

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

Peter Twemlow  
DP9 Ltd  
100 Pall Mall  
SW1Y5NQ

7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Dear Peter,

**London Review Panel: The Tulip**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of the proposals for The Tulip on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. On behalf of the Panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the review.

Yours sincerely,



Claire Bennie  
*Mayor's Design Advocate*

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA

Patrick Dubeck, Head of Regeneration, GLA

# LONDON REVIEW PANEL

## Report of The Tulip The Tulip, 20 Bury Street, City of London, EC3A 5AX

Tuesday 16 April 1029

### London Review Panel

Claire Bennie (chair)  
Adam Khan  
Tom Holbrook  
Hilary Satchwell

### Attendees

Juliemma McLoughlin	GLA Planning
Simon Westmorland	GLA Planning
Pooja Agrawal	GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
Jamie Dean	GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
Gwyn Richards	City of London
Bhakti Depala	City of London
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

### Report copied to

Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Debbie Jackson	GLA
Patrick Dubeck	GLA

### Confidentiality

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.

## **Project name and site address**

The Tulip, 20 Bury Street, City of London, EC3A 5AX

## **Presenting Team**

Rob Harrison	Foster + Partners
Insub Lee	Foster + Partners
Dimitra Kyrkou	Foster + Partners
Grant Brooker	Foster + Partners
Barnaby Collins	DP9
Peter Twemlow	DP9
Pearl Figueira	DP9

## **London Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

The discussion by Mayor's Design Advocates about the design of The Tulip hinged around the question of whether this would be a world class tall building, justifying its height and prominence on the skyline of London. The panel does not feel that it meets this test. The project would clearly have value in drawing visitors to a predominantly business district, including school children using the educational facilities. The panel also recognises the legitimacy of a tall building primarily designed to provide spectacular views of the city. However, it thinks the quality and quantity of public open space is not sufficient to support the case for such a significant new visitor attraction. The panel does not agree that a roof terrace above the pavilion building can be seen as equivalent to fully public open space at street level. It also has reservations about the quality of the architecture. It thinks that the pavilion and base of the tower would do little to enhance the quality of the streets around them. The tower shaft in textured concrete is a 'mute' architectural element. The viewing platform levels have been designed to maximise views out, with extensive glazing. A potentially unintended consequence of this design is to create the appearance of a surveillance tower, particularly in views from Whitechapel Road. Overall panel members felt that whilst the building may be a successful response to the functions of its brief – this has not resulted in the world class architecture that would be required to justify its prominence. The panel also felt that a building of this size and impact should be carbon neutral, and that the education strategy should be more ambitious, if this is a core justification for the height of the building. These comments are expanded below.

### *Public open space*

- The panel does not think the roof terrace of the pavilion building should be included in calculations of public open space – and does not think this is equivalent to space at street level, accessible 24 hours a day.
- The panel also thinks that base of the proposed tower, and the pavilion building would do little to enhance the quality of the streets around them. Both create primary frontage facing into the site, with closed facades to the perimeter.
- Ideally a visitor attraction of the scale and ambition of The Tulip would be located in the context of a generous public open space. This is the case for precedents such as The Eiffel Tower, which addresses the Champs de Mars, and the ArcelorMittal Orbit, which sits in the context of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
- The extremely limited public open space around The Tulip has made a highly structured access strategy necessary, which will segregate different users, limiting opportunities for social interaction.
- Overall, the panel do not think that the quality or quantity of public open space is sufficient to support the case for The Tulip.

### *Architectural quality and London's skyline*

- The Tulip is proposed in an exceptionally prominent location, and because of this and its height, would become a defining element on London's skyline. The panel does not think the architecture is of the world class quality needed to justify this prominence.
- As a general comment, the panel feels that the presentation was lacking in a clear explanation of the design development and the rationale for the architectural form of the Tulip.
- The location and height do not accord with planning policies on the Eastern Cluster of tall buildings, which envisages the height of buildings descending from a peak at the centre of the cluster in deference to the Tower of London.
- Assessment of the visual impact of The Tulip on the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tower of London have concluded that it would cause 'less than substantial harm'. This creates a requirement that The Tulip should demonstrate benefits that outweigh this harm.
- Whilst it is not the role of the panel to assess the proposed benefits, it can provide advice on the impact of The Tulip at street level and in wider views.
- The entrance pavilion is an unremarkable building, that as discussed above, does little to enhance the public realm at street level.
- Because of the highly constrained nature of the site, the base of the tower is primarily a lift lobby. This has resulted in a functional design focused on the efficient movement of people from street level to the viewing platforms.
- The viewing platform levels of The Tulip have been designed to maximise views out, with shallow floor plates, and extensive glazing. A potentially unintended consequence of this design is to create the appearance of a surveillance tower, particularly in views from Whitechapel Road.

- Overall, because of the panel's reservations about the architectural qualities of the base, middle and top of The Tulip, it is unable to support its construction in such a prominent location on London's skyline.

#### *Social and environmental sustainability*

- The panel notes that the educational benefits of The Tulip form an important part of the rationale for the proposal. In this context, it thinks that a funded education and social value programme should be in place, for example to educate the next generation about opportunities to work in the City of London.
- With the exception of school children, it seems that all other visitors to The Tulip would pay for access to the viewing platforms, which undermines the social value argument for such a tall building.
- The panel also think that a building of this height should be carbon neutral, if not positive, as one facet of world class architecture.
- The panel also highlights that demolition of the existing building completed in 2003, represents a significant cost in terms of embodied carbon.
- Internationally, tall buildings have often demonstrated innovation at the cutting edge of technology, as was the case with The Post Office Tower. This could be seen as a factor in demonstrating world class architecture, which is not evident in proposals for The Tulip.

#### *Conclusion*

The panel is unable to support The Tulip because it does not think it represents world class architecture, it lacks sufficient quality and quantity of public open space, and its social and environmental sustainability do not match the ambition of its height and impact on London's skyline.