



**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Our ref: DRP/73

Date: 21 October 2015

Dear Fiona Shankland,

## **ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

**RE: King's Cross Triangle Site, bounded by York Way, East Coast Main Line & Channel Tunnel Rail Link, London N1**

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 30 September 2015 for a review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for a mixed use development of part of the former railway lands comprising residential, shopping, food and drink and professional services within the A1, A2, A3 and A4 use classes, a health and fitness centre (use class D2) incorporating medi-centre facilities, a crèche and community facilities (use class D1), amenity and open space, habitat area, recycling and other ancillary uses, parking, highway works to provide access, and other supporting infrastructure works and facilities (officer's description).

### **Review Process**

The Design Review Panel provides expert impartial design advice following the 10 key principles of design review established by Design Council/CABE. The scheme was reviewed by Dominic Papa (chair), Richard Brown, Philip Cave, Michael Richter, Sarah Featherstone, and Simon Foxell on 30 September 2015 including a site visit, a presentation from the design team followed by a question and answers session and deliberations at the offices of the London Borough of Islington. The views expressed below are a reflection of the Panel's discussions as an independent advisory body to the council.

### **Panel's observations**

The Panel was generally supportive of the overall architectural approach and language of the scheme. However, panel members felt it was difficult to give full support to the scheme without more detail. They felt there was a lack of information provided in particular in relation to the quality of residential accommodation.

### Massing and scale

The Panel welcomed the changes to the massing in relation to the outline proposal. They were positive about the splitting of the W1 block and suggested that this aspect could be further improved by further articulating the two W1 blocks by employing a subtle difference in treatment of materials (a different brick was suggested).

Panel members enquired about daylight and sunlight impact as a result of the proposed massing and scale to be able to understand the quality of amenity provided throughout the scheme.

### Elevations and materials

The Panel felt that extensive work had been undertaken in relation to the treatment of the elevation of the residential units, particularly to W1 blocks. However, they felt there was still a lack of detail and inadequate information on materials for the scheme as presented. They suggested blocks W1 should be further differentiated in their treatment.

The Panel highlighted further detail on the ground floor units was needed as this was a key element of the overall appearance of the scheme and its impact on the street scene. This was also an issue on the courtyard side. Attention needs to be paid to the relationship between the rear of the commercial units, the raised courtyard, the lines of movement across the courtyard (i.e. seeking shelter in the rain/wind) and the landscape. The Panel emphasised the importance of a strategy for the treatment of the commercial units, signage, access etc.

Panel members also questioned the quality of the proposed leisure building and raised particular concern in relation to the blank façade towards the railway.

### Layout

The Panel was disappointed at the lack of information in relation to the internal layouts. They felt that it was impossible to assess the quality of the accommodation being provided without proper plans including floor plans and sections. They enquired whether the development was meeting housing standards for 1 bed units as they were unable to fully assess that aspect without the plans.

The Panel also questioned the quality of the entrances and the relationship between ground floor and upper levels. Panel members felt that critical parts of where the public would engage with buildings were missing from the information provided.

### Amenity

Based on the information presented to them, the Panel was of the opinion that the layout of the central landscaped space was not appropriate for the proposed uses and suggested that there was a need for a greater emphasis on well designed hard landscaping in order for the space to work.

The Panel stated that there was a lack of detail and information on play space provision and felt that this issue could not be left until the landscape is submitted as separate application.

Panel members stressed the importance of the landscaping scheme in creating the relationship between the buildings and for the scheme to work as a whole. In the light of this, consideration should be given to pulling forward the submission of the landscape.

### Accessibility

The Panel felt that there was a need for an analysis of the wider context to be presented so that there was an understanding of the link between the scheme and the wider community. They thought it was important to understand how people would be drawn through the site.

They also questioned how the leisure building would operate and whether it would serve the wider community. They felt this was important in order to understand the impact on accessibility, circulation, layout and landscaping.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, the Panel was supportive of the moves in relation to the massing and articulation of blocks and their development from the outline approval. But they highlighted that there was a lack of information presented to them in relation to internal layouts so that they could express a view in relation to the quality of the accommodation being provided. Panel members acknowledged that extensive work had been undertaken in relation to the treatment of the residential elevations. However they encouraged the design team to further develop the treatment of the commercial part of the development.

Thank you for consulting Islington's Design Review Panel. If there is any point that requires clarification please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to seek further advice from the Panel.

### **Confidentiality**

Please note that since the scheme is at pre-application stage, the advice contained in this letter is provided in confidence. However, should this scheme become the subject of a planning application, the views expressed in this letter may become public and will be taken into account by the council in the assessment of the proposal and determination of the application.

Yours sincerely,



**Luciana Grave**

Design Review Panel Coordinator  
Design & Conservation Team Manager