

**London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel**

**Report of Formal Review Meeting: Mecca Bingo**

Wednesday 20 September 2023

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

**Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Yemí Aládérún  
Alberto Campagnoli  
Ann Sawyer  
Alan Shingler

**Attendees**

John McRory	London Borough of Haringey
Valerie Okeiyi	London Borough of Haringey
Biplav Pagéni	London Borough of Haringey
Elisabetta Tonazzi	London Borough of Haringey
Richard Truscott	London Borough of Haringey
Kirsty McMullan	Frame Projects
Abigail Joseph	Frame Projects
Bonnie Russell	Frame Projects
Aretha Ahunanya	Frame Projects (observing)

**Apologies / copied to**

Suzanne Kimman	London Borough of Haringey
Rob Krzyszowski	London Borough of Haringey
Robbie McNaugher	London Borough of Haringey
Tasnima Ahmed	Frame Projects (observing)

**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

Mecca Bingo, 707-725 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London N22 5JY

## 2. Presenting team

Julian Evans	Fusion Group
André Ferdinand	Fusion Group
Laura Kurt	Fusion Group
Ameya Bhusari	Corstorphine & Wright
Spencer John	Corstorphine & Wright
Ailish Killilea	The Townscape Consultancy
Megan Townsend	The Townscape Consultancy
Taylor Vernon	DP9

## 3. Planning authority briefing

The site is currently occupied by a large single-storey bingo hall and by surface car parking to the south. To the west of the site is a residential estate. Immediately to the east is Omnibus House, a seven-storey building rising to nine-storeys, consisting of residential units and a ground floor gym. To the south on Wellesley Road there are three-storey town houses and the rear gardens of the two-storey properties on Moselle Avenue, part of the Noel Park Conservation Area.

The site is identified as a strategic area for regeneration in the London Plan 2021 and is in the Wood Green Growth Area (Local Plan 2017). The site forms part of designated Site Allocation 9, known as Mecca Bingo, which seeks the redevelopment of the bingo hall for town centre uses at ground level and residential above. It is also within the boundaries of the Draft Wood Green Area Action Plan (2018) and the Wood Green Metropolitan Centre.

The scheme aims to create a mixed-use development consisting of 985 square metres of flexible commercial floorspace (town centre use), 629 purpose-built student accommodation, 748 square metres of student amenity space at ground floor level, 24 shared ownership dwellings, 45 social rent dwellings, seven social rent houses, and 1,377 square metres urban pocket park.

Haringey officers find the principle of a mixed-use development on this site to be acceptable. Officers have explored the proposal for student accommodation with the developer team and are generally supportive. The level of employment floorspace is considered less than what should be delivered on this site – the site allocation indicates a development capacity of 1,484 square metres.

Planning officers asked for the panel's comments on the scheme's contribution to the public realm, the impact of its scale on neighbouring buildings, the layout of student housing, the approach to sustainability, and the scheme's functionality.



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## 4. Quality Review Panel's views

### *Summary*

The panel is pleased to have the opportunity to review the scheme at an early stage. It is broadly supportive of the proposals for student accommodation, housing, commercial space and new public green space on this edge of town centre site but thinks that more work is needed to improve its quality.

The scale of the development is ambitious, but generally acceptable. However, exceptional architecture is required to mitigate the sudden change in height along Lordship Lane in views towards the town centre, alongside further work to minimise impact on the Noel Park Conservation Area. Analysis and mitigation of the microclimate, including daylight and sunlight impacts on neighbours, is essential to justify the height.

A more coherent approach to the landscaping across the site is encouraged, including providing a direct visual link between the internal courtyard of Building A1 and the pocket park. The shared ownership Building A2-1 blocks views of the pocket park from Redvers Road and significantly reduces its attractiveness by limiting its visibility from the surrounding area. One response could be to remove this block entirely to create a more substantial park and give a better sense of welcome to the site. Alternatively, if block A2-1 is to remain, the management regime for the pocket park will need to be carefully controlled, including the possibility of night-time closure to prevent antisocial behaviour.

