

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

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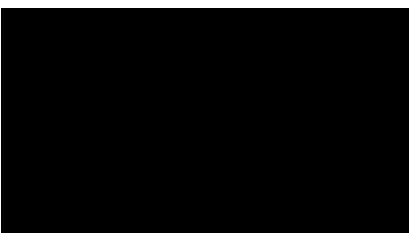
November 2019

Dear ██████████

London Review Panel: Manor Road

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of the Manor Road proposals on 1st November 2019. 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

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

██████████, Head of Regeneration, GLA

LONDON REVIEW PANEL

Report of London Review Panel meeting Manor Road

Friday 1st November

Review held at: City Hall, Queens Walk, SE1 2AA

Attendees

[REDACTED] (Chair)	Mayor's Design Advocate
[REDACTED]	MDA
[REDACTED]	MDA
[REDACTED]	Avanton
[REDACTED]	Assael
[REDACTED]	Assael
[REDACTED]	Gillespies
[REDACTED]	Avison Young
[REDACTED]	Avison Young
[REDACTED]	GLA Planning
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	LB Richmond upon Thames
[REDACTED]	LB Richmond upon Thames
[REDACTED]	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

[REDACTED]	GLA Planning
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration

Report copied to

Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Debbie Jackson	GLA
[REDACTED]	GLA

Confidentiality

Please note that while schemes might not yet be in the public domain, for example at a pre-application stage, they 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

Homebase site, 84 Manor Road, North Sheen

Note on review process

This review meeting followed on from two previous London Review Panel meetings to discuss the development proposals for Manor Road, Richmond: a formal review on 20 September; and a surgery review on 9 October 2019. The purpose of this meeting was to allow the applicant team to present revised designs responding to the Panel's comments. The meeting was attended by planning officers from the London Borough of Richmond, who briefed the Panel on the reasons for refusal of the application by its planning committee at the first review (a summary of this briefing is included below). The London Review Panel was consulted on the scheme, following a call in by the Mayor. Mayor's Design Advocates attending the previous meeting were Richard Lavington (chair); Rachel Bagenal; Holly Lewis; and Adam Khan.

LB Richmond upon Thames' views

The application for redevelopment of the Richmond Homebase site was unanimously refused by the LB Richmond upon Thames' planning committee, on the basis of the following 6 reasons: affordable housing; design; residential amenity; living standards; energy; and absence of a legal agreement.

As part of Richmond's processing of the application, two Design Review Panels were carried out, one in November 2018 and one in February 2019.

Public consultation included an advertisement in the Richmond and Twickenham Times, site notices, and letter to over 2,400 nearby properties. The consultation generated 724 responses: 694 in objection to the proposals; 5 in support; and 25 general observations.

During pre-application discussions, a number of key design principles were agreed: loss of retail; car free development; and the creation of a new public square. However, concerns were raised about: the scale, mass and height of the development; its impact on conservation areas; design quality; impact on neighbours; and affordable housing provision.

GLA Planning's views

GLA Planning is broadly supportive of the proposals, which would make a significant contribution to delivery of housing in this part of London. Following refusal of the scheme by Richmond, the Mayor called in the application to act as the Local Planning Authority. Since the call in, the applicant has worked with GLA Planning to refine the designs, including provision of an increased percentage of affordable housing.

As part of this process, three London Review Panel meetings have been arranged to allow Mayor's Design Advocates to advise on the scheme's: urban design; height and massing; architecture; residential quality; public realm and landscape design.

London Review Panel's views

Introduction

The Panel welcomes amendments that have been made to the proposals for Manor Road, Richmond, improving the quality of its landscape design, residential accommodation, and refining its scale and massing. Scope remains to continue this process of refinement, with careful thought about the quality of life the development will provide for future residents. The one aspect of the scheme where the Panel still has concerns is the affordable housing in Block E. The Panel repeats its view that in design terms, there may be more suitable locations on the site for affordable housing. The proximity of Block E to bus parking, its distance from open space and play areas, and location on a narrow triangle of land between Manor Road and the railway create challenging site conditions, not wholly appropriate for affordable housing where residents may have less choice over living accommodation. The provision of amenity space on the roof may also be seen as a risk by a Registered Social Landlord, potentially preventing its use as envisaged. The Panel upholds the view that bus parking would be better accommodated on streets in and around the site, rather than in close proximity to Block E – and thinks this could be achieved whilst still providing driver facilities. These points are expanded below, and comments from previous reviews that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

