


GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY


Delivery Lead (Waterloo & Streatham)
London Borough of Lambeth,
2nd Floor,
Phoenix House,
10 Wandsworth Road,
London,
SW8 2LL

13th August 2018

Dear 

London Review Panel: Waterloo Works

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of LB Lambeth's Good Growth Fund project, Waterloo Works, on 31st July 2018. On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer the panel's ongoing support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,


Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

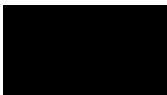
Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Lucy Owen, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA

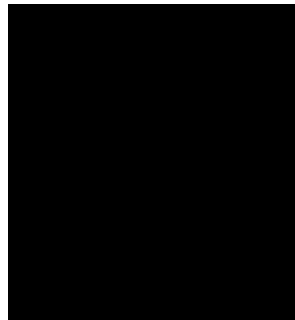
**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Waterloo Works**

31st July 2018
Greater London Authority, City Hall

London Review Panel

 (chair)

Attendees



Lambeth Council
Lambeth Council
Lambeth Council
Almanac
Almanac
GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
GLA Regeneration and Economic Development
GLA (panel manager)

Report copied to

Lucy Owen
Jules Pipe

GLA
Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Summary

The London Review Panel (LRP) think that Waterloo Works is a commendable project, meeting an important local and strategic need for affordable workspace and acknowledging the role that the space can play in providing opportunity in the creative and digital sector to underrepresented groups and the local community. The panel recognise that the project is constrained by its modest budget and ambitious programme, and therefore fully support the proposed approach to retain the existing, cellular structure with light-touch improvements and concentrate spend around key interventions including the new-build first floor, façade treatment, the shared 'street' space and landscaping. LRP support the general approach to massing and height which builds on typologies in the area.

LRP applaud the work that the project team has done to identify local partners, from established institutions to CDI start-ups to outreach organisations, in developing the building's programmatic agenda. LRP urge the project team to formalise these ambitions through operator contracts and communicate the programme, project partners and user offers to the public.

Budget and phasing

LRP had some concerns that the proposed budget for the project was tight and urged the team to be realistic about delivery within the budget. The project team should look to precedents of comparable schemes of quality with similar budgets, being aware of what is included in those budgets in terms of fit-out, M+E, prelims, overheads and profits and VAT. The project team could also consider testing various scenarios in which the scale of development could be optimised in relation to its rental yield and its ability to deliver the agreed social programme, possibly by reducing the amount of new build, or by phasing the project to allow for further funding to be sourced from other sources. The level of fit-out and service-provision in the budget should also be carefully checked so that it is in keeping with the rental-yield expected in the business model.

While LRP acknowledged that D1 provision effectively ceased with the decommissioning of the Special Educational Needs facility in 2017, the panel did not feel it would be acceptable to postpone the build-out of the multi-functional community space to future phases, given potential perception that the project would not meet its core aims of supporting diversity in creative and digital industry and supporting the identified needs of the local community.

Design process

While it is understood that the project's programme does not allow for the workspace operator to be decided ahead of planning submission, LRP highlighted the importance of the workspace operator's input during the design process. The panel welcome that the project team have engaged prospective bidders on current designs. The team should look for ongoing opportunities to test designs against the business needs of the operator and users. The team should also be prepared to make amendments to designs in order to respond to the chosen operator's business plan, which might for example include a more significant reception/concierge point or additional, private meeting rooms.

Public interface and landscaping

As identified by the project team, at present the site is largely hidden and has a fortress-like perception from the street. Despite the quiet nature of Wootton Street and Greet Street, it is a busy through-route between the Cut and Waterloo station with high foot fall. In order to reinforce the street as a more social and active space, the project team could consider creating direct access to individual studios on Wootton Street. This would mirror the opposite, under-railway units, which are largely occupied by small businesses, strengthen the street layout and give more purpose to the grass verge fronting the existing block.

LRP understood that there is some conflict between the project's ambition to improve the building's green verge, creating a useable 'pocket' space, and the residents' concerns over noise and anti-social behaviour. LRP encourage the project team to define the different characteristics of the spaces on Wootton and Greet Street more clearly and design accordingly, be ambitious and communicate it as an asset to local residents. The fact that the modest green space is already used informally, is a good indication that there is a need for dwell space, and that there is great potential to better articulate these spaces. In light of this, LRP urged the project team to ensure that sufficient budget is set aside to allow for an ambitious yet sensitive approach to create a public welcome.

The panel commented that a wider area plan that showed the intensity of pedestrian movement and desire lines through the site including those to and from Waterloo Station, Waterloo East, The Cut, Southwark Tube and Palestra, would be a useful drawing to help inform more detailed design work. The project team is also encouraged to consider what other public realm improvements may be coming forward in the wider area that may influence the design of the public-facing landscape.

The 'street' and communal spaces

LRP welcome the proposal to create a communal outside, covered space for the users of and visitors to Waterloo Works. There was a question about using 'street' rather than 'mews' or 'courtyard' to describe the space, accepting the fact that the space would not provide a through route from Wootton Street to the residential amenity. LRP put emphasis on the consideration of the threshold function this space and the adjacent reception/café will provide. Other recently completed affordable workspace projects have shown that a generous front of house provides an important function as an identifiable first point of call for visitors and deliveries, as well as providing a sense of security and welcome. With potentially two entrances their hierarchy should be considered, taking into account likely routes to the site.

LRP recommended to be prepared to amend 'cell spaces' for more meeting and event space. Testing of provision and demand in the area could be useful in the operator selection process. Likewise, the provision of informal tea points/kitchenettes should not be dismissed at this stage as they tend to play an important function in daily use of the occupiers.

Procurement

LRP welcomed the project team's pragmatic approach to contractor procurement and the use of prefabricated elements to manage design quality within the set timescales. LRP urged some caution with regards to the existing building which may require further work due to unforeseen circumstances. LRP recommended that the project team ensure there is sufficient contingency in the cost plan and

programme flexibility to make informed decisions should changes be required, and also to ensure that programme concerns are not the sole driver determining the design and its implementation.

Materials

LRP supported the use of timber cladding to the new build, suggesting standard rather than bespoke solutions, and that its weathering should be taken into account through appropriate detailing. Other cheap and robust options could be explored to determine whether there are more cost-effective alternatives.