

**Richmond
Design Review Panel
C/o Richmond Council**

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Please ask for/reply to:



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Our ref: ECS/

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Date: 28 February 2022

Neil Henderson
Gerald Eve LLP
72 Welbeck Street
London W1G 0AY

Dear Neil

**Richmond Design Review Panel – Follow-Up:
Stag Brewery Redevelopment, Richmond, SW14**

The Panel is grateful to you and your development team for submitting your proposal to the Richmond Design Review Panel (RDRP) on Wednesday 2 February 2022 for a Follow-Up review. In light of the Government restrictions following the coronavirus outbreak the Panel was not able to meet your team in person, however provided feedback in a virtual open session with the applicant present to hear the Panel's views. We therefore thank the applicant team for their presentation of the proposals for the redevelopment of the Stag Brewery site. This letter will remain confidential until a formal planning application has been submitted, whereupon it will appear alongside the information submitted with the application.

As context, the former Stag Brewery is bounded by Lower Richmond Road and Mortlake High Street to the south, the River Thames and Thames Bank to the north, Williams Lane to the west and Bulls Alley to the east. The Site is split into two, by Ship Lane, however, linked by a footbridge. The eastern site is 3.1 hectares (ha) the western site 5.5 ha.

The site is occupied by a number of large modern structures associated with the previous brewing process, which ceased at the end of 2015. These are mostly functional in appearance and highly visible from the surrounding area. The exceptions to the modern structures are three Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTMs) - the Maltings (adjacent to the river at the end of Ship Lane and also designated a landmark); the former bottling building (adjacent to Mortlake High Street) and the former hotel (on the junction of Mortlake High Street and Sheen Lane). The site also includes a sports pavilion.

Existing points of gated access exist off Lower Richmond Road, at the junction with Sheen Lane and opposite Welbeck Road, Williams Lane and Ship Lane.

Background

In the first review on 30 September 2021, the Panel had the opportunity to get acquainted with the complexity associated with the planning application process since the initial applications were made in 2018. We acknowledge that two of the applications received a positive recommendation from the Council, whilst a third to deal with highway works was refused. The original application proposed 893 residential units. The applications were then called in by the Mayor for determination and the two applications that the Council were minded to approve, were amended and the highways application withdrawn. In July 2021 these applications were then refused. The amended applications comprised 1,250 residential units, a substantial increase on the earlier scheme.

We note the hybrid application presented at this Follow-Up review proposes 1,114 residential units, which represent 221 additional units compared to the approved scheme and 136 units less than the amended GLA application.

The Panel is grateful for the commitment shown by the applicant and design teams to the design review process and the progress the design has made since the project was first presented on 30 September 2021 and commends everyone involved and all the efforts made in addressing the Panel's feedback. This is a significant regeneration scheme for Richmond and for achieving much needed housing in London, and while we fully support the scheme coming forward, we think it is crucial the aspirations set out for its redevelopment and regeneration addressed in the Council's planning brief are safeguarded and carried forward to deliver a successful and sustainable outcome.

The main points from the design review were that the Panel was as follows:

We are generally supportive of the massing and height of the scheme.

We are generally supportive of the distribution of height across the site with the exception of Block 10.

We are comfortable with the overall number of residential units set out in the masterplan.

The detailed comments of the Panel have been collated as follows:

Masterplan

In the first design review in September 2021, we stated that we were generally supportive of the original masterplan but felt that there was scope to refresh this in parts, which may help with the distribution of massing.

Since the 2018 application, much has been addressed in policy terms around healthy living and housing standards with the National Design Guide, revised NPPF and a new London Plan. With this in mind, the masterplan feels now slightly outdated and does need to follow the standards set through the London Plan. Whilst we acknowledge that an array of design and policy parameters have been reconsidered as part of the journey, we still feel it needs to work harder to achieve a successful outcome, particularly with regards to the quality and quantity of single aspect flats and the Urban Greening Factor (UGF).

