

**Report of Camden Design Review Panel meeting to discuss
Camden Goods Yard**

Friday 2nd December 2016

Room 11.10-12, 11th Floor, 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG

Panel

Catherine Burd (chair)

Adrian Wikeley

Luke Tozer

Sara Grohmann

Michael Spooner

Attendees

David Joyce	London Borough of Camden
Gavin Sexton	London Borough of Camden
Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden
Edward Bailey	London Borough of Camden
Katrina Christoforou	London Borough of Camden
Kevin Fisher	London Borough of Camden
Kristina Smith	London Borough of Camden
Alfie Stroud	London Borough of Camden
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Sarah Carmona	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
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Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Camden Council 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. Should the project proceed to a planning application, all pre-application documents will be made public in accordance with Camden's policies.

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1. Project name and site address

Camden Goods Yard, NW3 2BP

2. Presenting team

Hendrik Heyns	Allies and Morrison
Kirsty Leslie	Allies and Morrison
Marco Colavacomo	Allies and Morrison
Attzaz Rashid	Barratt London
Martin Scholar	Barratt London
Rob Copland	Gillespies
Oliver Duguid	Gillespies
Georgina French	Morrisons
Tilo Guenther	Niall McLaughlin
David Cawston	Piercy & Co.
Ian Fergusson	Turley

3. Background

The site incorporates the current Morrisons supermarket food-store, above ground car parking and the petrol filling station on a piece of land, adjoining a privately-owned access road. The site is bound by Chalk Farm Road and the buildings along it, the railway line, a housing estate to the northwest and housing and mixed-use sites along the canal to the southeast. The site is largely several metres above surrounding ground level and overlies the stables markets below the eastern corner. There are several listed buildings around the site and historic remnants of the Victorian railway infrastructure below and around the site edges. The proposal is for a mixed-use scheme incorporating a replacement food-store, workspace, housing and associated facilities and landscaping. A masterplan, model and view studies were presented for the panel to review.

4. Planning Authority's views

The applicant has engaged in several pre-application meetings since their previous presentation to the Camden Design Review Panel. Officers broadly support the layout of the scheme. However, three key issues remain to be resolved: the character of the development; connections and routes through the site; and the massing – both overall and shoulder height. In terms of character, a clearer strategy is needed for the design and use of key spaces, including clarity about the way they are enlivened by surrounding uses. Connections through the site need further thought, to resolve the tension between opening up the site, and creating a high quality residential environment. The high density of the development currently proposed also raises questions about the appropriate overall massing and shoulder heights of individual buildings within the masterplan. Planning officers would welcome the panel's views on these issues.



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5. Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The Design Review Panel recognises that the site represents a significant opportunity for a high quality, mixed use development. They welcome the clear explanation of the design rationale; however, they would like to know more about the overarching vision for the site. They note that the proposals seem conceived in response to site constraints and views analysis, rather than as a positive vision for a new community and a new part of the city. They feel that the development density and massing of the scheme as currently proposed is too high, at up to 17 storeys, and recommend a rethink of the massing, to create a development with a shoulder height of 5 to 7 storeys, extending up to 9 storeys in one or two key locations.

They support the improvements to vehicle circulation on site, but would encourage further thought on pedestrian routes and desire lines, particularly where there are level changes. Whilst they welcome emerging designs for streets and spaces, they think further thought is needed about the differences between each space, in terms of character and use. This process should include careful thought about levels of surveillance and hierarchies of public and private space. The panel also highlights some concerns about the quality of some of the residential and commercial accommodation resulting from the layout and massing – in particular the reliance on deep plan residential blocks, which would generate a large proportion of single aspect flats. Further details on the panel's comments are provided below.

Development density, massing and building heights

- Whilst extensive work has been undertaken to explain the rationale behind the massing of the scheme; the panel does not think this justifies the scale of the current proposals.
- They would welcome more information about the overarching place-making vision that is shaping the design of this new part of the city, and how this informs decisions about the proposed massing and layout.
- The panel notes that the proposed density of the developed part of the site is roughly 220 units per hectare, which is greater than that of the Olympic Park, in Stratford.
- The panel also highlights that the massing / height of the proposals is significantly greater than that of the development at King's Cross Central (a very central location and significant transport hub). The panel does not think that a greater quantum and scale of development is appropriate for a more peripheral 'island' site with access constraints.
- Stratford High Street represents an example of how this scale of development can proliferate, and the panel would be unwilling to see this experience replicated in Camden.



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- They would support further strategic guidance from the Council in order to establish acceptable limits and locations for taller buildings.
- Drawing parallels with other similar developments locally, and across neighbouring London boroughs, the panel would suggest that a shoulder height of 5 to 7 storeys, rising to a 9 storeys in one or two key locations, would be more appropriate in this location.
- The panel reiterates that it will be critical to understand what the aspiration is for the site: the character, type of place, social uses and routes. They highlight that a place framed by 5 to 7 storey buildings feels completely different to a place framed by 7 and 17 storey buildings.

