



London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Berol Quarter Phase 4

Wednesday 19 October 2022

Room 5M1, Clockwise Wood Green, Greenside House, 50 Station Rd, N22 7DE

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Tim Pitman
Esther Everett
Louise Goodison
Andy Puncher

Attendees

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| Richard Truscott | London Borough of Haringey |
| Philip Elliot | London Borough of Haringey |
| Rob Krzyszowski | London Borough of Haringey |
| Robbie McNaugher | London Borough of Haringey |
| John McRory | London Borough of Haringey |
| Emily Read | London Borough of Haringey |
| Deborah Denner | Frame Projects |
| Kirsty McMullan | Frame Projects |
| Joe Brennan | Frame Projects |

Apologies / report copied to

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| Elizabetta Tonazzi | London Borough of Haringey |
| Suzanne Kimman | London Borough of Haringey |

Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Haringey 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.

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1. Project name and site address

Berol Quarter, Ashley Road, London, N17 9LJ
Hybrid planning permission reference: HGY/2017/2044

2. Presenting team

| | |
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| Jonathan Carkeet | Berkley Square Developments |
| Paul Eaton | Allies and Morrison |
| Aidan Potter | John McAslan + Partners |
| Ben Kelway | Lichfields |

3. Planning authority briefing

Tottenham Hale is an area earmarked by the GLA to deliver 1,965 homes and is a Tall Building Growth Area and a Local Employment Area: Regeneration Area. It is within the site allocation Ashley Road South for the creation of an employment-led mixed-use quarter, creation of a new east-west route linking Down Lane Park and Hale Village, enhanced public realm and residential use. It falls within Flood Zone 2.

The Berol Quarter site sits within the Ashley Road South Masterplan and covers an area of 1.02ha. A hybrid planning permission has been partially built out with residential building 'The Gessner' completed and occupied since 2021. There are a number of relevant emerging nearby tall buildings, such as the approved 38 storey Tottenham Hale Island Site building.

A new full planning application at the Berol Quarter site (phase 4) is now proposed comprising comprehensive refurbishment and extension of Berol House, alongside a new mixed-use building, 2 Berol Yard. This scheme will complete the Ashley Road South masterplan. It will deliver 210 Build to Rent homes and approximately 620 sqm of retail and 160 sqm of community floorspace at 2 Berol Yard, alongside the refurbishment of approximately 3,300sqm of existing commercial floorspace and 2,000sqm new employment space at Berol House, plus associated public realm and landscaping. Allies and Morrison are designing 2 Berol Yard, John McAslan & Partners are designing the refurbishment and extension works at Berol House, and Churchman Thornhill Finch are leading the landscape design and public realm to connect the two buildings.

The panel reviewed the original hybrid scheme for the Ashley Road Masterplan in January 2017 and a joint reserved matters application for the detailed design of Berol House and 'The Gessner' in September 2017. A separate reserved matters application for the detailed design of Berol House was reviewed in November 2019. Most recently, a former iteration of the current proposal was reviewed in August 2022.

Planning officers asked for the panel's comments on 2 Berol Yard and the surrounding public realm, including: height and massing; microclimate impacts on the public realm and surrounding buildings; landscaping; and architectural expression.



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4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel's comments at this review focused primarily on the newbuild proposals for 2 Berol Yard. It is broadly supportive of this and feels a case has been made for a tall building on this site, subject to continuing refinement of the architecture, public realm, and a robust strategy to facilitate delivery of the pedestrian bridge across Watermead Way. The rationale for a tall building on this site, marking key public infrastructure nodes, is convincing. This height must be justified by public benefit, provided by substantial public realm improvements that can support a new community of this scale. This should include the bridge over Watermead Way that would facilitate access to the Lea Valley Park. Berol Square will be the heart of the scheme, and the public realm design should be extraordinary, creating an attractive destination. The architecture needs further work to protect residents from the hostile Watermead Way environment, increase legibility from outside to inside, celebrate the entrance experience, and define the activity and character of the shared gardens. The commercial strategy is welcome, and the panel encourages the project team to refine the details of this for each area, as an integral part of the public realm.

