

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

Nicola Zech-Behrens,
Bishopsgate Goods Yard Regeneration Limited

27th September 2018

Dear Nicola,

London Review Panel: Bishopsgate Goodsyard

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of Bishopsgate Goodsyard on 13th September 2018. On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer the panel's ongoing support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,



Joanna Averley
Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Lucy Owen, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA



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

Thursday 13 September 2018
Buckley Gray Yeoman, The Tea Building, 56 Shoreditch High Street, E1 6JJ

London Review Panel

Joanna Averley (chair)
Sowmya Parthasarathy
Tom Holbrook
Roger Hawkins
Sunand Prasad

Attendees

Sarah Considine	GLA Regeneration
Jamie Dean	GLA Regeneration
Paul Roberts	GLA Planning
Karen Page	LB Hackney
Barry Coughlan	LB Hackney
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Kirsty Gilmer	LB Tower Hamlets
Paul Buckenham	LB Tower Hamlets
Max Smith	LB Tower Hamlets

Report copied to

Lucy Owen	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 Goodsyard, Braithwaite Street

Presenting team

Nicola Zech-Behrens	Bishopsgate Goods Yard Regeneration Limited
Paul Rigby	FaulknerBrowns Architects
Kevin Fraser	FaulknerBrowns Architects
Giles Charlton	Spacehub
Chris Dyson	Chris Dyson Architects
Matt Yeoman	Buckley Grey Yeoman
Jim Pool	DP9 Ltd
Julian Shirley	DP9 Ltd

LB Tower Hamlet's views

Although LB Tower Hamlets planning officers were not able to attend the review, their comments on the revised development proposals for Bishopsgate Goodsyard were provided by e-mail and read out at the meeting. In broad terms they support the approach to height and massing, subject to analysis of daylight and sunlight. Views analysis, including from local streets, especially those within conservation areas, will be needed to test the building massing. There are some concerns about the reduced area of public realm, with development plots being created at platform level. The concept of a high level open space to serve a strategic role in an area of open space deficiency has been a long-standing policy objective. The introduction of a second east-west route at ground level is welcomed and creates the opportunity to optimise the use of the existing railway arches, and better reveal the heritage assets of the site. Finally, the Council has reservations that the amended proposals may not be optimising the development potential of this strategic site, particularly in relation to the significant reduction in housing numbers. The approach to the balance of land uses, on the western part of the site could be reconsidered with a view to reducing hotel space and increasing housing and employment opportunities.

LB Hackney's views

Planning officers from LB Hackney welcome the reduced scale and massing, improved amenity and townscape quality of the revised proposals for Bishopsgate Goodsyard. They would encourage further work to achieve a positive relationship with the adjacent Tea Building. In terms of historic structures on the site itself, officers are pleased that the scheme retains the historic wall along Shoreditch High Street, and the viaduct above London Road. Hackney Council is keen to see a majority of employment use in the scheme, as well as provision of housing, including affordable homes. They would place a higher priority on employment and residential use than on hotel accommodation. Overall, they question whether the development potential of the site is being optimised, in the context of an emerging cluster of tall buildings around Shoreditch High Street Station.

GLA introduction

The development proposals for Bishopsgate Goodsyards are intended to form the basis of an amended planning application – the original submission having been called in by the previous Mayor in September 2015. A Mayoral Planning Hearing was scheduled for 18 April 2016 and GLA officers published an advisory planning report on 8 April 2016, which recommended refusal based on negative neighbourhood amenity impacts, specifically daylight / sunlight, as result of inappropriate density, height, massing and layout as well as because of the cumulative harm of the proposal to heritage assets. The majority of the revised application is expected to be submitted in outline, with detailed applications only for elements that have an interface with historic structures. A design guide will be produced to accompany the masterplan. While all matters will be reserved for the outline application, an indication of the means of access, scale parameters, indicative layout and indicative landscaping will be provided. GLA officers requested the panel's views on: scale and density; townscape and heritage impacts; routes, public realm and open spaces; the mix of uses; and servicing arrangements. As a scheme called in by the Mayor, the GLA will determine the planning application taking into account national, strategic and local planning policies, representations and other material planning considerations.