Views and visual impact

- The panel recognises the extent of view studies undertaken, but questions the current focus on mitigating the visual impact as a basis for design development. They would encourage a greater focus on how the scheme can be a positive contributor in the visual landscape.
- The site is located within the context of mainly four storey terraces; the relationship of the scheme to its neighbours will be a critical aspect to explore.
- The visual relationship to and from the Roundhouse is very important; the panel would support further exploration of this through dynamic views analysis.
- They suggest that close views of the development from neighbouring streets should also inform the discussion around massing and height, and also winter views from the Royal Parks.
- Views of the proposed scheme from the train routes adjacent will also be extremely useful to inform the ongoing design development.
- The panel would encourage the design team to explore the scope to widen views into the new development.

Access and circulation

- The panel welcome the improvements to vehicular access, and would support a more integrated approach to pedestrian circulation as the access strategy is developed in more detail.
- Further thought about the design of the key spaces within the site could also strike a better balance between creating high quality places and facilitating pedestrian movement through and between levels.



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- Changes of level across the site present a significant challenge, and requires further thought. The panel suggests that where possible, lifts within buildings should be avoided in favour of stepped and ramped routes as part of the landscape design.
- The panel would support a clearer and more deliberate hierarchy of the spaces and routes; Makers Yard seems to be the natural primary desire line, yet the commercial activity is focused on Roundhouse Way.
- Exploration of this hierarchy should help to establish the look and feel of each space, the private and public areas, and what is at grade or made up.

Townscape, streetscape and landscape design

- The panel welcomes the provision of active frontages at ground level.
- They would like to understand more about the overarching vision for the site, and the way in which different spaces and routes contribute to place-making.
- It is not clear what the character of Market Square (at the entrance of the site) will be, as it is dominated by steps and ramps, and separated into a number of distinct terraces.
- The panel would support further consideration of the design of this space, to reinforce its character, and to make the space read as one, rather than a number of smaller spaces.
- In addition, they question whether this is an appropriate location for a tall building, and thinks that the twisted massing of this detracts from the coherence of this part of the scheme.
- Roundhouse Way is conceived as the main civic avenue, and the panel would encourage the design team to reinforce the 'avenue' nature of the route, and avoid dominant landscape planters that act as an impediment.
- They would support further consideration about the most appropriate places within the site for play and public art; they remain to be convinced that Roundhouse Way is a good location for these.
- The design of Interchange Place has the potential to be a valuable public route, but this will require good natural surveillance, and design to create clear pedestrian access.
- Interchange Place would potentially form the interface between the site and Camden Market. The panel would encourage further thought about the nature and character of this interface, and what uses should frame and support it; this may be a good location for non-residential uses.



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- Generally within the site the streets seem very narrow in relation to the scale and massing of development proposed; the panel would welcome further information on the proposed street sections.
- The panel welcomes the widening of Oval Road at the southern entrance to the site; it will help to lead pedestrians into the centre of the development.
- There was limited time at this review to discuss the petrol station site, but the panel think this creates an opportunity for relief against the busy environment on Chalk Farm Road.
- The panel notes that the proposed pocket park on Chalk Farm Road may present some challenges in terms of maintenance and management; in addition, it is north facing and may not get much sunlight.

Architectural design, configuration and accommodation

- The panel would encourage the design team to refine the massing, configuration and layout of accommodation to minimise single aspect residential units, and increase the levels of daylight and sunlight penetration into all buildings generally.
- A masterplan relying on blocks with double-sided corridors of single aspect units is not acceptable; the standard should be high quality homes.
- In addition, the north-facing block along the access ramp of the supermarket requires further thought in terms of daylight and sunlight.
- The stacked maisonettes to the south of site do not sit well within the context of the urban character that is being created elsewhere on the site. Apartment buildings may provide a more confident edge to the site. Whilst the panel notes the rights to light issues, they understand that there may be an opportunity to further refine this section of the site in future.
- The roofscape of the development as a whole requires further thought; it is currently very fragmented and would benefit from a simpler, more confident approach.

Nature and mix of housing

- The panel highlight that the development needs to fit into the surrounding social context. The nature, quality and mix of housing should be integral to the scheme; the panel would like to see more clarity on these aspects.
- The number of housing units, tenure mix, and the impact that these have on child density need to be established; this will help to establish what facilities are required for the people living in this new neighbourhood.



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- The panel would also like to know more about the proposed management arrangements for the development.

Next steps

- The panel recommends a rethink of the massing and height of the development, based on a clearer vision for the quality and character of this new neighbourhood. The panel would welcome a further opportunity to comment on the masterplan.
- They would also welcome further strategic guidance from Camden Council regarding acceptable heights both within and around the site.

