

**LONDON**  
**REVIEW PANEL**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
London Borough of Lambeth

November 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

**London Review Panel: Brixton Rec Quarter, Lambeth**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Brixton Rec Quarter, Lambeth on 26th November 2020. I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer ongoing Mayor's Design Advocate support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham, Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA

Patrick Dubeck, Head of Regeneration, GLA

**LONDON**

**REVIEW PANEL**

**Report of London Review Panel meeting  
Brixton Rec Quarter, Lambeth**

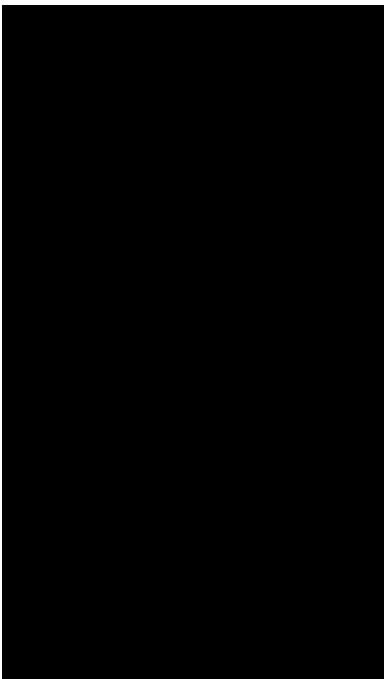
Thursday 26th November 2020  
Review held remotely

**London Review Panel**



MDA  
MDA (Chair)  
MDA

**Attendees**



LB Lambeth  
LB Lambeth  
LB Lambeth  
  
muf architecture/art  
muf architecture/art  
muf architecture/art  
muf architecture/art  
IKS Consulting  
Jenny Stewart PR  
Scope for More  
  
GLA Planning  
GLA Planning  
GLA Regeneration (Panel Manager)  
GLA Regeneration  
GLA Regeneration

**Report copied to**

Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Philip Graham	GLA
Patrick Dubeck	GLA

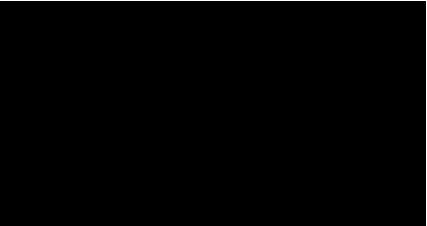
**Confidentiality**

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 location**

Brixton Rec Centre, LB Lambeth, London

## **Presenting team**



LB Lambeth  
LB Lambeth  
LB Lambeth  
muf architecture/art  
Scope for More

## **Client Team introduction**

Representatives from LB Lambeth presented project history and context. The team positioned the project's vision as a narrative that focuses on local people and local businesses with the aim of a fairer and better Brixton. LB Lambeth highlighted the key objectives of the project are to reduce inequalities and respond to the COVID crisis in an inclusive manner. The project will also aim to build on the identity of Brixton Rec Quarter with follow on projects and form part of a larger plan for the area, whilst addressing the climate emergency through sustainable and environmental strategies. LB Lambeth stated these key principles will be monitored to assess the benefits and whether the objectives have been achieved.

LB Lambeth described the constituent parts of the GGF project that include improvement works to the public realm, new workspace, access and concourse improvements into and through Brixton Rec., shop fronts improvements, meanwhile uses in International House and better physical connections to Brixton Central across the railway lines. This project focuses on the area around Station Road facing onto the railway arches, and the connections through Brixton Rec Quarter using the existing walkways. LB Lambeth' strategy is for this project to help the Rec Quarter function better for market traders and the town centre more widely, and in response to the impact of the large regeneration sites surrounding the site.

The project has included significant community engagement and has had a co-design and co-clienting approach with the local businesses and community. Muf architecture/art have been appointed as the lead consultant via ADUP2 in March 2020 and they have developed proposals that are working towards a planning application in January 2021. Potential operator proposals are being assessed with delivery strategies to be agreed by January. The ambition is to take a phased approach, with completion intended for March 2022 and an evaluation in March 2023. LB Lambeth confirmed the budget for this project covers the proposed capital works, activation strategies and professional fees.

