


**LONDON**  
**REVIEW PANEL**

  
The Earls Court Development Company (ECDC)

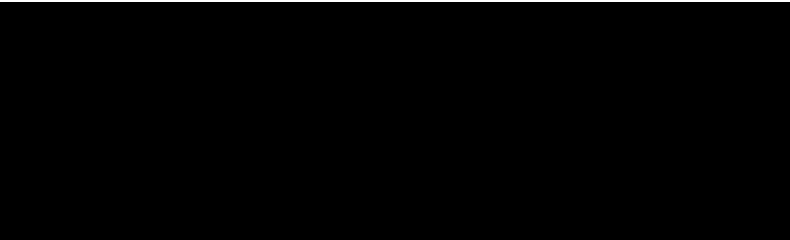
June 2023

Dear 

**London Review Panel: Earls Court - Former Exhibition Centre**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Earls Court 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023. I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer ongoing Mayor's Design Advocate support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,

  
Mayor's Design Advocate (London Review Panel Chair)

cc.

All meeting attendees


Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham, Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA

Louise Duggan, Head of Regeneration, GLA

Lucinda Turner, Assistant Director, Planning & Regeneration, GLA & Director Spatial Planning, TfL

 Head of Design, ECDC

 Development Manager, TfL

Brendan Hodges - Planning Manager, TfL

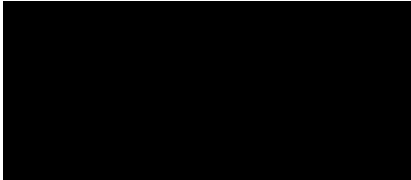
**LONDON**

**REVIEW PANEL**

**Report of London Review Panel meeting for Earls Court**

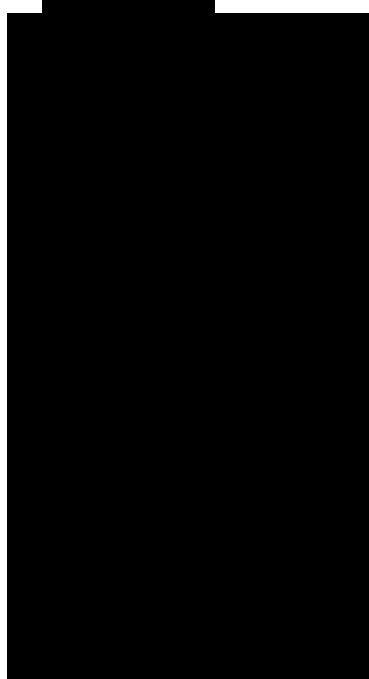
19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - Review held in person.

**London Review Panel**



Mayors Design Advocate  
Mayors Design Advocate  
Mayors Design Advocate  
Mayors Design Advocate (Chair)

**Attendees**



Earls Court Development Company  
Earls Court Development Company  
Earls Court Development Company  
Earls Court Development Company  
Earls Court Development Company  
Greater London Authority Planning  
Greater London Authority Regeneration  
Greater London Authority Regeneration  
Hawkins\Brown Architects  
Hawkins\Brown Architects  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (DRP rep)  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (DRP rep)  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
SLA  
Studio Egret West

**Report copied to**

Jules Pipe  
Philip Graham  
Louise Duggan



Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills  
GLA Executive Director of Good Growth  
GLA Head of Regeneration  
GLA Regeneration

**Confidentiality and publication**

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. Review reports will target publication to the London Review Panel webpage six months following the review unless otherwise agreed.

## **London Review Panel's Views**

### **Summary**

The panel thanks the team for the comprehensive presentation and was encouraged by the client and design team working and presenting together as one coordinated team.

Since the previous review of the scheme, the current masterplan has evolved towards greater clarity and key design elements are working well together. The proposed approach to height and massing is positive and works well. The legibility of the scheme, particularly around movement and open spaces has improved. The genuine and substantive engagement with the community was noted, as was the quality of the models and presentation materials.

The character areas presented were generally supported but the panel cautioned against developing design guidelines for each character area without an equal consideration to their interfaces, which is where most of the people movement and buildings lines are likely to be.

Some areas for further resolution and clarity were identified, including around the experiential quality of places and open spaces, and they are noted below in this report.

### **Reinforcing the overall vision**

- The panel has now reviewed this scheme four times and is aware of the broad vision and objectives for the site. However, this presentation would have benefitted from reinforcing the vision and overarching masterplan before describing specific aspects. The masterplan image shown at the end would have been a helpful drawing to set the scene. It is recommended that future discussions start with the overall masterplan vision.

