

# LONDON

# REVIEW PANEL

[REDACTED]  
CEO  
Earls Court Development Company

23 February 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

## London Review Panel: Earls Court 05

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of the Earls Court on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 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,

[REDACTED] (chair)  
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 Earls Court, LB Hammersmith and Fulham and RB Kensington and Chelsea

4th December 2023

Review held in person.

#### London Review Panel

[REDACTED]	MDA (Chair)
[REDACTED]	MDA
[REDACTED]	MDA
[REDACTED]	MDA

#### Applicant team

[REDACTED]	Earls Court Development Company
[REDACTED]	Hawkins Brown
[REDACTED]	Maccreanor Lavington
[REDACTED]	Sheppard Robson

#### Local Planning Authority

[REDACTED]	RB Kensington and Chelsea
[REDACTED]	RB Kensington and Chelsea
[REDACTED]	RB Kensington and Chelsea
[REDACTED]	LB Hammersmith and Fulham
[REDACTED]	LB Hammersmith and Fulham

#### Greater London Authority (GLA)

[REDACTED]	GLA, Regeneration
[REDACTED]	GLA, Planning

#### 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's Views**

### **Summary**

The panel commended the team on clear presentations, facilitated by the production of models and the exhibition display.

The panel finds the open space strategy and ecosystem of different spatial typologies successful overall, however the landscape has been over-programmed in places. The panel advises the team to consider a looser-fit approach, particularly the Table Park, to allow for flexible and adaptive use of the open space to meet changing needs over time.

The panel urges the team to test the buildings to understand the microclimate they will create for the landscape, and to design the landscape to provide outcomes above amenity. Wind assessments are yet to be carried out and their findings will be critical to the success of the scheme.

The panel challenges to the team to think more about how their designs would translate into Design Codes, particularly for the open spaces. The panel suggests that Code should be concise, but not too prescriptive. Distinguishing which elements should be coded, and which may not need to be could, help to secure design intent and quality as the masterplan is built out.

The panel firmly supports the team's approach of designing the landscape to provide outcomes above amenity, with microclimate and biodiversity in mind. The panel reminds the team that planting above ground at podium level will need to be supported by adequate soil depths and water retention areas to maintain its quality.

The panel strongly recommends that the team thinks about how to continue bring the Inclusivity panel with them throughout the design process.

### **Revised height and massing – distribution, spacing and variation of tall buildings and associated townscape, legibility and environmental considerations.**

- Having seen and fed into the development of the masterplan over the previous four London Review Panel meetings, the panel agree that the plan is now working well, and think that the general distribution of heights, and locations of increased height and density is sensible.
- The panel thinks that the masterplan has benefitted from the removal of some buildings and reductions in height since the last proposal. The panel thinks that tall buildings now seem more considered, using height in certain locations to help the large area to feel urbanised.
- The scale of the site has generated a masterplan of many centres which will improve the development's sense of scale, character and appeal.
- Open spaces should provide some shade, and the panel recommends that the team use the models to test the quality of daylight in open spaces and that they represent this in CGIs, using them as a tool to help calibrate the design and expectations of how these spaces will feel and how they can be used.

- The panel questioned what public realm interventions are proposed for Lillie Road and prompts the team to consider how they can benefit the cultural building.

### **Design code**

- This landscape-led masterplan of a new, complex piece of city requires support and input from many parties over many years to realise. The panel would like to impress the importance of the design code having the right balance of generic-ness and specificity to keep the development of the masterplan on course over time and between many hands.
- The panel cautions against 'over-coding', and it advises that coding is used for repeating elements, not bespoke or singular elements in the design.
- The Code should also be specific in its language so that it is instructive and useful to future architects. This will ensure the unique and idiosyncratic style of the proposed architecture is delivered in the spirit of its design.

