



FRAME PROJECTS

London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Stratford Gasworks site, Rick Roberts Way

Thursday 2 May 2024

Auditorium 1, Level 10, 5 Endeavour Square, London E20 1JN

Panel

Teresa Borsuk (chair)
Russell Curtis
Jayne Earnscliffe
Amber Fahey
Jennette Emery-Wallis

Attendees

Nikita Gleeson	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Paul Taylor	London Legacy Development Corporation
Pippa Henshall	London Legacy Development Corporation
Daniel Legg	London Borough of Newham
Halil Yorel	London Borough of Newham
Cindy Reriti	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Anne Ogundiya	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from a pre-application and a planning application review. Panel members who attended the previous meetings were: Peter Bishop (chair); Teresa Borsuk (chair); Michál Cohen; Jayne Earnscliffe; Keith French; Helen Hough; and Ann Sawyer.

1. Project name and site address

Stratford Gasworks, Rick Roberts Way, London E15 2GN

Planning application reference: 23/00457/FUL

2. Presenting team

Chris Wilkinson	Jo Cowen Architects
Emily Lawrence	Jo Cowen Architects
Andrew Harland	LDA Design
Alex Ash	St William
Ashley Spearing	St William
Timur Tatlioglu	Montagu Evans
Chris Gascoigne	DP9
Louise Overton	DP9

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is located on the southern fringe of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, midway between Stratford town centre and the River Lea. It is within the setting of the Three Mills Conservation Area with Abbey Lane, a low-density residential street containing several dwellings that are designated heritage assets, to the south. Abbey Mills Pumping Station, a Grade II* listed structure, is visible from the site. It is bordered by The Greenway to the west and a car dealership to the east.

The site, formerly used as a gasworks, is heavily constrained, with two disused gasholders located underground and a pressure reduction station, which will continue to function after the site is redeveloped, located in the northwest of the site. An associated underground gas pipeline traverses the site. An Environmental Investigation Agency scoping opinion was obtained by LLDC, and it was determined that specified remediation and mitigation works should be undertaken. A planning application was submitted on 15 December 2023, seeking permission for 245 homes, including 35 per cent affordable housing.

Officers would welcome the panel's comments on whether the proposals meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5. In particular, comments are sought on the scale and massing of the scheme, its response to the heritage setting of Abbey Lane and the Three Mills conservation area, and the success of the public realm, including movement and connectivity to the surrounding area and the connection to the Greenway.



4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel thanks the design team for taking on board many of its previous comments. It welcomes the reduced height of Holloway House West and feels that the scale of the proposals works well in the surrounding townscape, with the lower buildings located in the south, opposite the Abbey Mills Workers' cottages, and one tall building in the north, stepping up toward Stratford High Street. It also welcomes the move to incorporate the Holloway Stitch within the site boundary and the ongoing negotiation to ensure its delivery. However, a further level of rigour is needed for the design of both the architecture and landscape, to deliver the exceptional design required to meet Local Plan Policy BN.5. Greater ambition is also needed for Gateway House, to deliver a signature building of exceptional design. The apartment blocks require a further iteration of design development to provide a unified family with elegant massing, composition and prominent entrances.

The configuration of the entrance and the landscaped area between Holloway House West and Gasworks Green need further thought, to afford pedestrians and cyclists a warm sense of arrival and priority over vehicles. A clear link should be established between the entrance to the site and the north-south route, along Bazalgette Lane. The ecological approach is sound, and the generous provision of private and public play space is commended, but further work is needed to give confidence that it can be delivered as illustrated in the drawings.

Further work is needed to improve the quality of accommodation, including a reduction in the number of single aspect homes, and environmental analysis should be provided to allow the panel to comment fully on the quality of accommodation proposed. Environmental analysis should also be provided, to allow the panel to comment on the quality of the public realm and landscape, including external amenity areas and play space.

Architectural expression and materiality

- The design development of Gateway House has resulted in a more elegant tower, but further work is needed to deliver a building of exceptional design, to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5.
- The location of Gateway House, set apart from the other buildings on the site, presents a great opportunity to design a signature building. Justification of the buildings orientation should be provided and further consideration should be given to the corners of the building, its crown, and the entrance.
- The level of rigour applied to Gateway House should be applied to the other three blocks, to provide a unified family with thought given to materiality, the height of the ground floors, and the size and shape of balconies.