The panel supports the proposal for Berol House and urges safeguarding of the quality through to delivery. The materiality and detailing should be refined to ensure that the building has a clear hierarchy and looks convincing at night. The panel questions the permeability of the ground floor plan beyond the central access route and suggests focusing on the activation of spaces around Berol Square.

These comments are expanded below.

2 Berol Yard

Height and massing

- Considering the wider emerging context, the panel agrees that a case can be made for height on this site to complete the triangle cluster of tall buildings, marking Tottenham Hale station and the green link. However, justification for height will depend on the public benefit that the scheme can offer and continuing refinement of the massing at a detailed level.
- The panel recommends further testing and adjustment of heights to ensure the different faceted elements of the building relate positively to the emerging context.
- In the panel's view Berol Walk does not feel like a balanced, two-sided street because its western face risks feeling overbearing, compromising the quality of public realm at ground floor level.
- The panel would encourage a significant reduction in height to the element directly facing Berol House and a lesser reduction in height to the element fronting Berol Square, both to improve the street life of the public realm.



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- This will help to create more difference between the tallest element and the shoulder elements of the building lower down. The panel supports the height of the tallest element, on the basis that this forms part of a cluster of tall buildings around the station. It should, however, read as subservient to the tallest building in the centre of the cluster facing the station.
- The ground and mezzanine floor facing Ashley Road step out beyond the building line, and the panel asks that this is reconsidered, to avoid constricting the width of the street.
- The panel welcomes the move to rotate the building, which resolves its' previous concerns about proximity to other buildings.
- The panel agrees with the decision to angle the tallest element towards the River Lea and Lea Valley open space nearby.
- The panel notes that a carefully resolved servicing strategy will be essential to minimise impact on public realm around the building. It would welcome further information on this at a future review.

Public benefit

- In the panel's view, the acceptability of a building of up to 30 storeys will depend in large part on the public benefit it offers. This must come from the delivery of more than high-quality new homes; it must deliver extraordinary and substantial public realm to support a new community of this size and create a new destination.
- Key to this will be a robust strategy for delivery of the bridge over Watermead Way, to increase pedestrian and cycle connectivity. The panel does not think that merely providing a bridge landing as part of the scheme is sufficient and encourages the applicant and the Borough to establish a more robust delivery strategy. Ideally the bridge over Watermead Way should be an integral part of the planning application and secured by a Section 106 agreement to which the Borough, as Highway Authority, would also be a party.
- The panel agrees that the second notional bridge (over the railway lines) could be delivered at a future stage because this is subject to as yet unknown requirements for Crossrail 2. However, the design of the Watermead Way bridge should include a landing point for the future bridge over the railway.
- The project team should also consider where public art might be best placed to help with placemaking and wayfinding. The panel suggests that this could help to reinforce the green link, as well as Berol Square.



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Public realm and landscaping

- In the panel's view the heart of the scheme will be Berol Square, rather than the streets around Berol House as shown in diagrams.
- Most people are likely to arrive from the direction of Tottenham Hale station, taking them through Berol Square first. Berol House may also be less permeable than the drawings suggest, making the surrounding public realm more challenging to activate.
- Further thought is needed to ensure that Berol Square is the civic space demanded by this new piece of city. The landscape design and surrounding uses will be key to the success of the scheme as a whole.
- The panel also suggests that the green link should be more than a series of trees and benches. The design should extend across the new bridge and integrate with public artworks to create a place that people will want to visit.
- The public realm feels urban, and the panel thinks that families with children should be considered more in its design. Whilst there is a park nearby, this scheme should provide social spaces for all.
- The panel advises carrying out studies 'day-in-the-life' studies of future residents and visitors of varying demographics. This will help the project team to understand the user experience, developing the public realm and private amenity spaces such as the rooftop gardens to the next level of detail.
- Across the scheme greater attention should also be given to how the public realm welcomes and caters for cyclists.