### **Public realm and landscaping and podium levels**

- The landscape will be the glue for this new neighbourhood. While the proposed connections and routes and landscape are all working, the panel strongly encourages the team to refine the character of each of the outdoor spaces, by thinking about how they would feel as a place to live and adjusting designs accordingly.
- The panel highlights the need to consider safety in such a large pedestrianised area, as streets will be quieter, and perception of safety and actual risk can be heightened in this kind of environment.
- Sources of light should be considered from both natural and artificial streetlighting. The panel would like to understand and see the natural light and shade diagram and to be reassured that the team has taken this information into account in their design process. This is not to say that darker spaces should be viewed negatively, but that their treatment should be considered different, for example, shadier areas can offer a sense of respite when safety considerations are also integrated.
- The panel describe the Cascade moment as a crisis of geometries, different types of public space and characters converging. It suggests that this level of complexity cannot be coded for but requires detailed and specific design.
- Considering the likely length of this site's construction and its phased approach, the panel strongly advises the team to design how can the ground floor spaces and public realm be actively programmed in the interim condition. This can help to create a sense of place, built confidence in the long-term project, and support residents and businesses to take ownership of them and develop sustainable community networks into the future.
- The management and maintenance of planting at podium and ground levels should be factored into the design to ensure its visual and amenity and ecological value.

### **Engagement**

- The panel has been impressed with how the team has worked with the Inclusivity Panel to harness local interest and insights so far. At this stage, the early intentions and conversations have materialised in a concrete design and it is crucial to communicate with and engage those who contributed to this.

- The panel suggests that the next phase, and at this point in the process, should be about enabling local people on the Panel to become constructive design critics; enabling them to fully understand the implications of decisions, and to hear any subsequent concerns. The panel advises taking members of the Inclusivity Panel on active site investigations, rather than passive site visits could be one of the many ways to approach this.

## Detailed plots

### General comments

- The Phase 1 design successfully incorporates a number of dense and tall buildings into a podium that meets the ground and form a street successfully on the whole.
- The team have produced a ‘monolithic mosaic’, in that the scheme is dense with consistent urban blocks forming streets, but with plenty of detail and variation which break down the form. However, given the amount of complexity in plan and section, the panel thinks that the materiality can be simpler to improve the architectural legibility and clarity of composition.
- The panel believes that the ‘Habitable dual aspect’ interpretation of the London Plan policy wherein non-habitable rooms are not taken into account, is sensible and potentially applicable in other urban contexts.
- The panel strongly supports the ‘Opera box’ balconies on both EC05 and EC06.

### Plot EC06

- The panel believes that the team has explored and landed on a true evolution of a mansion block typology, that negotiates the scales of its surroundings well.
- The panel commends the team on developing an emerging new typology that resolves compliance with the new Part B Building Regulations by incorporating a second stair core.

### Podium

- The panel finds the urbanism and purpose of the podium unclear.
- It suggests that the team clarify whether it is, for example, lining the Empress building, creating a back, or a forming street.
- The scale and proportions of the podium block has a good relationship to neighbours – with the sun path and daylight well-minded in its design.
- The podium sets a good shoulder-height it creates for the collection of buildings above
- The panel does not support making shoulder height buildings into demi-detached. These spaces should be designated for social infrastructure.

### Plot EC05

- The panel thinks that the teams have explored geometries well to arrive at something that is contextually relevant. However, it is in consensus that there are a few too many architectural ingredients in the current design. The panel support the express of architectural ornamentation but would like to see more clarity in its materiality.

### Plot WB03/04/05

- While the panel thinks the articulation of the nursery area facing Aisgill Gardens is working well, it also thinks the podium has too many faceted edges overall needs work to improve its interface with adjacent external spaces.
- The panel appreciates how the floors of the buildings are rotated on an axis so that their dwellings face in all directions as they rise on plot WB04.
- The panel commends the team for achieving 100% dual aspect on WB04 and WB05.
- The panel thinks the formal expression of communal space at the 'nose' of tower WB03, distinguishes the student tower with a status of its own.

### 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.