## **Design Team presentation**

Muf architecture/art presented their work to date including their process regarding the co-design and on-site engagement which included the team undertaking a 6-week residency on the site. Key conclusions from this research include the objectives for the budget allocated to focus on benefiting the existing community, rather than on attracting new people from

outside the area. The team wish to draw out the rich history and past successes and failures of the Brixton Rec, to inform the proposals.

A strategy has been developed that focuses on 'care, repair and celebration' of the existing urban fabric, businesses and community. This strategy tries to avoid cosmetic interventions, 'stripping back the extraneous and celebrating the tangible'. The ambition for the scale and phasing of the proposals is to avoid the disruption on the local businesses, markets and social infrastructure that often accompanies large scale construction work. The proposals aim to phase the various interventions to provide immediate changes and allowing the proposals to develop on site beyond the scope of this project.

The team highlighted the challenges around working with a Listed Building and have sought to address early in the design process the strategy to addressing the conservation needs required for the Listed Building Consent at the planning submission stage. The team have presented their research into the existing condition of the site and buildings, including the accessibility issues involving existing ramps.

The team's proposals aim to provide more openness to Brixton Station Road, improving the sense of place through new lighting to the Rec building, restored signage and wayfinding strategies and provide additional greening where appropriate and supported by local businesses. In this way the team propose highlighting the existing attributes of the architecture by returning it to the original intent. This includes removing later additions such as suspended ceilings to shops and fixing the leaks to the plumbing systems. Additional works proposed include improving the street activation under the staircase to Bushman's kitchen, new playable spaces for all ages, a workspace offer in the Beehive space and removing cladding to provide an externally visible gallery which is both sheltered and airy.

The team includes business development consultant Scope for More who presented their work to date in engaging with local businesses and providing business coaching. This has sought to provide additional support and communication between LB Lambeth and these businesses whilst enabling business owners to take proactive action in improving their business operations.

NOTE: Due to technical challenges it was not possible for the panel to review all the design team's presentation material during the session. The panel would like to clarify that the provided information has since been reviewed and that these notes reflect the full extent of comments on the currently available information.

## **London Review Panel's Views**

### ***Summary***

The panel endorse LB Lambeth on appointing an excellent team to bring this project forward, with muf setting the standard for this approach. This project methodology is correct for this site and context. The panel would encourage the team to make the investment in the project and the make the people of Brixton legible and celebrated. The panel would advise the team to establish a longer-term plan and legacy to capture and allow future opportunities to advance the thinking developed, as funding becomes available. The panel advise the lessons learnt from International House can inform the emerging workspace strategy as the proposals develop in the next stages of the project.

### ***Project Methodology***

The panel support the strategy for care, repair and celebration and agree this is appropriate for this location and the stated project objectives. The panel support and encourage the continued pragmatic approach taken to the project, noting the design team's sensitive curation of the opportunities that have emerged through their research. The panel advise that whilst the approach is powerful it is fragile and to not underestimate the difficulty in taking this project to completion and to protect this process.

The panel endorse the approach by the design team to hold off on developed design before co-design processes have completed but would advise the team to ensure the planning programme allows for the final design time needed before a submission as the stated January target seems very close.

### ***Project Budget***

The panel agree that there is a challenge to achieve the objectives for the necessary scale and scope of interventions needed with the budget allocated to it. Allocation within the budget to fixing leaks and other maintenance focused issues are fundamental to the success of the project, but the panel question how the funding from the GLA can be utilised to add value to the project in more tangible and readily appreciated interventions. The panel acknowledge that works such as fixing the leaks and power are fundamental to the present needs of the site and its occupants and that these should be a priority to be addressed. The panel also understand the local authority challenges relating to shrinking revenue funding for maintenance of buildings and public realm and would encourage LB Lambeth to review opportunities new development may bring to secure ongoing funding support.

