

King's Cross Development Forum

Annual Review Meeting 7:00 p.m. 9 December 2015

Committee Room 1, Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

1 Attendance

1.1 Present

John Chamberlain, Andrew Clayton, Rachel Coyle, James Dunnett, Helia Evans, Ben Fernandez, Jim Humphris, Jean James, Philip James, Deklan Kilfeather, Jasmine King, Hugh Lake, Fiona Maclean, Robert Milne, Geoffrey Roper, Jamie Scudamore, Diana Shelley, Norman Sheppard, Herman Tribelnig and Ben Williams

1.2 Apologies

Andrew Bosi, Emyr Fairburn, Aileen Hammond, Ivor Kamlish, Ernie Lew, John Mason, Lucy Tamman, Lisa Tang and Malcolm Tucker

2 Previous meeting

2.1 Notes

The notes for the meeting of 30 September 2015 had been circulated and posted on the website and were formally approved.

2.2 Matters arising

Nothing was discussed.

3 Developments

3.1 W

David Morley, of David Morley Architects, described the plans for Zone W, which is a roughly triangular site that straddles the boundary between Islington and Camden to the east of York Way.

The plans break up the blocks in the outline planning permission blocks in various ways: they introduce light, glazed, inset bases, vertical emphases, horizontal striations and zigzag movements whereby the vertical emphases are not aligned with one another in different horizontal zones are not aligned with those in others. Members of the Forum remarked that the overall visual effect remained rather busy but improved considerably on what had been presented to the Design Panel and Access Forum, where there was also variegated oppressive dark brickwork. The architects are aiming to make the building speak without being repetitive or shouting for attention and recognise that they might not have struck exactly the right balance yet.

The site is rather isolated, being cut off by York Way and railway works from other occupied sites to the east, north and west. Nonetheless the architects aim to make it a focal point for those sites, despite the inhospitable route under the railway bridges towards Maiden Lane, for example. They hope that the Zone W shops will animate the street and the Zone W garden, with the café placed invitingly at the southern entrance, will draw in people. At least the architects have succeeded in giving the garden level access from the south and the east (with a pedestrian crossing less stupidly positioned than at present). However, they know no proposals for the railway land immediately to the north of Zone W or for Maiden Lane Overground Station (though a study of that is to be partly funded under the Section 106 agreement).

The garden itself and the associated ecology area at the north of the site will be the subject of a separate planning application, as will the recreation centre (which is also problematic, with its position alongside the railway line and with the potential over-provision of such facilities). Member of the Forum expressed disappointment that the money-making parts of the scheme were being put forward in an application before the rest and noted the need for a condition in the approval to ensure public access to the garden. They also suggested that the recreation centre might be suited as a location for start-up units (though these were not in the outline application), which appeared to be missing elsewhere.

The architects have done the usual studies of daylight, noise and wind. They have concluded that York Way was a bigger problem than the railway line and have introduced some triple glazing to meet current standards. Members of the Forum feared that York Way would become a sunless canyon (instead of a windy hill, as it can be at present); the architects consider, though, that the proportions of the road are quite generous and that their plans fit with the heights, scales and finishes of Rubicon Court and Saxon Court on the other side of the road.

The appearance to York Way is tenure-blind, though the social rented housing on the one hand, and the intermediate and open market housing on the other hand, have separate entrances, leading through from York Way to the garden. The taller blocks, at the north of the site, consist entirely of open market housing.

4 Annual review

4.1 Report

Ben Williams drew attention to the annual review report and thanked everyone for their contributions over the past year. Particularly noteworthy in the annual review report were the sections on transport provision and health care provision, which included briefings by external contributors from King's Cross Estate Management, Camden Council Planning and Camden and Islington Public Health. The year was especially busy for the Design Panel and Access Forum; the thoughts of Forum members on the plans presented to it are also summarised in the annual review report.

4.2 Matters arising

Nothing was discussed.

5 Operations

5.1 Community Infrastructure Levy

The CIL levied by the Mayor of London is spent on CrossRail. However, 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) levied by Camden Council will be devoted to local works. The councillors are consulting local groups (including neighbourhood forums, where they exist) on priorities, which will typically relate to transport, health care, education or recreation. The Forum should be considered as an interested party in this. There are as yet no corresponding formal arrangements in Islington for the consultation of local groups, other than in conjunction with the Ward Improvement Programmes.

5.2 Links with other groups

Work on the proposed King's Cross Neighbourhood Forum had been expected to be resumed after the general election but was not yet apparent.

The King's Cross Business Forum, mentioned during the meeting, had been dissolved long since. The King's Cross Business Partnership (or Urban Partners for King's Cross, Euston and St Pancras) operates from the Argent offices and consists mainly of large companies. The King's Cross Knowledge Quarter operates from the British Library and consists mainly of academic institutions.

5.3 The allocation of Section 106 money

Nothing was reported outside the annual review report.

5.4 Use of funds

Nothing was reported outside the annual review report.

5.5 Elections of the Chair, Joint Deputy Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer and other Steering Group members

The following were elected without objection:

- Chair: Ben Williams
- Joint Deputy Chairs: Rachel Coyle and Deklan Kilfeather
- Secretary: Robert Milne
- Treasurer: Jim Humphris
- Other Steering Group members: Del Brenner, Helia Evans, Ernie Lew, Jasmine King, Jamie Scudamore, Norman Sheppard, Lucy Tammam and Malcolm Tucker

5 Future meetings

5.1 Date and place

The University of the Arts and the Plimsoll Building Community Centre were suggested as venues (paid for, if necessary, from the funds of the Forum).

5.2 Agenda

Nothing was discussed.

6 Any other business

6.1 Coal Drops

James Dunnett outlined the planning application for the Coal Drops. The Victorian Society and the Islington Society had submitted objections to the extra floor with a curvilinear roof envisaged in the application. After discussions of the absence of provision for start-up units, and of the relevance of celebrity designers to proposals for the King's Cross Central site, the Forum agreed to submit an objection in line with those already submitted.

7 Actions

The Steering Group to develop intentions of the Forum for the coming year.

The Steering Group to find out the status of the Section 106 funding according to Camden Council, especially in the light of the prospective planning applications for Zone W (which might benefit from the study for Maiden Lane Overground Station) and the relinquishment of floor space originally intended for health care.

The Steering Group to submit an objection to the planning application for the Coal Drops.

Ben Williams to check with Argent whether the Housing and Planning Bill is expected to have any repercussions for the development.

Robert Milne to register the interest of the Forum in being consulted over the allocation of the CIL of Camden Council.