

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review: Iceland Wharf

Thursday 14 June 2018

Level 10, 1 Stratford Place, Montfichet Road, London E20 1EJ

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Russell Curtis
Keith French

Attendees

Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Esther Everett	London Legacy Development Corporation
Tessa Kordeczka	Frame Projects

Report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Jerry Bell	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Jane Jin	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application review of the scheme for Iceland Wharf. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Peter Studdert (chair); Russell Curtis; Keith French; Neil Deely; and David Bonnett.

1. Project name and site address

Iceland Wharf, Hackney Wick, London E3

Planning application reference: 18/00095/FUL

2. Presenting team

Andy Puncher	pH+ Architects
Gavin Henneberry	pH+ Architects
Laura La Greca	pH+ Architects
Glen Charles	City & Suburban Homes
Adam Williams	CMA Planning

3. Planning authority's views

A constrained site, land use designation and proximity of a Strategic Industrial Location (SIL) result in a challenging context for a mixed use development. The planning authority has welcomed the design team's inventive approach to these challenges. Issues pursued with the applicant include: appropriateness of scale and massing; compliance with the Mayor's housing SPG with respect to unit sizes and amenity provision; response to the adjacent SIL; impact on neighbouring properties, including daylight / sunlight levels, overshadowing and noise.

Block D marginally exceeds the prevailing 20 metre height and is therefore subject to LLDC Local Plan Policy BN.10 on tall buildings which includes a requirement for 'outstanding' architecture.

A question arises around the design of the walkways providing access to residential units in terms of mitigating fire risk. The planning authority considers, however, that the design as submitted is central to the development's success.

4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel supports approval of the planning application for development at Iceland Wharf. This is an ambitious and complex scheme which combines both commercial and residential uses, in keeping with the character of Hackney Wick and Fish Island. Some reservations remain about residential units overlooking commercial working yards. The panel suggests that the streetscape along Iceland Road might be improved by a small reduction in the height of the block between the Lighthouse public house and the retained two storey building – possibly to be compensated by an increase in the height of the riverside residential block. The panel thinks that the architecture shows exceptional quality, promising high quality spaces for both living and working. The landscape design is integral to the quality of the scheme and careful thought should be given to ensuring that the proposed planting thrives. These comments are expanded below.



Response to context

- The panel points to potential issues, such as noise or offensive smells, arising from existing or future uses of the SIL to the south of the development. It welcomes assurances that the scheme has been designed to create a buffer to the SIL and also that it benefits from high acoustic specifications.

Mixed use

- The panel commends the depth of thought applied to creating a genuinely mixed use development – a little community within a community – that is entirely appropriate to the character of Hackney Wick and Fish Island. The scheme demonstrates a real richness and quality.
- While the proposal cleverly tackles the challenge of combining living and working, some reservations remain about the compatibility of residential and B1 uses, with commercial working yards overlooked by residential units. (It is noted that servicing of B2 uses in block A is envisaged from an internal loading bay.)

Scale and massing

- Overall, the panel finds the scale and massing of the buildings appropriate, although some uneasiness remains about the relationship between the two storey retained building (former Ammonia Works Warehouse, a non designated heritage asset) and the new buildings along Iceland Road (blocks B, C and D). It would be interesting to see how the streetscape along Iceland Road might reveal itself at street level.
- The panel suggests that the streetscape might be improved by a reduction in height of one storey for block B between the Lighthouse public house and the retained building. This block directly faces the development across Iceland Road (419 Wick Lane).
- Such a reduction would lessen the dominance of the blank flank wall of block B. It would also moderate, to a certain extent, reservations around residential accommodation overlooking a commercial working yard, and also any issues around overlooking of development at 419 Wick Lane.
- The panel suggests that a reduction in height of block B could be compensated by an increase in height of residential block D on the riverside. This could result in a subtle gradation of heights along Iceland Road. The panel leaves these suggestions to be pursued with planning officers.

Architectural expression

- The panel has no hesitation in concluding that Block D will meet the requirements of Policy BN.10: it considers that Iceland Wharf as whole demonstrates 'outstanding' architectural quality.



Residential accommodation

- The residential units promise high quality accommodation. The panel welcomes the reconfiguration of internal layouts, with living spaces now opening onto the south facing access walkways overlooking the courtyards, and bedrooms facing onto the quieter street side.

Public realm / landscape design

- The panel supports the proposed generous planting on the walkways and rooftop gardens, but recommends careful thought to ensuring conditions that will support successful plant growth.
- The panel thinks it appropriate that block D is built up to the river edge, with a planted green buffer.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel supports approval of the planning application for development at Iceland Wharf, which it thinks has the potential to be a highly successful addition to Hackney Wick and Fish Island. It suggests some refinement to the massing of the blocks along Iceland Road.
- The panel also stresses the importance of the scheme being built in the spirit in which it has been designed – with ambition and imagination.

