

Appendix One A: QRP response 27 April 2016

Formal review

Summary

The Quality Review Panel recognises that the Chocolate Factory site represents a welcome opportunity to bring forward a high quality development that should set the standard for the area around the Haringey Heartlands. The panel broadly supports the emerging proposals, and feels that it has the potential to become a good scheme. They identify, however, a number of issues that need to be resolved, in particular the configuration and nature of the northwest section of the site adjacent to the school, and the clarity and role of the central space. They also remain to be convinced by the location and nature of both towers, and suggest that further thought is required.

The panel also identified that the public realm across the site requires further scrutiny in terms of scale, hierarchy and design. The courtyard block could be very successful; the panel drew a parallel with the Custard Factory in Birmingham as an example of how the special character of a place has been retained and expressed in a very successful development. The importance of early consideration and integration of public art was highlighted. Further details on the panel's views are provided below.

Massing and development density

- The panel notes that whilst the site plans for the Chocolate Factory set the scheme within the context of adjacent development proposals, it would also be helpful to see the scheme in the context of existing buildings, as those proposals may not be realised.
- The panel remains unconvinced by the two towers on site; they have concerns that the tower to the east of the site will detract from the Chocolate Factory rather than framing the view of the retained building.
- The panel also feels that the tower at the northwest of the site is too dominant relative to the adjacent school buildings.
- The panel recommends a rethink of this section of the site (see further details below), and suggests that adjustments to the massing should be considered, perhaps through redistributing some of the residential accommodation from the towers to the other residential buildings.

Place-making, character and quality

- Further thought about the configuration of the central square could strike a better balance between the requirements of the route passing through, and the aspiration to create an important public space within the development.
- At present the proposed central square seems like a space with a road passing through, not a square.
- The public realm elsewhere on the site requires further consideration; the network of spaces across the site is shown as having uniform width.
- Exploration of ways to differentiate the hierarchy of spaces and create a more intimate feel to side roads would be encouraged.
- One approach might be to 'pinch' the street width or reduce gaps between buildings at the ends of spaces/routes, to provide a sense of visual enclosure.
- Alongside an increasing emphasis on the hierarchy of the different spaces and routes, the panel would suggest that different approaches to the public realm design would be appropriate within different parts of the site.
- Activity and vibrancy are most appropriate within the main public areas, whilst the residential areas will require a quieter and more domestic approach to the public realm design.
- The Custard Factory in Birmingham is a fantastic example of how distinctiveness and character can be embedded in the redevelopment of industrial premises to create a diverse and vibrant mixed-use quarter.
- The panel would recommend the early engagement of a public artist for the scheme, highlighting that this can bring a scheme to life and reinforce distinctiveness and character.

Scheme layout, access and integration

- As noted above the panel has concerns about tall buildings proposed to the rear of the Chocolate Factory courtyard, and adjacent to the school.

- The proximity of the rear courtyard of the Chocolate Factory to the residential tower adjacent could cause conflict – residents may be disturbed by the noise of light industry and by activity in the courtyard's café's in the evening.
- The panel would welcome a re-think of this section of the scheme, perhaps involving relocation of the taller residential element southwards to the adjacent residential courtyard block.
- This would enable a more positive design solution at the northwestern entrance to the development, which could resolve frontage and access issues to the rear of the Chocolate Factory, whilst creating a more positive interface with the school.
- An employment use may be more appropriate than residential accommodation to the rear of the Chocolate Factory yard.
- The panel note that Quicksilver Place (to the northwest) is a difficult site with many challenges; they would welcome further information on the configuration and design of the proposed development on this section of the site and its relationship to the Conservation Area to the north.
- The panel would also welcome the opportunity to consider the detailed design of the accommodation across the whole site.

Architectural expression

- The panel feels that the success of the additional storey at roof level on the existing Chocolate Factory building will depend upon its design detail and its relationship to the existing double cornice.
- The architecture of the new build elements of the scheme was not discussed in detail at this review, as the panel's comments were at a more strategic level.

Inclusive and sustainable design

- The panel would like to know more about the strategic approach to energy efficiency and environmental sustainability for the scheme as a whole.
- It was highlighted that the standard of zero carbon homes remains a requirement of the London Plan, in contrast to the Building Regulations.
- The building typologies proposed on site include the classic mixed-use type of block; the panel would recommend careful detailed design of the living environments accommodated within the block to minimise environmental problems for the residents.
- Both north- and south-facing single aspect units can be problematic and should be avoided where possible.

Next steps

- The panel would welcome a further opportunity to comment on the proposals before a planning application is submitted.