### **Community Engagement**

- The panel commends the team on the extensive and thoughtful community engagement that has been undertaken to date.
- The panel is pleased to see how the team has facilitated constructive conversations about height using models and images that go well beyond basic and generic communications materials. The panel noted significant positive feedback from the engagement sessions and hope that this intelligent engagement will continue as the project moves into the next phase.
- The contribution of the PRIP panel on process is very positive. The team is now encouraged to utilise this excellent community panel to test further ideas and proposals around placemaking and inclusion.

### **Landscape-led Approach**

#### *Character of the Park*

- The panel questioned the dominance of retail / F&B edges to the main park and encouraged the design team to look at a less curated park edge (in parts) to encourage a more inclusive feel where the pressure to spend for using the park is not so overt. Since

the park is such a central feature of the new place, the design team is encouraged to develop a very intentional proposition to design for a variety of uses and avoid defaulting to a well-managed corporate place.

- The new green deck over the railway line is a welcome addition to the project and offers excellent potential to enhance movement into the site as well as variety in open space type. The need to differentiate this place/route from the adjacent Empress Place route was emphasised to maintain the identity of each. The ability for a deck to accommodate the level of vegetation shown was questioned and it was recognised that further work would be needed to ensure a healthy landscape could be sustained in this location.
- The open space to the north (the hinge between Aisgill Gardens and Table Park) is a key open space and was not discussed sufficiently. This will be an important pivot with challenging edges and levels, and it should be developed further.

#### *Scale of the Park*

- The narrative of a 'destination big new park' may not be what everyone imagines this place to be. The closest comparator mentioned was Trafalgar Square, which is not a park. More relevant comparisons for scale and character will help communicate the design aspiration for the park better. These precedents should include London open spaces for local context, and other (potentially non-London, non-UK) typological precedents to show open spaces surrounded by similar scale buildings with similar proposed topography.

#### *Sections, the Table and Level Change*

- The level changes across the site are a distinct challenge but also offer an opportunity for interesting interfaces. The team has made good progress in navigating the levels. This could have been better communicated, and therefore discussed, through some site cross-sections. The panel was not convinced about the extent of green shown on top of a concrete deck (Table Park as well as the green route over railway) and this needs to be well-resolved if the desired landscape character is to be achieved.

#### **Movement and Circulation**

- The panel agree the movement network of streets and boulevards are now showing good clarity and ease of wayfinding.
- The panel advise that all the gateway points into the site need to provide a strong welcoming aspect to people from the neighbourhoods beyond. There was a lot of focus on the southern and eastern entrances, but equal attention must be brought to the northern and western entrances as well. The PRIP panel could help review these public realm thresholds as they are key interfaces with the surrounding community.
- The gateways into the site offer opportunities for small parks and plazas that are accessible to the wider community. These edge spaces could be as important as the Table Park which currently dominates the open space concept narrative.
- The panel emphasised the need to build safety and overlooking in any phase one movement and open space amenity that will be provided.

## Massing and Height

- The panel was unanimous in the view that the proposed approach to height and massing has improved since the last review. The panel agrees that the singular tall building is a more elegant proposition for the location and works better than the previous concept of a variety of height datums around the Empress State building. The reduction in the number of towers of varying heights and the wider spacing between buildings around the Empress State building was supported.

## Mixed-use, retail, and culture

- The approach to mixed-use is well supported. Given the headline aspiration to make this a cultural destination ('new' showground), the panel would like to see more detail on the creative cluster and the maker / cultural spaces. The lack of any 'backs' in the heart of the scheme with all servicing underground presents a risk that the servicing for maker / creative spaces is not adequately provided leading to less industry and making uses and more service and retail occupation. The design and client teams are encouraged to develop a genuinely inclusive range of uses, building on the existing grassroots cultural scene, rather than curating a retail-as-culture based destination.

## Sustainability

- **Sunlight & Daylight** – Optimising sunlight and daylight into buildings and in open spaces will be a critical factor in a dense scheme such as this. The new proposed massing with greater spacing between towers appears to work better from a microclimate perspective but the panel questioned the evidence around that, and also questioned whether previous schemes had been robust enough in assessing this aspect. The design team should be clear about baseline measurements for the sunlight and daylight levels they are achieving when comparing any future massing and height – this is a fundamental issue that will determine the success of the open spaces and must be given more attention.
- The overall approach to sustainability is commended with specific commitments such as the low temperature ambient loop seen as a positive and innovative contribution. The team is encouraged to continue developing specific areas of innovation as the sustainability and design proposals are explored further.

## Future Reviews

- The panel is pleased to have had the chairs of the RB Kensington & Chelsea and LB Hammersmith & Fulham Design Review Panel to join the review session as observers. Review panel notes will also be made available across both panels. The London review panel respects the principle that design review brings greatest value when it responds to the context and is done locally. The panel welcome the team to return to discuss evolving proposals again in the future.