to ensure sufficient time to discuss all the relevant issues. They suggest that, where possible, the applicant provides information at this review meeting to answer the questions raised above.