Appendix One B: QRP response 06 July 2016

Formal review

Summary

The Quality Review Panel are generally supportive of the way that the scheme has developed following the previous QRP meeting on 27 April. They welcome the reduction in height of a storey from Block I (Metropolitan Police site), and removal of the tower to the north-west of the site, and the opportunities that this has enabled for the creation of some positive spatial relationships within the Chocolate Factory courtyard, and with the school to the north of the site. The tower located adjacent to the square remains an interesting proposition, but the panel feels that further justification and testing of the scale is needed, with regard to long views. The emerging sketch designs for the tower show promise; the panel further feels that the tower would need to have very special qualities to justify its scale.

The panel is broadly supportive of the distribution of uses and emerging architectural design, but suggest that there is scope for fine-tuning, especially with regard to over-shadowing. Further consideration (in discussion with officers) is also required concerning short-term boundary conditions of the first phase of development to mitigate or avoid negative impacts like overlooking. The panel also finds much to admire in the design of the public realm - but feels that there is scope to further refine the design of the square. More detailed comments are provided below.

Massing and development density

- The panel noted that the scope of the site was sufficient to potentially warrant individual reviews of different buildings. Whilst an outline / hybrid application is proposed, the current level of detail shown is indicative only – and the panel requests an opportunity to comment on more detailed designs.
- The panel welcomes the amendments to the massing of the proposals following the previous review.
- The removal of the tower at the northwest of the site is a very positive move in terms of the relationship to the school beyond the site, in addition to addressing the courtyard and rear of the Chocolate Factory more appropriately.
- Removal of the top level of accommodation on Block I (Metropolitan Police site) is also welcomed.
- The massing of the residential blocks fronting onto Western Road is acceptable at 6+1 storeys, and will provide good views to the west.
- The panel is not yet convinced that a strong enough argument has been made for the location and height of the tower.
- They would like to see analysis of what the impact of the tower will be on the square, on long views, and on the setting of the Chocolate Factory.
- Long views (including those from the park) approaching the site should help to inform decisions about where the tallest building should be, how many storeys it should comprise, and how it is visually terminated on the skyline.

Public realm and place-making

- The panel warmly welcomes the refinements to the public spaces; creating pinch points and tightening up the flow of space around the site.
- Critical to the success of the central square will be the extent to which vehicle access is integrated within the public realm design.
- The panel understands that details of the vehicle access route through the square will be subject to discussion with highways officers; they would support a design approach that prioritises the pedestrian within the public realm of the square.
- The panel notes that 'Jelly Lane' is likely to be very significant in the early phases of development; it will be a lively route with commercial uses either side, opening up to the square.
- The corner site at the junction of 'Jelly Lane' and the square also holds great potential.

Relationship to surroundings

- The panel notes that due to phasing and land ownership constraints, the boundary of the detailed application will deliver fragments of blocks, which creates some very difficult transition spaces/issues.
- This is particularly relevant with regard to the area south of the mews blocks, and the area to the north of the tower.
- Careful consideration of the short-term and long-term relationships across these transition spaces will be required in order to avoid awkward juxtaposition.

- For example, the outlook from the western end of the mews block in the short-term would be a two-storey blank wall at very close quarters.
- The panel feels that there is not enough information about these short-term spatial relationships and overlooking issues, and that this requires further detailed consideration, in close dialogue with planning officers.
- The detailed design for these peripheral parts of the development should also avoid prejudicing development on sites adjacent.

Scheme layout, access and servicing

- The panel would like to see more detailed drawings to demonstrate the quality and amenity of residential and commercial accommodation.
- The panel supports the evolution of the delivery yard and access arrangements to the north-west of the site.
- They also note that refuse handling requires very careful consideration within the design of large residential developments.

Architectural expression

- The architecture of the majority of the new build elements of the scheme were not presented or discussed in detail at this review – and the panel's comments were therefore at a strategic level.
- However, generally the panel feels further work is needed to ensure high quality architectural expression and choice of materials.
- For example, Block I occupies a prominent location on an awkward site, and the panel think it could be successful with a robustly detailed 'industrial' aesthetic that more closely responds to the character of the neighbouring conservation area.

Inclusive and sustainable design

- The panel would encourage early environmental analysis and testing of the proposals, to inform the overall design.
- For example it may be necessary to mitigate downdraughts at the ground level of the blocks fronting onto Western Road, due to their scale and exposure to prevailing winds.
- They note that plans rendered with standard shadows as a stylistic treatment can be very misleading of the actual environmental impact of the proposals.
- The panel would like to know more about the strategic approach to energy efficiency and environmental sustainability for the scheme as a whole.
- The panel would encourage the design team to consider natural ventilation for the Chocolate Factory; early consideration of these issues is crucial.
- It was highlighted that the standard of zero carbon homes will be a requirement of the new London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, in force from 1st October 2016.