We expressed high concern about the potential overlooking between habitable rooms where the buildings are c.10m (or less apart), resulting in issues of privacy and security. On the typical floor between Block 06 and the hotel section of the bottling building, the distance shown on the plan provided is approximately 5m. Whilst we appreciate the diversity of space this creates, we feel there should be a better understanding of how overlooking would be overcome in these situations.

Furthermore, we were disappointed that a disproportionate number of single-aspect north facing units were located in Block 10 which we believe is the intermediate housing. More should be done to provide an equitable design solution.

The Panel felt the scheme is too dense for this area. In our view the density expressed resonates more with areas in Central London where higher density is expected, rather than reflecting this part of Richmond. Notwithstanding the high number of housing units achieved, we would have expected a different character and density in some parts to mitigate the higher level of density.

Equally, a stronger design narrative in both architecture and layout would have helped contextualise the scheme further. The rationale for the design and how it relates to the surrounding context should be much stronger expressed.

The Panel is still of the view that the scheme would benefit from a clear hierarchy of spaces and routes. How the public spaces and how the widths of the street have emerged is unclear, so the placemaking narrative is missing. How you navigate your way into the site from the station and find your way to the river and Maltings feels imposed. More could also be done along the river edge to increase its appeal as a destination and to soften it.

The Panel felt that potentially a fine-grained network of spaces would have allowed for a tighter knit environment and more diverse building footprints. The use of the mansion block and warehouse typologies is both limiting and rather formulaic.

In terms of massing, we welcomed the remodelling of the blocks to give a more refined distribution of height across the site and are generally comfortable with it. The proposed hybrid scheme is visually less dominant in relation to the Maltings compared to the previous scheme. In the CGI views from Chiswick Bridge the Maltings now retains its pre-eminence over the emerging scheme. We do acknowledge and agree on not increasing height on the school block and welcome the change of Blocks 20 to 22 to 3-storey houses.

We do however expressed concern on the height of Block 10 which feels over dominant in the street view in relation to the historic bottling building.

Public Realm and Landscaping

We raised concern that the current scheme precludes the planting of larger growing trees such as London Plane, Chestnuts, Lime, and Oaks above the basement car park, unless the team can explore 'pockets' where trees can anchor such that they can achieve full size and maturity. We ask the team to consider this as it will not only enhance the visual landscape appearance of public spaces but also improve biodiversity, microclimate, and therefore greater use of the public realm.

Consider clustering the hard landscaped spaces where mixed use functions are located, creating distinctive places of activities. Whilst the footprints are fixed, we think there is still room for a clearer hierarchy from active to more passive or movement areas which can deliver more greener areas. This will provide further opportunities for planting and help improve the Urban Greening Factor and ensure there is a close relationship between nature and living a healthy life.

The spaces facing the river and the back of the Maltings are not yet developed and do not yet promote use or appeal. Consider what type of functions are located along the river, their relationship with planting and trees and how they link with the wider green network and spaces.

As before, we suggest both a tree succession and landscape management and maintenance strategy be submitted for the public realm to accompany any planning application.

Architecture

We are still not convinced about the success of the mansion blocks. We think the typology is confused due to the height and not enough level of detail and richness as these building types would require. Their scale and height without the delight of the more celebrated mansion blocks seem out of place in this location.

We noted the images of precedents elsewhere in London and whilst we support a contemporary interpretation, it is about capturing the essence of the details. In particular we encourage more consideration of the tops, the gables, the texture, balconies, and more celebration. The elements of delight which are redolent of the mansion block types, are here lacking and relying on brickwork rather than architectural expression.

The materiality of the mansion blocks needs refining, and we look forward to seeing how this develops.

We find the warehouse typology much more convincing, and we liked the images showing how the details were developing.

Sustainability

We are pleased more work has been put into raising the sustainability levels of the scheme and support the targets proposed, in view of the changed requirements and the Council's climate change agenda to achieve a greener borough and meet the net-zero carbon target by 2030.

We support the reduction in the size of the basement car park compared to the Richmond scheme and feel this will reduce the embodied carbon as part of the construction. We would encourage this reduction be aligned with the tree strategy to maximise the opportunities for trees to be planted in the ground.

