

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

██████████
Applicant's Agent
DP9

2nd January 2023

Dear ██████████

London Review Panel: Croydon College Green

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of the Croydon College Green on the 17th November 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

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

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

Report of London Review Panel meeting for Croydon College Green, LB Croydon

17th November 2023

Review held in person.

Site visit did not take place ahead of the review as this was a follow up on the review of 10th May 2023.

London Review Panel

[REDACTED]

MDA (Chair)

[REDACTED]

MDA

Attendees

[REDACTED]

London Borough Croydon

DP9 (Applicant Agent)

DP9 (Applicant Agent)

Studio Egret West (Design team)

Studio Egret West (Design team)

Studio Egret West (Design team)

GLA Planning (Urban Design)

GLA Regeneration (Panel Manager)

Report copied to

Jules Pipe

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham

GLA Executive Director of Good Growth

Louise Duggan

GLA Head of 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 comments

Summary

The panel thanks the design team for an excellent presentation which was concise and clear both on diagrams and on technical issues.

The panel was highly supportive of the new building forms, commending their elegance, visual contextuality and excellence in achieving 91% dual aspect homes. The panel was however, surprised to see that the building heights have increased in relation to the previously reviewed scheme. While the panel is sympathetic to the pressures on housing design to meet the new fire safety regulations, it struggles to find a rationale for the six-storey increase on the tallest building and encourages the team to revise and reduce this.

The panel recommends that the tall building to the eastern edge of the site and building fronting the new public courtyard have a resonance in materiality and form, creating variety with a degree of calmness.

Buildings at this scale need the highest sustainability credentials, the panel strongly recommends that the team addresses the approach and revises the flats that are not meeting the required daylight levels.

The panel thought the landscape was generally good and reminded the team that the planting deck needs to stay deep enough to achieve the intended benefits.

Suitability of the overall height

While the panel understands the pressures on residential development, it advises that if not addresses, the six-storey increase height may create an unnecessary planning risk.

The difference between 38 and 44 storeys is distinguishable in views from Chatsworth Road, where the Tapestry now appears higher than the College Road co-living building. The panel advises that the ultimate height justification should be supported by technical data such as evidence of daylight and wind impacts, and overshadowing of neighbouring buildings.

Given the strong opposition to increased height from Croydon's Design Review Panel and the Local Planning Authority, the panel were surprised that the scheme has come in higher. The panel feels that a reduction in the number of flats will need to be seriously considered.

Building layout

Reducing the 10-storey link block to a 2-storey NHS facility has helped bring daylight and sense of openness to Fairfield Courtyard. The panel welcomes the addition of the L-shaped ground floor on Arnhem Gardens which adds more positive frontage to the public courtyard.

The panel appreciates that the team is working with the inherited overshadowing condition from the annex building to the south of the site, but sunlight to open amenity space and play space should be at least 50%. The panel recommends that the team explores any

possible solutions to minimising the impact to the quality and useability of these spaces. The panel queried the Vertical Sky Component and overshadowing impacts for the neighbours, as the distance between the annex building and the site boundary is only 11m.

The panel supports the omission of balconies at upper levels of the taller building, as the wind at this height would render them redundant; it was agreed that the oversizing of the homes without private external amenity was a reasonable compensation.

The panel was particularly impressed with the achievement of 80% BRE compliance for daylighting within the homes as lower floors do not often work as well on tall schemes.

Public open space and pedestrian environment

The public realm principles are generally supported, but there are some potentially unsafe and underused dead ends that need to be designed out. Such as the area of southern public area which would be better used if enclosed as private space for residents. The 2.5m route to the west of the site leading to Fairfield Gardens is too narrow and needs to be more generous.

The panel asks the team to include trees in the ground, as per the last review. This should be in addition to any trees and planting at podium level that are planted in an adequate depth of soil to sustain them long term. Where open spaces are overshadowed and receiving lower than expected levels of daylight, the planting scheme should respond to support the shadier, woodland quality of landscape.

Building form and materiality

The panel commend the team for their courage to completely change the building forms from the scheme previously presented. The narrower, octagonal forms are less blunt than the rectangular forms, resulting in a much more elegant scheme. The quality of the homes has drastically improved as a result of the chamfering - from 45% to 91% dual aspect.

The panel advise that where currently each building has its own architectural language, perhaps three of the buildings could be expressed more similarly, but with different colours for example, and one could be more singular to aid the composition and bring a sense of overall harmony to the development. A more muted mid ground works well, but the building fronting the courtyard could be made more playful in dialogue with the tallest.

The panel thinks that the neo-classical stone colonnade, dilutes and detracts the mid-century spirit of the scheme, does not relate well to the corresponding building and advocate for its removal from the plans.

The panel advise the team to test the facades appropriately to ensure that the tonality and textures read as well at a distance as they do up close.

While terracotta is a relatively sustainable material, it will need to be supported on an aluminium frame. Therefore, the panel urges the team to consider the choice of materials in a deeper way to meet the highest levels of sustainability for the scheme holistically.

Impact on the nearby heritage assets including the Conservation Area to the south

The panel found the townscape flythrough very helpful and illustrative. Notwithstanding the height issue, the panel is in consensus that the proposed buildings are good for Croydon and it feels confident that the development will bring the centre to life.

Next Steps

The panel thanks the applicant for its clear presentation of the scheme and is available to review the scheme again if requested to do so by the GLA.