Next Steps

- The panel are generally supportive of the way that the scheme has been refined following the previous QRP; however, they highlight a number of action points for consideration by the design team (outlined above).
- They would welcome a further opportunity for review of the proposals following submission of the outline / hybrid planning application – and subsequent reserved matters applications.

Appendix One C: QRP response 30 January 2018

Formal review

Summary

Overall, the Quality Review Panel is impressed by the way in which the proposal for the Chocolate Factory has developed and, in principle, would support approval of the planning application. It thinks that there is some scope for revisiting some of the decisions on distribution of massing across the scheme – but a definitive position has to take into account other developments coming forward on adjacent sites. The panel thinks that the architecture proposed for the various blocks within the scheme has developed well, including Block B which will become a marker for the cultural quarter. It will be essential, however, to ensure that the quality promised by the proposals is followed through to detailed design and construction. The panel would encourage environmental analysis and testing of the proposal, especially in relation to the impact of tall buildings. It also suggests development of a public art strategy for the public realm of what will become a cultural quarter. These comments are expanded below.

Scale and massing

- The panel finds the proposed scheme impressive – but also complex. Decisions on scale and massing for the various blocks making up the scheme have to correspond to the quantum of development proposed for the Chocolate Factory – with care taken to avoid overdevelopment.
- A number of the issues previously raised about scale and massing have since been addressed in consultation with planning officers – and the panel supports many of the decisions reached.
- Assessing the appropriateness of the proposed distribution of massing requires a clearer understanding of how this might relate to that of the future development of adjoining sites. At the moment, because of phasing and land ownership constraints, a number of factors remain unknown. The planning application will deliver fragments of blocks.
- This applies particularly to Block D which would become a periphery block as part of an eventual urban block. The scale and massing of Block D will to a large extent determine that of future development.
- A more detailed scheme for the entire urban block of which Block D forms a part is required in order to take a more definitive view on the massing of Block D. The panel thinks, however, that an argument could be made for increasing its height, currently proposed as nine storeys, dropping down to four storeys. The panel also suggests that a particularly distinctive tall building could be appropriate at the northern corner of this urban block.
- One storey of residential units has been added to Block E along Western Road. There is a view that the proportions of this block were more elegant, and that there was more differentiation across the scheme, before addition of another storey. An increase in the height of this block would, however, afford improved views from apartments over the railway embankment towards Alexandra Palace. The panel recommends continuing discussions between planning officers and the design team on this point.
- Reverting to a lower height for Block E could be compensated by an increase in the height of Block D, as suggested above, or Block B. The panel appreciates, however, that the planning authority may have reservations about further increases in heights, including in the context of the adjoining conservation area.
- The panel considers the height of Block B – at 16 storeys – to be the least contentious element of the scheme. The building is well proportioned and it serves as a significant marker for the proposed cultural quarter.
- Consideration of long views when approaching the site is important. While the prominence of Block B in long views is appropriate, the panel suggests that it might be preferable for Block E not to be visible.
- The panel repeats its view that a three dimensional model of proposed development, of both the Chocolate Factory and the wider context, would be invaluable.

Mix of uses

- The panel welcomes the increase in commercial space that results from revisions to the proposal.

Architectural expression

- The architecture proposed for the different blocks making up the scheme has developed well. This includes the choice of materials.

- The design of Block B shows considerable potential. The panel supports an approach where the top of the building is more distinctive, for example by incorporating a giant order, in order to emphasise its role as a marker for the cultural quarter.
- It will be essential that the high quality sought for this scheme is assured through to detailed design and construction and not diminished through value engineering. The panel recommends retention of the design team throughout.

Residential accommodation

- The panel is confident that the proposal will provide high quality residential accommodation – if the quality promised by the proposal is achieved.

Environmental conditions

- The panel again encourages environmental analysis and testing of the proposal.
- For example, while supporting the proposed height of 16 storeys for Block B, a study of environmental conditions will be important to assess potential down draughts and wind funnels.

Public realm

- Given that the Chocolate Factory will form part of a cultural quarter, the panel suggests that a public art strategy be developed to enliven, animate and add an element of fun to the public realm.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel offers some comments on the distribution of massing across the development to be pursued by the design team in consultation with planning officers. It notes, however, that much will depend on schemes coming forward on surrounding sites.
- In principle, the panel would support approval of the planning application. It stresses, however, the importance of ensuring that the quality of the development promised by the proposal is realised, including by retention of the design team through to detailed design and construction.