



# LONDON REVIEW PANEL

## Report of London Review Panel meeting 66-68 Pier Road in Erith

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Review held via video conferencing

### London Review Panel

[REDACTED] MDA  
[REDACTED] MDA

### Attendees

[REDACTED] LB Bexley  
[REDACTED] LB Bexley  
[REDACTED] alma-nac  
[REDACTED] alma-nac  
[REDACTED] alma-nac  
[REDACTED] GLA Regeneration  
[REDACTED] GLA, LRP panel manager

### Apologies / report copied to

[REDACTED] GLA Regeneration

### Report copied to

Jules Pipe Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills  
Philip Graham GLA  
[REDACTED] 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.

### Conflicts of interest

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## **Background**

66-68 Pier Road is a re-fit of a vacant unit on a key route in Erith Town centre. The units are on the ground floor of a new residential-led, mixed-use development. They have remained empty since the development was completed in 2006. The new facility will provide a family friendly informal restaurant, a community kitchen, a flexible multi-use community space and storage for community infrastructure. The facility is intended to be functional for 3 to 5 years. A central objective of the project is to enhance the night-time economy of Erith, where the current offer is minimal. The project also seeks to ensure that as much as possible of the fit out is re-usable.

66-68 Pier Road is a project that forms part of a wider set of both current and historic Mayorally supported initiatives in Erith town centre. Adjacent projects that are being led by LB Bexley include the acquisition of key sites for redevelopment, the refurbishment of the Carnegie Library to a café and workspace, and the Erith Lighthouse meanwhile project providing a food offer and a space for community engagement. The current round of investment also includes the upgrading of Riverside Gardens, refurbishing and developing 70 Pier Road as mixed use office and housing and looking at the feasibility of improving the cultural, educational and/or retail offer on Erith Pier, opening up one of the units in the shopping centre that fronts on Erith High Street and some improvements to the High Street itself.

The scheme was previously reviewed by Urban Design London. The panel has taken these comments into account.

## **Summary**

The panel were broadly supportive of the scheme and acknowledged that the project team's main moves - maximising active frontage to address wider issues of connectivity and legibility in the town centre, combining security requirements with the façade design and promoting demountability and reusability - were commendable.

The panel recognised that budget constraints were challenging, and that some prioritisation was needed in order to meet the core objectives of the scheme. It was noted that some elements of the brief should not be subject to value engineering, for example the specification of the community kitchen kit. The panel asserted that adopting circular economy principles to construction material procurement could help with budget constraints while supporting the project's objective of sustainable design. The panel questioned the thermal performance of the primary spaces and if the proposed faceted internal wall was at odds with the core objective of flexibility.

## **Façade treatment**

The panel commended the ambition to address Secure by Design recommendations for anti-social behaviour and vandalism through a holistic approach to the façade design, effectively using screening techniques to design out the need for roller shutters. The client advised that not all units in the town centre, including the pub, have roller shutters and that therefore they may not be deemed necessary. This would be very positive as, shutters, either solid or lattice, would fundamentally undermine the approach to façade design and effectively negate the need for screening. Resolution of the security requirements for facades should be treated as a matter of urgency.

While the merits of the proposed use of perforated metal sheets were understood, the panel urged the design team to fully explore alternative material treatments like timber or expanded metal, which might be more cost effective and embodied-carbon efficient.

## **Circular economy**

The panel raised the potential to capitalise from the local regeneration schemes through seeking opportunities to reuse or upcycle building materials, either surplus or from demolition. They noted that the proposed scheme already used polycarbonate panels from the Erith Lighthouse project and that it is proposed that unfixed furniture will be second hand. But pressed if further opportunities for taking a circular approach to material procurement could be explored, for example reusing the timber batons from the existing façade/hoarding for the toilet ceilings.

## **Thermal performance**

The panel highlighted that should budget constraints mean that double glazing and added insulation are not feasible, thermal performance of the space is likely to be sub-optimum. Given the generosity of internal space, the panel questioned if insulation in the internal walls could be increased, citing the White Building (David Kohn Architects) and its use of sheep's wool and mesh as a relevant precedent. The use of Fermacell in particular could benefit from additional insulation or alternatives could be explored. The panel also questioned whether there was potential for heat recovery from the pizza oven. Likewise, the panel highlighted the potential for the space overheating in the summer months. While it was understood that passive cooling opportunities were being proposed, the panel urged the team to be alive to this particularly as the facade design progresses.

## **Internal layout and future flexibility**

The panel recognised the project team's ambition for the business plan to adapt to demand, potentially needing to increase the number of covers over time or reconfigure layout. The panel questioned if the curved or faceted wall would have a fundamental impact on the businesses ability to be flexible over time. The panel recommended testing alternative seating arrangements and number of covers to analyse if the current proposals would allow the business adaptability which is necessary for a new offer.

## **Next steps**

There is not a requirement for the panel to revisit the scheme as a full review. However, the panel would like to offer their support in the development of any specific elements on the brief, which would take the form of a workshop if required.