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The London Review Panel finds much to admire in the evolving development proposals for Bishopsgate Goodsyards, and the fresh thinking that is evident in the revised designs. Whilst offering its support at a strategic level, the panel highlighted the critical importance of a robust planning process, to ensure high quality design is protected throughout the process of detailed design and implementation. The panel welcomes the reduced scale and massing, which has potential to improve townscape quality, daylight, sunlight and views protected by the London Views Management Framework (LVMF) – as well as optimising viability by avoiding the need for large structures spanning the railway. As design work continues, the panel would encourage a more outward looking focus, to explore the way in which the scheme will contribute to its rapidly evolving context. The way in which the development responds to the historic structures on the site would also benefit from further thought. In general, the panel feels that a more confident approach to the design of new buildings and spaces would be appropriate in response to the extraordinary Braithwaite Viaduct. Some practical concerns were raised about security and safety, where public space and managed vehicular access is proposed beneath a live railway. The creation of a significant new public space at on top of the existing viaduct is one of the most exciting elements of the scheme. Making sure this does not become fenced off for private use, that it is well connected to street level, and animated by the uses that surround it will be essential to its success. Whilst not commenting in detail on the mix of uses proposed, the panel thinks there should be a co-ordinated approach to this across the whole site – rather than requirements for specific uses to be located either side of borough boundaries.

Planning process

- This is a very significant, large scale and complex project. It has enormous potential to deliver something special and unique which speaks to its diverse and dynamic context and communities of interest.
- The design as presented provides many commendable elements, and a strong overall approach. However, there are many issues that were not presented, which will require further review and analysis by the planning authority, for example: the architecture of individual buildings; landscape; lighting; materials; and other issues highlighted in this note.

- The panel would encourage further dialogue between the planning authority and the applicant about how to define and ensure the wide-ranging design issues are safeguarded through the planning process.
- As part of this process, the panel encouraged the design team to consider the merits of a hybrid application over the current plan to submit in outline with design codes.
- This letter therefore is not a comprehensive review of the proposals, but a view on the material presented at the time of the panel meeting.

Scale and massing

- The panel is broadly supportive of the revised scale and massing – subject to testing of sunlight, daylight and townscape views. A comprehensive set of elevations and sections will also be needed to fully describe the scheme.
- Assessment of the scheme in the LVMF will be needed to test the assertion that the impact of the scheme in protected views has been reduced. The panel did not see this information.
- The team is to be applauded for identifying a dual benefit in reducing the quantum of development – so that development is optimised for the structural capacity of the existing viaduct, and its townscape quality is improved.
- There may also be scope to fine tune the development’s massing for example, to enhance its relationship with the Tea Building, which is a significant historic building and local landmark.
- The massing of the taller commercial building to the west of the site needs to be considered in context with suitable analysis to inform their massing, including how they meet the ground / podium and their skyline.
- The panel recognises that discussions are ongoing with the local planning authorities and GLA about the mix of uses and provision of affordable housing – which may have an impact on the economics and therefore the form of the development.

Urban integration

- The presentation was very clear on the design rationale within the red line boundary, and in response to existing structures on the site. It was less clear on the way the scheme will fit into and contribute to the wider area. The scheme needs to be presented in its wider context in terms of all its components – routes, public transports, views, scale, materials, etc
- The area around Shoreditch High Street is undergoing rapid change, and the panel would encourage the design team to produce drawings that show the development in its current and future context.
- This should include analysis of key desire lines to and from the site, views from these routes, and how the scheme contributes to the emerging cluster of tall buildings, around Shoreditch High Street.
- Where staircases and lifts are needed to provide access to the upper level public realm, their locations, visibility, integration with building designs and onward routes will need careful consideration.
- In general, studies of routes through the site, how they fit into the wider context, work in section and at different levels is required. This work was not presented in detail to the panel and there are still some areas of the scheme which remain unresolved – for example whether to not to retain a ramp on the south west corner.
- On Bethnal Green Road, where there will be vehicle access to service yards, careful design and programming will be needed to ensure a positive relationship with the street.

- It is also worth noting that much of this scheme will be seen from above, from adjacent buildings and therefore the design should be considered from a range of elevated positions, as well as from the street.

Integration of historic structures

- The opening up of London Road beneath the historic viaduct running east west across the site promises to create a uniquely characterful new public route.
- The panel supports the concept of pop up units animating London Road below the viaduct, where it is open to the railway. As well as providing welcome activity, these have potential to reduce noise – but careful design will be needed to avoid blocking too much daylight.
- The panel questioned whether the scheme has achieved the right balance between celebrating historic structures and treating them with excessive deference / over celebrating their decay. This relates to both the architecture and potentially the planting strategy for the roofscape and over the top of walls.
- Above the Braithwaite Viaduct, the panel would encourage further thought about how to celebrate this structure, and the experience of being on a large open deck so close of the city. Without wanting to recreate the High Line, the team are encouraged to think about whether there is a unifying design approach for this space, that heightens its extraordinary qualities.
- In general, the panel feels that a more confident approach to designing new buildings and spaces would be an appropriate response to the robust historic structures.
- Drawings that clearly show how the development relates to historic structures, at both level 0 and level 1, would be helpful to clarify the relationship between new and old.