The panel suggests relocating the student accommodation and commercial entrances so that they respond better to typical footfall from the tube station. The internal layouts should allow wheelchair access to more parts of the building. The sustainability strategy needs further work and greater embedding into the scheme. The panel would also like to see more integration of the architecture of Wood Green into the character of the scheme to help it feel more of its place, and more welcoming from the street. It encourages meaningful co-creation with the community to ensure that the scheme responds to local needs. A stewardship plan covering the public realm maintenance throughout the site would help to guarantee the site's safety and long-term success.

### *Height and massing*

- The height of the student accommodation building jumps abruptly in scale in comparison to the nearby two and three-storey housing, especially in views westwards along Lordship Lane. To justify the scale, the panel asks for exceptional architecture with high quality materials. This will also set a new precedent of quality for the whole immediate neighbourhood.
- The panel is concerned about how the scheme is visible above the parapet line from the Noel Park Conservation Area. It suggests exploring whether the upper floor could be stepped back to avoid impacting this view.



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- It advises that more work be done to refine the massing, informed by both town centre and conservation area views. Eight storeys may be justifiable for a marker element signifying the gateway to the town centre, but not for the rest of the block.
- The panel recommends technical studies on the overshadowing and microclimate impact of the scheme on nearby buildings, especially as the height of the Lordship Lane gateway building could block winter sunlight reaching the houses opposite and the adjacent estate's gardens.
- The panel suggests exploring the possibility of varying heights across the scheme, perhaps further adding more height on the town centre side and stepping down to east. Some units may need to be sacrificed to ensure that the height and massing is successful.

## *Masterplan layout*

- The panel is happy with the treatment of the eastern end of Wellesley Road, as the masterplan completes the street.
- The panel understands the Council's policy ensuring no loss of employment space but thinks that the needs of students should be prioritised to ensure the success of the scheme, given the extremely high numbers of student rooms that are being proposed. As it is not convinced by the access along the eastern alley to the duplexes, the panel suggests that this area could provide an alternative location for the employment space meaning it does not need to occupy a key frontage.
- The panel suggests that the project team thinks about how it can facilitate and maximise social interaction among students. Students from a range of universities across London will be living on the site, so it will not feel like a campus, and more needs to be done to create a sense of student community.
- The panel thinks that more consideration is needed of amenity provision on the upper floors. Amenity here could be used by students, other residents, and users of the workspace. The panel encourages the use of unconventional spaces, such as corners, for amenity provision. It would also be beneficial to include some smaller spaces for studying and socialising to give students more options.
- The panel encourages the project team to prioritise student health and wellbeing as the design develops. It wants to see more detailed examples of this, such as avoiding long, narrow corridors, bringing natural light into the communal spaces, and creating informal meeting spaces.
- It also suggests peppering student clusters across the plan rather than concentrating them all in the same area to improve the legibility of the scheme and students' wayfinding.



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## *Landscape and public realm*

- The panel is concerned about the location and design of the urban pocket park. Its proposed location behind Building A2-1 means that it would not be overlooked, which will inevitably encourage antisocial behaviour, particularly after dark. Its design is further compromised by the fact that it will need to be kept open to meet the scheme's servicing needs.
- If the park is being offered as a community benefit to mitigate the scale of development being proposed, then consideration should be given to removing Building A2-1 altogether, making a more substantial and useful park with greater visibility from the surrounding area. The panel recommends that the project team carry out an analysis of the demographics of the wider area, and of existing green spaces, to help ensure that the public realm offer here will meet the needs of the community.
- An alternative, but possibly controversial, response would be to accept that the pocket park in its current form would be more successful if it was primarily managed as an amenity linked to the student accommodation, with a direct visual connection made between it and the internal courtyard of Building A1.
- Whatever strategy is adopted, the panel would like to see a comprehensive management plan for the pocket park covering security and use, alongside a lighting strategy.
- The panel suggests developing the character of the landscaped spaces across the scheme. This could include exploration of the use of planting, with multi-sensory aspects across the scheme, which would be particularly beneficial for users with disabilities.
- The internal courtyard of Building A1 needs further analysis to ensure that it provides adequate light and visual amenity. The panel also suggests including terraces on upper floors so that students have accessible outdoor space at different levels of the site. These terraces could perhaps act as winter gardens and help to break up the frontages.
- The panel would like to see a detailed stewardship plan which outlines how the scheme will be managed on a long-term basis and which actor(s) will be involved. This is important for the scheme's safety and successful longevity.