- The proposed massing could be more elegant if there was some clarity to the orientation of all of the buildings. Further thought should be given to the angles of the buildings and to simplifying any steps in their plan.
- A similar approach should be taken to the architectural expression of the entrances for all four blocks, including their height, depth, and the provision of a canopy. Elevation drawings of all four entrances are requested.

Quality of accommodation

- Where there is more than one wheelchair user home along a corridor a minimum corridor width of 1,800 millimetres should be provided to ensure that there is adequate space for two wheelchairs to pass.
- Further consideration should be given to how relief can be given to excessively long corridors.
- The triangular-shape balconies proposed for Holloway House East and Holloway House West require further thought for wheelchair apartments as users would not be able to access the corners and would have difficulty manoeuvring through the doors and turning onto the balcony.

Public realm and landscape

- A larger area of rectangular lawn, in place of the two small triangle-shape areas bisected by a diagonal path, would help to create a heart at the centre of the scheme.
- The entrance area should be reconfigured to afford pedestrians and cyclists priority over vehicles. Consideration should be given to the number and frequency of vehicles entering the site, including Blue Badge holders, delivery vans and Pressure Reduction Station maintenance vehicles.
- The three Blue Badge car park spaces, adjacent to the entrance of Gateway House, should be relocated to allow the continuation of a clear north-south link from Bazalgette Lane through to the entrance on Rick Roberts Way.
- The materiality and colour of paving should be used to improve legibility and to establish a hierarchy of routes.
- The panel commends the design team's decision to move the Holloway Stitch into the centre of the site, and it welcomes the activation that the front doors located along its length will provide. It is essential that the new ramp and connection to the Greenway are delivered, so that this does not become a dead end. The panel supports planning officers' use of conditions to safeguard its delivery.



- The panel suggests that the London Borough of Newham should safeguard the area along the boundary of these two sites, the original location proposed for the Holloway Stitch, as an ecological corridor.
- The proposed sustainable urban drainage will make a positive contribution to sustainability and also bring a welcome sense of character and joy to the scheme.
- The proposed new connections to the west are welcome. Further details are requested to show how the scheme links to the Channelsea River and to the River Lea.
- Environmental analysis is requested to show that there is adequate daylight / sunlight to enable planting to thrive long-term and to provide pleasant external amenity areas and play spaces that people will enjoy being in.
- Consideration should also be given to the robustness of planting and its long-term maintenance, especially adjacent to the play areas where the chance of damage is particularly high.
- Further details are requested on how internal and external amenity spaces will work to foster a strong sense of community among new residents through, for example, the provision of community growing gardens.
- The panel notes the bollards proposed at either end of Bazalgette Lane, but further details should be provided regarding how the speed of cyclists will be managed, given descending that slope at speed will endanger young, elderly, and visually impaired pedestrians.

Play space

- The panel welcomes the generous private play space shown in the drawings. However, further investigation is needed to ensure that the entire area will be useable, given the steep interface with the adjacent Greenway.
- The provision of public play space in Gasworks Green makes a welcome contribution to the wider community and the reference to the Pressure Reduction System for the play equipment works well. However, the required foundation depths should be checked, given the underground constraints of the site.

Environmental sustainability

- Environmental analysis should be provided to demonstrate that all new homes, particularly those on the lower levels and the inside corners of the buildings and those facing adjoining buildings, will have adequate daylight / sunlight.



- Overheating analysis and evidence of how it has been used to inform the design of the buildings, including the balconies, should be provided.
- A Whole Life Carbon assessment, with an aspiration to achieve beyond policy compliance, should be provided.
- An audit should be undertaken of materials that can be reused, and a commitment made to only specify new materials that have low embodied carbon. Details should be provided.
- Further work is needed to reduce the number of single aspect homes in the Holloway House East and Holloway House West buildings.
- Consideration should be given to improving the form factor of the buildings by simplifying the massing through the removal of any steps in plan.
- The proposed additional photovoltaic panels are welcome, but they should also be extended to the roofs of the three-storey houses.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel would welcome the opportunity to review the scheme again once the comments above have been addressed, in consultation with planning officers.