Architecture

- This scheme will create a large number of homes next to Watermead Way, a busy and hostile road environment.
- The panel encourages the project team and London Borough of Haringey to work on ways that design can temper the impact of the road over the long-term for a better quality of life for the residents.
- The external envelope of the building, which is expressed as a series of buildings with different materiality, looks promising. The panel would support simple and consistent details, as a basis for the changing material colour/tone.
- The panel encourages the project team to continue this idea inside the building to create legibility. The external material could wrap inside the communal areas, allowing people to 'read' the building volumes internally too.
- The cladding of the exposed core currently feels rather dark and monolithic, and the panel asks for further thought about its materiality and detailing.



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- The panel urges the project team to give careful attention to the design of the north-eastern servicing corner at ground floor level. Accessibility, views, signage, greenery and functionality for cyclists should be considered.

Internal layout

- Approximately 700 people will be using the entrance lobby, which should be designed with appropriate generosity. Currently the entrance route creates a 'bottle neck' between the lobby and the stair/lifts. This route is not instinctive and is likely to become congested at peak hours.
- The entrance should also be more celebratory both outside and in, perhaps making a design feature of the staircase at ground floor level. As part of this process, options to provide a stronger link between the residential entrance and the adjoining retail unit could be explored.
- The residential core has the potential to connect to all the rooftop garden spaces, to allow views at the end of corridors, and to bring natural light into the circulation spaces. This aspiration should be protected as the project team develops the detail of each floor and should be informed by the 'day-in-the-life' studies discussed earlier.
- The panel welcomes the project team's ambitions regarding dual aspect homes and providing a range of external shared spaces.
- The gardens could be designed with defined characters, uses and programmes of activity. This will help the spaces to feel accessible and welcoming, creating a cohesive community.
- The project team's learnings about which rooftop spaces have been well-used in the completed buildings nearby should inform the designs here.

Commercial strategy

- The commercial strategy is well thought through. It is positive to see this being considered at an early stage and the commitments are welcomed.
- The panel encourages the project team to now focus on the next stage of curation, continuing to develop the commercial strategy alongside the design.
- Key focal points should be identified, and the project team should zoom in and refine the individual strategy for each. The retail strategy will be key to the success of the public realm. The green link, Berol House, Berol Square and the Watermead Way bridge should all be focal points for active uses.
- The panel emphasises that a substantial amount of creativity will be required to find the right tenants for the commercial space to support a thriving public realm.



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Berol House

- The panel thinks that the proposals for Berol House promise a successful re-use of this locally listed building. The materials and detailing of the new elements will be crucial to carry the quality of the design through to delivery.
- The panel suggests the façade designs could emphasise a tripartite hierarchy, with the original Berol House building as the heavier base, the additional full length two storeys as the Piano Nobile levels, and the setback rooftop element as a pediment.
- The terracotta cladding on the exterior of the 'Piano Nobile' could have a more reflective quality than the existing brickwork below. This may help to ensure that the base 'reads' as the primary element, with lighter elements on top.
- The building's appearance at night will be influenced by its materiality, as well as lighting, and merits further exploration.
- The panel understands that as a minimum, a single public route through the ground floor of Berol House will be provided – and that additional routes cannot be guaranteed as part of the commercial strategy.
- For this reason, the panel suggests that the concept of permeability through all sides of the building should not be overplayed, and the project team should focus on Berol Square as the primary civic space that requires activation.

Next steps

The Haringey Quality Review Panel would like to see the proposals for 2 Berol Yard again when the scheme has developed in response to the comments above. This should be a full review to allow time to cover sustainability, public realm strategy, landscape design, bridge delivery/design and architectural expression.

It is confident that the applicant team will be able to address its minor comments on Berol House in liaison with planning officers, but any updates on the design should be provided as context for the next review of 2 Berol Yard.