We welcome the use of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) as a communal installation that will serve the whole of Phase I. The incorporation within the roof of the bottling building is supported. We note that ASHP will also be used in Phase II and this is welcomed.

We feel the current Urban Greening Factor is low for this type of scheme and the team needs to push harder. We would expect for the masterplan to achieve the UGF of 0.4.

We are concerned that the proportion of single aspect flats was almost 50%, although acknowledge that only 7% were north facing. Nevertheless, we question the quality of living conditions in these homes, especially as there may be issues of overheating on the south facing ones. We feel the scheme can push harder to reduce the proportion.

We feel there is scope to improve the biodiversity net gain for the site which will improve the UGF. Moreover, the importance of greater provision of planting and

green spaces in close proximity to where we live cannot be overstated and we urge for the landscape to reduce the proportion of hard areas and to increase the soft.

Moving Forward

The Panel is pleased to see how the scheme has evolved and compliments the team on the commitment shown to the design review process. We acknowledge and commend the enormous amount of work the team has put into this scheme over the past 5 years and see this review as a last opportunity to evaluate the masterplan and be clear on the areas which in our view should be revised to create a successful outcome.

We appreciate how the team addressed our last set of comments and were pleased that some of our suggestions were taken on board, particularly around the height and massing in relation to the Maltings and the redistribution of the massing across the site. Apart from the relationship of Block 10 with the bottling building, the distribution of height across the site now feels appropriate. We do echo however some of the comments expressed in the first review, thus whilst we were generally supportive of the underlying principles of the masterplan, we feel there are opportunities to further improve some elements including the expression of the mansion blocks and the hierarchy of spaces.

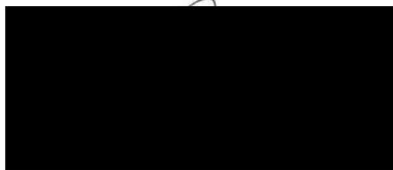
We understand that a fresh planning application will be submitted soon and feel it is important the proposals be reviewed in light of the comments above, and further developed in the continuous conversation with the Council as part of the pre-application, and application processes.

If further changes to the design of the mansion blocks have not been made following the Design Review Panel or during the application process, then the Panel would only be prepared to support the application if the Council were to add a condition to any decision requiring the applicant to undertake further revisions to the design of the mansion blocks to finesse the details. At that stage the Panel invites the applicant to submit those revisions for a workshop review to give the Council confidence in the scheme as part of its post application decision-making process.

Similarly, we request that the Council secure by way of an appropriate legal agreement as part of any approval, to invite the submission of a detailed tree succession, landscape management and maintenance plan to ensure that the uses, access to public spaces comply with the Public London Charter. We particularly feel there is scope to improve the Urban Greening Factor and encourage the local planning authority to push the applicants harder to achieve this.

We acknowledge that Phase II of the scheme is in outline only and would welcome the opportunity for the applicant to bring this forward for a design review at the appropriate time.

Yours sincerely



Noel Farrer
Director, Farrer Huxley
Chair, Richmond Design Review Panel

Panel Members

Leonardo Pelleriti	Director, Wimshurst Pelleriti Architects
Beatrix Young	Partner, Weston Williamson & Partners
Vinita Dhume	Associate Director, Levitt Bernstein
Katy Neaves	Director, Neaves Urbanism

Panel Admin

Barry Sellers	Principal Planner, Panel Secretary
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Applicant Team

Michael Squire	Squire and Partners
Murray Levinson	Squire and Partners
Rebecca Brook	Squire and Partners
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Steve McAdam	Soundings
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Peter Wadey	Stantec
Androniki Strongioglou	Gillespies
David Ashcroft	Dartmouth Capital
Guy Duckworth	Dartmouth Capital
Neil Henderson	Gerald Eve LLP
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Attendees (invited to observe)

Jeni Jackson	Assistant Director Environment & Community Services
Lucy Thatcher	Strategic Applications Manager
Grace Edwards	Senior Planner
Marc Wolfe-Cowen	Principal Urban Design Officer
Nicolette Duckham	Senior Conservation Officer
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Tara Murphy	Conservation Officer
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Cllr Gareth Roberts
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