The panel would encourage LB Lambeth to review how funding for maintenance and other required costs can be sourced to allow the project budget to focused on the enhancements and improvements over and above the baseline building servicing needs. The panel agree that the importance of the investment in this project by the GLA and LB Lambeth is seen as the investment in the people of Brixton. If this investment is not legible and celebrated it risks being a missed opportunity.

### ***Approach to Engagement and Local Business Partnership***

The panel acknowledge that the recent impact of large-scale redevelopment in the area have caused some grievances and suspicion amongst the existing residents and

stakeholders. The panel agree that this project is an important signal from the GLA and LB Lambeth in funding proposals that focus on care and repair of the existing urban fabric. This is a good starting point to frame and start planning local policy and guidance around to support ongoing developments.

The panel agree that in this location and context establishing the trust of local businesses and the community's is both an objective and an essential method of achieving the other aims of the project. The panel commend the team's inclusion of business development consultant in providing coaching to the existing businesses within the project and seeking to turn the existing relationships between businesses the local authority into something more positive. The panel recommend the team sustain and build on this so that the previous value developed here can be retained and built upon for future projects and ensure a continuation and nurturing of these relationships.

### ***Connecting the Various Public Realm Experiences Around the Area***

The panel suggest that the spatial character of the various locales in and around the project location have distinct qualities and are linked as a patchwork of spaces that sometimes share overlapping issues. This project is an opportunity for the distinction between these areas to be celebrated rather than ironed out and developing a character area framework might be one way to do this. The panel recommend reviewing the Public London Charter which includes guidance on the management and maintenance of new public spaces.

### ***Project Legacy***

The panel suggest that the team should consider how the benefits of this scheme can be sustained and help catalyse new projects that contribute to the team's objectives for this area. For instance, how can this project be used as an impetus for nearby local businesses to engage and spread the benefits being established by the businesses involved here.

The panel advise that there may be other opportunities arise from this process being established. This could include in the delivery and construction of this project where there are opportunities to benefit local businesses and groups through inclusion in the local supply chain and skills training.

The panel encourage the team to consider the ripple effects this project will have through further investment once it completes. The team should plan for potential next steps so that they make the most of the established dialogue with stakeholders and social capital developed throughout this process.

The panel suggest that LB Lambeth review opportunities to utilise the nearby developments to secure support and funding from CIL and/or Section 106 and allow related and complimentary projects such as this to happen, within a character area framework. These potential funding opportunities could be focussed on the tying together of the area rather than only the immediate surrounds of the new developments and can make the most of the established processes developed here and positively supporting the existing community.

The panel would suggest the team develop a public facing reference document that lists all the works that need to be done to the building and site and overlap these with future needs

and potential interventions. This compendium of required works will hold those involved to account and ensure the legacy of the project by providing a plan and framework for future projects to fit into and support.

***Post Meeting Note from GLA Planning Team: Inclusive Design***

The team would be encouraged to consider the challenges of accessibility into the buildings and across the site. A listed building of this style, utilising internal concourses and external ramps needs a sensitive strategy to ensure the results are inclusive to all. The team are advised that an equality impact assessment and/or inclusive design statement be conducted to inform the designs.

The team are recommended to consider level access throughout and how servicing including refuse and recycling will be accessible and operate across the site. The team are advised to ensure they include enough accessible seating in the public realm, and that street furniture and tree planting be located to minimise impact on those with visual impairment. The team are encouraged to consider the surface materials selected to ensure the tonal difference and slip resistance required.

Signage and wayfinding will be an important strategy to implement for the project and the team are encouraged to utilise their co-design process to engage with the community, particularly those with disabilities where the importance of signage being clear and large enough is of greater importance. Additionally, the team are advised to include in the co-design elements of access such as the directional access proposed include those with mobility concerns.

**Next Steps**

The Panel would welcome the opportunity to further comment on this exciting and aspirational scheme and would suggest another review in the next stage of the design programme to focus on the detailed proposition including those for the workspace, and the progress and integration of the level access to the podium level of the Rec.