

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

Partner
Gerald Eve

December 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

London Review Panel: Liverpool Street Station

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Liverpool Street Station on the 5th December 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 Liverpool Street Station, City of London Corporation

5th December 2024

Review held in person.

Site visit did not take place ahead of the review on the 5th December 2024.

London Review Panel



MDA (Chair)
MDA
MDA
MDA

Attendees



Gerald Eve (Applicant Representative)
Network Rail (Client)
Network Rail (Client)
City of London Corporation (Principal Urban Designer and Heritage Officer)
Acme (Director)
GLA Planning (Principal Strategic Planner)
GLA Design Unit (Panel Manager/Design Officer)
GLA Design Unit (Head of Design Unit)
GLA Design Unit (Project Support Officer)
GLA Design Unit (Principal Conservation Officer)

Report copied to

Jules Pipe
Philip Graham
Louise Duggan

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

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 acknowledges the need for improvements and upgrades to Liverpool Street Station and expresses general support of the proposal for the station itself, but have significant concerns regarding the scale of intervention proposed and the disproportionate disruption it would bring to passenger services in balance with benefits to station users and long-term station capacity.

Key areas of concern include the integration of the over station development (OSD) with station improvements, the justification of scale and massing of the OSD, public realm quality, station legibility, heritage impacts and inclusive access.

It was strongly felt that the presentation of the proposals did not give enough detail on the OSD and that this requires more scrutiny from the panel.

The panel strongly recommends revisiting several aspects of the proposal to address identified shortcomings and deliver a project that reflects the site's importance as a gateway to London. Further engagement with the panel is encouraged to address their concerns.

Station proposals

- The panel acknowledges that the proposed changes to the station generally seem logical and the passenger modelling is reassuring.
- At the previous panel in February 2023, the applicant stated that they had commissioned a study to explore improvements to the station independent of commercial development, to provide a baseline against which the proposals can be tested. The panel would like to see the results of this study.
- The panel comments on the proposed station entrances, strongly recommending that they read more as station entrances and that they are more legible and distinct from the office entrance for easier identification for users.
- Using London Bridge as a good precedent for managing capacity of users, the panel expresses the importance of permeability in the station.
- The panel stresses the importance of inclusive access throughout the station. They also assessed that the addition of lifts to allow for step-free access in the station is a positive step.
- It is unclear how the proposal is intending to address the bus station, the panel expresses that improvements to access needs to be considered.
- The panel raises concerns on the position and desirability of retail units on the ground level in the station and supports that further investigation is required to justify placement of units.
- The panel had concerns regarding the tight concourse spaces created by new structural columns, questioning whether the proposed 45% increase in concourse size is sufficient to justify the disruption caused by construction.
- While the panel acknowledges that expanding the station concourse at platform level is challenging, given the constrained station footprint, the stated 45% increase in concourse size appears to be heavily weighted to creation of additional circulation space at street level. Frequent last minute platform changes at Liverpool Street encourage the vast majority of passengers to congregate at platform level in close proximity to the gateline. The applicant is encouraged to look at whether additional concourse space at the lower level could be created by further re-allocation of retail and support space, to provide as much capacity as possible where it is most needed, at platform level.

- The panel also raised questions around future-proofing the design, considering the resilience of station infrastructure in the face of future passenger demand.
- The quality of the renderings presented was questioned. The panel felt these did not accurately convey the experience of being within the proposed spaces, particularly regarding daylight levels.

Development Layout and Permeability

- The panel felt that the current proposals did not adequately communicate the understanding of the user journey or provide sufficient connectivity between the station and surrounding public spaces.
- The panel questioned the focus on Exchange Square as a key access point, given Network Rail's lack of commitment to delivering this connection.
- The panel welcomed the widening and levelling of Sun Street Passage but felt that more attention is needed on cycle parking provision and the interaction between the station and its surrounding streets.

Scale, Height and Massing

- The panel felt that they were unable to comment meaningfully on the OSD due to the lack of detail provided.
- However, the panel did express strongly that proposed massing and height of the OSD lacks clear justification, particularly given the site's location outside the City of London's tall building cluster and adjacency to the Bishopsgate Conservation Area.
- While the reduced height from previous schemes is noted, the panel remains unconvinced that the scale is appropriate and would welcome further justification that the massing of the building is the right approach in this context.
- The panel were particularly concerned regarding the accuracy of visuals showing the proposed glass facades of the OSD, feeling that these would have a dark appearance in reality. This raised further concerns about the building's visual impact on the skyline and its relationship to nearby heritage assets, such as the Andaz Hotel.
- The panel questioned whether this scale of intervention is necessary to achieve the desired operational improvements for the station.
- The panel requested more detailed elevations and sections be presented to justify the proposed massing and height.

Public Realm

- The panel noted that there was limited information on the public realm proposals in the presentation and would require further details to give meaningful comment.
- Concerns were raised around the location of the cycle parking provision which is advised to be in a more convenient location(s).
- The panel urged the design team to maximise the potential of Exchange Square as a public entrance and consider its broader impacts on the surrounding urban fabric, albeit reliant on Network Rail's commitment to delivering the connection.

Inclusive Access

- Concerns remain about the usability of certain features, such as the Sky Lobby, for neurodivergent users and those with mobility challenges and pinch points created for wheelchair users, those with pushchairs and other lift users in this user journey.
- The panel also noted that the lifts on Liverpool Street providing access to the roof garden appear secondary to the escalators giving access to the office building. The

escalators are more prominent and grand, creating a conflict between visitors to the roof garden and the workforce.

- It was felt that the overall design should better reflect the needs of all users, ensuring seamless navigation through the station and the office part of the development.
- The panel strongly recommended the applicant to ensure there is a diverse representation in the visuals of the proposals, as this should reflect the diversity of all London users who will access the station.

Architecture and Materiality

- The panel provided feedback that the architectural approach to the OSD should be strengthened significantly to demonstrate greater ambition and quality for such an iconic building for the City of London.
- The panel encouraged the design team to aim for a landmark building, but with a contemporary expression.
- There were also concerns about the durability and carbon impact of the proposed materials, particularly the brick vaulted elements of the entrances, and the glass curtain walling of the OSD.

Heritage Impacts

- The panel acknowledged efforts to respect the station's Victorian heritage but remained concerned about the impact of removing parts of the late 1980s roof structure.
- The panel felt that any replacement roof should demonstrate clear design quality that justifies the intervention and the removal of listed building fabric. The panel also raised concerns about the practicalities of making the roof safe in the event of fire.
- The proposed massing and architectural approach of the OSD do not complement the heritage setting.

Next Steps

The panel thanks the applicant for its presentation of the scheme and recommends that the design team revisit the following:

- Justification for the OSD's scale, height, and massing
- Architectural ambition and material selection for the OSD
- Integration and clarity of station entrances
- Provision of high-quality public realm and cycle parking
- Inclusivity and accessibility of key features, such as the Sky Lobby
- Detailed elevations and sections to justify design choices

A follow-up design review is strongly encouraged to address these concerns and ensure the proposals deliver a transformational scheme worthy of this key London site.