## *Community engagement*

- The panel would like to see deeper engagement with the local community to identify which town centre uses would be beneficial, for example a launderette or medical centre. It suggests creating an area-wide ground floor plan of use types to determine how the scheme can best contribute.



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- Further, as the height and massing of the development may be controversial, it would be good to address any community concerns through engagement at an early stage in the process.

## *Sustainability*

- The panel would like to see detailed information on the proportion of solid to glazing that will be needed to mitigate overheating and allow ventilation.
- The panel recommends consideration of how the rooftop areas can be used to provide photovoltaic panels, as well as increasing biodiversity.

## *Entrances and frontages*

- The panel suggests reconfiguring the ground floor plan to place the town centre uses on the Lordship Lane frontage with the ground floor student facilities overlooking and animating the pocket park, as suggested above. This would mean locating the main entrance to the student accommodation on the north-west corner of Building A1 where it would be closest to Wood Green Station, and locating the town centre uses where there is greatest footfall along Lordship Lane.
- The arrival space for the student accommodation should be lively and welcoming, with a café and social spaces that could also be open to the wider community, helping to activate the ground floor.

## *Accessibility*

- The panel is pleased that the scheme is car-free but would like more consideration of possible tensions the scheme may cause with parking provision on surrounding streets. It may be helpful to include parking provision for larger families.
- The panel recommends extending wheelchair access throughout the student accommodation, beyond the 10 per cent of rooms proposed. This will ensure that wheelchair users are able to visit their friends in other parts of the building, as well as fully navigating and experiencing the area.

## *Quality of residential housing*

- The panel is pleased that the project team is working with Haringey Council to ensure the housing mix, tenure and amount of wheelchair accessible homes will meet local needs. It also welcomes the provision of some larger family-sized social rented homes.

## *Architectural language*

- The height of the Lordship Lane building could be justified as a gateway to the town centre if it demonstrates high-quality, exciting architecture. The panel



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suggests that this could include references to the traditionally playful use of corners in architecture in local Wood Green buildings such as corner pubs.

- The panel advises the project team to draw from the character of the Noel Park Conservation Area for the southern side of the scheme, and from the town centre for the student accommodation block.
- The panel would like to see more integration of the character of the High Road into this scheme. Building A1 has no articulation, nor does it include a parapet line, and the panel would like to both these areas addressed.
- The panel recommends more external expression of internal functions. For example, the addition of social spaces would help break up the façade and create more visual interest.

### *Next steps*

The panel would welcome the opportunity to review the proposals again once the applicant has had the opportunity to respond to its comments.



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## Appendix: Haringey Development Management DPD

### Policy DM1: Delivering high quality design

#### Haringey Development Charter

- A All new development and changes of use must achieve a high standard of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. The Council will support design-led development proposals which meet the following criteria:
- a Relate positively to neighbouring structures, new or old, to create a harmonious whole;
  - b Make a positive contribution to a place, improving the character and quality of an area;
  - c Confidently address feedback from local consultation;
  - d Demonstrate how the quality of the development will be secured when it is built; and
  - e Are inclusive and incorporate sustainable design and construction principles.

#### Design Standards

##### Character of development

- B Development proposals should relate positively to their locality, having regard to:
- a Building heights;
  - b Form, scale & massing prevailing around the site;
  - c Urban grain, and the framework of routes and spaces connecting locally and more widely;
  - d Maintaining a sense of enclosure and, where appropriate, following existing building lines;
  - e Rhythm of any neighbouring or local regular plot and building widths;
  - f Active, lively frontages to the public realm; and
  - g Distinctive local architectural styles, detailing and materials.