Security and safety

- With public space being proposed below, above and immediately adjacent to a live railway line, expert advice on security arrangements should be sought as soon as possible.
- New guidance published by the Department for Transport on risk associated with shared surfaces should also be taken into account in the design of areas where there will be some vehicle access to predominantly pedestrian areas.
- With access from street level via steps and lifts, there is a risk the upper level public spaces may not be well used enough to feel safe at night – although the hotel at this level should help generate activity.
- Additional residential accommodation could help ensure the upper level spaces are well populated and support passive security.
- The proposals should address pedestrian routes throughout the day and night, including considering active frontages and a lighting strategy. This should extend to all the routes both under the viaduct structures, across the roof space and on the adjacent streets.

Architecture

- There was limited information and time for the panel to provide comments on the emerging architecture – and this was discussed at a strategic level only.
- Each building within the masterplan will be a complex design challenge, with public realm interfaces at two levels, adaptation of historic structures, adjacency to railways and busy roads – as well as tall buildings.

- The Grade II listed Braithwaite Viaduct, and other obsolete railway infrastructure on the site create an extraordinary context. The panel think it would be a mistake to 'normalise' this through the addition of generic brick buildings.
- The way in which the buildings meet the ground, bring life and activity to streets and spaces, and accommodate servicing, bikes and bin stores will careful consideration.
- Equally, the skyline of the development created by the top of the buildings will play an important role in their contribution to the townscape of Shoreditch, as well as longer distance views.
- The panel queried the reasons for submitting an outline application – when it is clear that detailed designs are being developed as a basis for the masterplan parameters and design guide.

Landscape design

- The opportunity to create a public space on top of the existing viaduct is one of the most exciting elements of the scheme.
- The landscape design of this, and other areas of the site could help mediate between new buildings and historic infrastructure.
- The panel is not convinced by the current approach of creating a series of gardens on the viaduct, which could prone to being fenced off from public use.
- Whilst the local authority has reservations about buildings being located in the podium level park, the panel thinks these could be positive in generating activity and reinforcing public use. However, making this case will depend on a convincing mix of uses, and commitment to avoiding gated gardens e.g. for the hotel.
- The panel also questioned how accessibility of the upper level public space could be maximised – the experience that will be created for wheelchair and pram users will be an important consideration
- Making use of the upper levels of buildings to provide amenity space should also be considered, especially where this could enhance the quality of residential accommodation.
- The environmental quality of streets and spaces will need testing, to ensure that wind, daylight, sunlight and noise conditions are understood – to help refine the morphology of the scheme and influence the landscape design.
- A management plan for the entire public realm within the viaduct structure and on at upper levels will need to be developed, which ties into a servicing and maintenance strategy. In some instances, the relationship between the pedestrian and servicing routes needs further resolution.
- The environmental conditions and experience of being in the different spaces across the development needs to be more fully considered, particularly under the viaduct. This should address daylight, sunlight, wind, temperatures, dampness, noise etc with the aim of creating enjoyable spaces.
- In a similar way the role and function of the different areas of public space needs careful consideration and the design should be responsive to this, which spaces are gateways, routes, dwelling, transient, gardens, play, formal or programmed, etc. This should also extend to the opportunity for active or planted roofscapes.

Mix of uses

- The panel understands that the mix of uses being proposed is the subject of discussion with both Hackney and Tower Hamlets.
- Whilst it understands the importance of maximising the provision of residential accommodation, including affordable housing, there may be some benefits in the hotel use, which could help animate the upper level public space.

- It also commented on the phasing and delivery of affordable workspace, which should be clarified and protected through the planning process.
- Tower Hamlets and Hackney have planning policy requirements that relate to the mix of uses, but the panel thinks there should be a co-ordinated approach to this across the whole site – rather than a requirement for specific uses to be located either side of borough boundaries.

Next steps

- The London Review Panel would welcome a further opportunity to comment on the design guide and parameter plans for Bishopsgate Goodsynd.