Urban design

- The Panel feels that in general, the height of development is acceptable in relationship to the wider context. Progress has been made in adjusting the massing of the scheme, particularly where the two buildings framing the main space at the heart of the development have reduced in height.
- The Panel is convinced by the rationale for locating the site entrance, opposite Manor Grove, and the arrangement of commercial uses fronting Manor Road.
- Omission of the pavilion previously shown in the main space is a positive move – allowing for greater generosity and design flexibility in the main public space.
- The Panel welcomes the further thought that has been given to the internal layout of residential units, their relationship to external spaces, and the creation of defensible space.
- Previous comments about the quality of public space leading to the affordable Housing Block C have been addressed, through redistribution of parking and improved landscape design.
- However, the Panel continues to have significant concerns -in relation to Block E and the accommodation of affordable housing. The Panel does not think this is a suitable location for affordable housing, because of its proximity to bus parking, its distance from open space and play areas, and location on a narrow triangle of land between Manor Road and the railway. It is essential that the scheme is equitable between tenures – although this does not mean that all residents should have access to all open spaces, which may cause management problems on a development of this size.
- The quality of accommodation in Block E does have some positive characteristics, as it is primarily dual aspect. However, the Panel observe that these units are the most compromised in terms of future residents' quality of life and as such should not be occupied solely by households who may not have the choice of accommodation, compared to if these units were for private sale or rent.

Quality of residential accommodation

- Progress has been made in the design of the residential accommodation, there has been some reduction in the number of single aspect units, and some further progress in mitigating the proximity to the busy Manor Road and railway lines bordering the site.
- This process has been supported by improvements in the landscape design, and the way this relates to the internal layout of residential blocks.
- Where dual aspect flats have been introduced facing onto Manor Road, the internal floor level has been set higher than the street, giving greater privacy. The Panel would encourage a similar approach for ground floor flats elsewhere in the scheme, facing onto public spaces.
- However, the Panel thinks that in relation to these flats the entrances should be to Manor Road and that the raised balcony spaces accessed through the bedrooms are not in a good location and are unlikely to be used in a positive way. It would be better to create front doors facing the street, rather than entrances opening directly into living rooms.
- Where some single aspect units remain, planning officers should assure themselves that issues of noise and potential overheating have been adequately considered. The Panel is not able to assess this level of technical detail.
- As a detailed comment on Block D, the Panel is not convinced by the open passageway between Manor Road and the courtyard. It would be preferable to create a more protected route through a generous entrance lobby.
- The Panel observe that the balconies facing Manor Road at the northern end of Block D are very close to traffic, and are unlikely to be used, especially at ground floor level. The Panel suggest there could be a case for additional internal space instead of an external balcony here.
- The Panel continues to think that Block E is not an appropriate location for affordable housing. The highest proportion of children will likely be living in affordable housing blocks, and Block E is farthest away from the main public space and shared private courtyards of the other blocks. There is a risk that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) will not accept liability for amenity spaces at roof level. The narrow triangle of land that the block occupies may also suffer from noise and pollution from the railway and busy Manor Road – with many units overlooking bus parking immediately outside their windows.
- At a detailed level, the flats in Block E would be improved if they could open onto a garden space to the west, possibly where bike stores are currently located or by enlarging this plot and reducing the size of the plot to the south.

Landscape design

- The Panel supports the more relaxed approach to the landscape design that has emerged since the previous review. Careful thought about the character and use of each external space is now evident in the designs, which are clearer and more resolved than previously proposed.
- The landscape design of the 'neighbourhood street' parallel with the railway line seems to be developing in the right direction.
- Where a new point of access is shown opposite the station, directly into the shared private courtyards, the layout of paths should be revisited to create more convenient routes to and from entrances.
- There remains scope to add richness and interest to the landscape design by thinking about how it will be used by residents, for example to grow fruit and vegetables, or for play.

- The scheme assumes deliveries to the commercial units on Manor Road will be delivered from the parking bays on the service roads to the rear using trolleys. To ensure this happens in reality, it will be important to design the Manor Road frontage to prevent delivery vehicles from parking on the pavement.
- Given the density of residential development proposed, the long-term management and maintenance of the landscape will be essential to its success. This should be secured through the planning process.

Architecture

- The architectural expression of the scheme has been simplified, and the Panel feel this is heading in the right direction – although there remains scope for further improvement.
- The Panel would be happy to provide further advice on the architecture of the scheme at a future review, if requested to do so.

Bus garage

- The revised scheme accommodates bus parking adjacent to Block E, which is an improvement on the previous approach where bus parking was shown below these residential units.
- However, the Panel upholds the view that the location of the bus parking should be reconsidered if possible, as distributing buses on streets around the site would create fewer negative impacts.

Next Steps

The Panel trusts that the design team will be able to address the comments above, in consultation with planning officers. It would be happy to provide further advice at a detailed design stage, if requested to do so.