

# LONDON

## REVIEW PANEL

Associate  
DP9

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

### **London Review Panel: 99 Bishopsgate**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of 99 Bishopsgate on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024. 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,

[REDACTED]  
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 99 Bishopsgate

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024

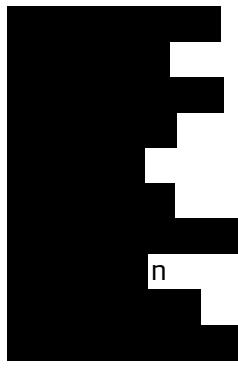
A site visit took place ahead of the review with a tour and briefings given by the client team and the Design Team.

#### London Review Panel



MDA (Chair)  
MDA  
MDA

#### Attendees



RSHP  
RSHP  
Andy Surgeon  
AKT II  
Atelier Ten  
DP9  
DP9  
Brookfield Properties  
Brookfield Properties  
Townscape Consultancy



City of London  
City of London  
City of London  
City of London



GLA Planning – Case Officer  
GLA Design Unit  
GLA Design Unit  
GLA Design Unit

#### 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

## **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.

## **Overview**

The applicant team is proposing a mixed-use commercial development in the Bishopsgate area. Their plan includes a developed public realm on the ground floor alongside commercial space across all levels. The project aims to enhance Bishopsgate and enrich the public realm within the City of London.

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

### **Summary**

The panel does not support the complete demolition and rebuild of a building of this type which is less than 50 years old and urges that this approach is reconsidered. Notwithstanding this fundamental aspect, the panel gives its views on the merit of the proposed design in its own right.

The panel acknowledges the evolving nature of city views and, based on the views presented, finds no issues with how the building sits within the cluster, though they recommend further evaluation from Waterloo Bridge for coherence.

The panel urges a flexible strategy for public realm and site routes, safeguarding the building for future uses. The panel cites IBM Madison Plaza in New York as a precedent for good public spaces. The ground floors should be designed to benefit surrounding and wider communities, accommodating various activities beyond commercial interests. Nighttime safety considerations, flexibility of use, and programming space to enhance cultural production are also highlighted.

The panel proposes integrating reclaimed materials to reduce carbon footprint, and refining circulation in the cultural hub for better cohesion. They advocate for enhancing the cultural space's presence.

The panel recommends exploring a lighter structural solution to improve the street-level experience and clearly communicating the space's openness. They stress aligning with local guidelines and evolving the management strategy to better cater to diverse audiences. Enhancing landscaping beyond site boundaries and integrating existing building elements to enhance uniqueness are also suggested.

Overall, the panel provides insights to refine future stages, emphasising community-centric design, safety, flexibility, and contextual integration as key considerations.

### **Height and form in relation to the immediate and city cluster context**

The panel recognises that the cluster curve for city views is always changing, so there is a collective consensus that there are no problems with the current cluster. However, further investigation should be considered for views from Waterloo Bridge to ensure there is coherence with the city cluster.

The sustainability and embodied carbon approach should reconsider the fact that this building is 30 years old, exploring better options to preserve the existing building to enhance the sustainability approach.

### **Public realm and routes through the site**

The panel recommends that the team develop a comprehensive strategy for adapting the building for future use, emphasising the need for flexibility. As an exemplar case study, the panel suggests looking at IBM Madison Plaza at 519 Avenue in New York, which features an abundance of trees and open spaces that create a welcoming public realm. In contrast to the proposed ground floor, which could benefit from a more holistic and open design approach, the panel underscores that the public realm should serve the community rather than focus solely on commercial gain; it should provide spaces for users to sit, chat, rest, and wander.

The panel also highlights the importance of considering the safety of women, girls, and gender-diverse people at nighttime. Conducting a nighttime study would be beneficial in establishing the necessary features to ensure safety. The current design of the food court space is overly specific, whereas public spaces should be non-specific and flexible, allowing people to use them as they wish. The panel suggests to the applicant team to consider all methods and spatial organisation options for public realm management. This area is consumption-driven, but it would benefit from incorporating more informal workspaces and public realm areas rather than retail.

Public realm spaces should focus on cultural production, prompting a reevaluation of the ground floor design. The panel suggests diversifying the commercial uses on the ground floor, as limiting it to food and drink units restricts its potential. Additionally, introducing flexibility in the space and its uses would greatly enhance its appeal.

### **Public realm connections, and integration with surroundings**

The panel suggests further exploration of materiality, drawing inspiration from architectural elements such as those found in the nearby church, could enhance the project's aesthetic and contextual integration. The panel critiques the current design of the cultural hub, noting that its circulation patterns feel disjointed and could benefit from redesign to create a more unified and amenity-rich environment. They recommend conducting additional investigation and design refinement specifically for the facade of the cultural hall space, highlighting its significant potential and its relationship with the main tower.

Additionally, the panel proposes transforming the cultural space into a more substantial, less transparent structure to imbue it with a stronger presence and character. They also suggest repurposing materials from the existing building to add historical depth and reduce the project's carbon footprint, thereby integrating sustainability into the cultural building's development.

Lastly, establishing a dedicated project team is proposed to oversee the public realm, focusing on both its design and management aspects to ensure its effectiveness and integration within the urban fabric.

### **Street level experience**

The panel comments on the current appearance of the structure, noting its heavy and formal aesthetic. They suggest exploring alternative forms for the structural elements to create a lighter visual impact and a more inviting atmosphere for the public. Emphasising the need to clearly communicate that the space is open and welcoming to all, they underscore the importance of aligning with local authority guidelines and goals for public spaces during the design process.

Furthermore, the panel recommends enhancing the management strategy of the public realm, advocating for a deeper understanding of the target audience to ensure broad appeal. They stress the importance of ongoing development of the public realm, suggesting that lessons from the city's urban experience should inform its design.

The panel also addresses the landscaping strategy, noting its current confinement within the site boundary. They propose exploring options to extend landscaping into adjacent pavement and public areas, thereby creating a more inviting environment. Additionally, they encourage integrating the ground floor more uniquely and contextually with the site, suggesting investigations into incorporating elements from the existing building—whether through materiality, scale, texture, or other means—to enhance its distinctiveness and relevance to the surroundings.

### **Summary**

The panel acknowledges their review arrives late in the application process but offers valuable insights intended to shape future refinements. Active participation in improving streetscape and public realms is emphasised over passive support for TFL and the city. The original building, dating back to 1776, is noted for its generous public space concept, which remains a collective asset to the city. There's a call for creating a public space that explicitly recognises its role and contributions to the community.