

Dulwich Hamlets FC/Champion Hill design review, 12 April 2019

Introduction

A site visit and independent design review took place on the morning of Friday 12 April, with a presentation by Alan Camp Architects and contributions from landscape architect Standerwick Land Design, planning consultant Lichfields, and the client, Meadow Partners. What follows is a note of the consensus views of the panel rather than a minute of the meeting.

Design review panellists: John Lyall, Jeremy Melvin, Paul Finch (chair)

What the panel noted

The pitch and associated buildings

- The new football pitch would switch to the adjacent site currently occupied by an artificial pitch which has not been maintained and in a poor state of disrepair
- The new clubhouse and leisure facilities would be relocated to the long edge of the new pitch
- Crowd capacity would be increased from 3,000 to 4,000; another 1,000 could be possible. Much of the crowd would be standing, with about 500 seats provided
- Capacity studies demonstrated that expansion could not take place on the existing site
- Significant facilities improvements could be achieved by the proposed move
- Construction phasing would allow the club to stay at Champions Hill
- The new facilities proposed would allow the club to compete in its next division in the event of promotion
- The club is supporting the application
- Creation of the new pitch and clubhouse can take place while football continues on the existing pitch
- Due to the designation of the adjacent site as Metropolitan Open Land, new permanent buildings on this land would not be appropriate
- Catering and other facilities would be offered via temporary structures which would be removed after any match
- Temporary sheeting would be erected to prevent non-attendees from viewing matches and removed after matches
- Walking and cycling around the pitch area would be easier
- The clubhouse/leisure facilities would be arranged as two connected buildings with a centralised entrance block. The three-storey club house would be in timber and glulam beam with a zinc 'wrap' and a fair-faced concrete base
- The two-storey leisure block would incorporate club signage and have a different architectural language
- The communications mast would be relocated to the other end of the pitch and could be the subject of a redesign
- There was a local desire to maintain the scrubland context of the site

The residential development

- The current pitch site and its surroundings would be developed with 231 housing units and substantial landscaped public realm
- Key external material probably brick
- Roofs would be bio-diverse
- 40% would be 'affordable', of which 70% would be social rent. Most of this accommodation is in two blocks
- The use of this 'other open land' site would increase hugely, access currently being limited to use by the club on match days only, otherwise there is no public access to this land. The scheme would open up the site and public access jump to over 65% of the land
- This is because of substantial landscaped open space incorporated, including a linear park to the south, with planted space and walking routes through and around the six main residential blocks
- A line of terraced housing on the old stadium site is designed so that many spaces do not front Sainsbury store activity
- Coach access (approx.20 times a year) would access the stadium north of the five main blocks. Note not always coach, mini buses also used by some away teams
- A MUGA play area is incorporated into the residential area, immediately north of the linear park; it has been dropped 1.5m to mitigate the effect on two ground-floor units adjacent

What the panel liked

- The skilful design and aspirational nature of the project
- The clear diagram and convincing explanation of the design strategy
- The creation of a modest landmark for the football club
- The sense of space incorporated into the pitch design
- The combination of existing wild landscape and the man-made
- The huge contribution of landscape design to the residential element
- The way the linear park connects existing informal landscape to St Francis Park
- The huge increase in public realm/accessible amenity
- The intelligent separation of traffic from most of the site
- The scale of the blocks in a context including blocks of comparable height
- The rational disposition of residential units around cores
- The incorporation of the MUGA play space into the scheme
- The fact that play-space in general exceeds requirements
- The general approach to materials

Some thoughts and comments

- The design of the stadium/leisure facility began life as a unified long building; it is now split into three- and two-storey elements which need further design thought in respect of how they meet
- Might there be a unified roofline and a re-examination of uses?
- Could flank walls be the occasion for planting and/or public art?

- This was the only part of the design which currently does not seem to be 'singing' in the same way as the rest of it
- The next design iteration of the residential accommodation could consider the relative weight of structural elements and their disposition across the site. In some views the structure looked a little 'chunky' though that may be the CGI
- The suggestion that the site should have 400 cycle spaces looked excessive, to put it mildly, bearing in mind requirements elsewhere
- It would be worth extending the good creative thinking on this project
- For example, might there be any other elements/uses which could be added to reinforce the idea of the club as a community hub, especially given the additional numbers who will live there
- In addition, the architects should be asked to design the transmission tower and the accommodation at its base with reference to the project and its materials. It should be a feature, not a functional add-on
- Similarly, it would be good to have a design hand deployed in respect of the temporary catering and other facilities which will be temporary elements on match days
- Could any of these elements be deployed elsewhere in the development when they are not being used around the pitch? Would be worth considering

Finally

- This proposal was a pleasure to review
- We have every confidence in the ability of the design team to address and resolve any outstanding issues

Paul Finch, 17 April 2019

The review panel

John Lyall RIBA FRSA

Partner in architectural practice Lyall Bills & Young. Experienced architect with a wide range of building types completed. Worked for Cedric Price and Piano & Rogers and was in partnership as Alsop & Lyall with Will Alsop before forming his own practice in 1991. An experienced design reviewer with CABE and Design Council CABE, he was a permanent member of the 2012 Olympic design review panel. He has continued to work with CABE, notably as chair of the review panel, commenting on contextual design and landscape, for all Highways England road programmes.

Jeremy Melvin HonFRIBA

Curator, World Architecture Festival. Contributing editor, The Architectural Review. Architectural historian, author and critic. Books include a biography of the modernist architect FRS Yorke, and '—isms', A guide to architectural movements and styles. Visiting professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, part of University College London. Former adviser to the Royal Academy architecture programme. Exhibition curator whose work included the RA Richard Rogers exhibition in 2013. An

experienced reviewer of designs by both students and professionals; co-judge for the Hertfordshire Architects Association annual awards.

Paul Finch OBE HonFRIBA (chair)

Programme Director, World Architecture Festival and Editorial Director, the Architectural Review/Architects' Journal. Former chair, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), now part of the Design Council, where he was deputy chair. Chaired CABE's design review panel for four years; chaired the 2012 London Olympics design panel for seven years, reviewing everything from masterplan designs to permanent and temporary buildings, landscape, the Olympic Village and Stratford City. Former chair, Royal Borough of Greenwich/CABE design review panel. Co-editor, Planning in London magazine (now on-line) for 25 years.