

King's Cross Development Forum

Meeting 6:30 p.m. 5 July 2016

Saxon Court Meeting Room, Beaconsfield Street, London

1 Attendance

1.1 Present

Del Brenner, John Chamberlain, Andrew Clayton, Helia Evans, Anna Gasco, Jean James, Philip James, Deklan Kilfeather, Jasmine King, John Mason, Robert Milne, Enora Robin, Virginia Stanley, Lisa Tang, Herman Tribelnig, Luca Vukotic, Ben Williams and Chris Yang

1.2 Apologies

Raphael Andrews, Andrew Bosi, Jeannie Burnett, Rachel Coyle, Jim Humphris, Ivor Kamlish, Hugh Lake, Roger Robinson, Norman Sheppard, Lucy Tammam and Malcolm Tucker

2 Previous meeting

2.1 Notes

The notes for the meeting of 16 March 2016 had been circulated and posted on the website and were formally approved.

2.2 Matters arising

Nothing was discussed.

3 Developments

3.1 Q2

Representatives of Bennetts Associates gave a presentation on the proposed sports hall, the planning application for which is due to be submitted in August 2016. The building needs to meet requirements that it did not bear heavily on the railway tunnels immediately underneath and that it be slightly distinctive to reflect its civic role. The first of these led to constructing it from wood more than steel or brick, and the second led to cladding it with dark zinc panels. The building aims to pick up on the Midland Goods Shed by having a saw-tooth roof (which in turn is carried over into the wall facing north along York Way). The presence of the tunnels was thought to preclude having a roof garden: the currently planned strip foundations would need to be replaced by a thick and heavy rafter, in the opinion of the architects.

The intention is to make a bold statement despite the modest scale of the building, but some members of the Forum felt that the end result was rather ugly and too dark.

The main entrance would be on Wilberforce Street; the door on York Way would serve merely as a fire exit, except during the initial use of the building to house the construction skills centre. Though there was a preference for having the main entrance on York Way, difficulties in achieving inclusive access finally precluded this.

The facilities would be limited in various ways; for instance they would not include a climbing wall, for safety reasons. In addition refreshments would be available only from vending machines, as there might be many cafés in the neighbourhood (though there are none currently) and Camden Council did not want to look after one. Members of the Forum expressed concern that the internal fit-out and lay-out might be as awkward in practice as those at 5 Saint Pancras Square and the Oasis Sports Centre.

3.2 Open space policy

Julia Finlayson gave an overview of the intentions for open space in King's Cross Central. The intentions have changed over the years, because, for example, the proposed office block for Sainsbury has been replaced and the roads nearby have been reconfigured. There is, unfortunately, no document detailing the changes since the 2004 parameter plan or since the 2006 planning application.

There are discussions proceeding about a permanent location for the Skip Garden. However, at the moment there are no plans to keep the pond, which had maintenance costs and encroached on the intended track route.

Members of the Forum noted that the site had relatively few trees and rather many hard grey surfaces. The suggested justification for this was that tunnels and utilities restricted tree positions.

4 Design and Access Forum

Nothing was reported.

5 Construction Impact Group

Nothing was reported.

6 Operations

Nothing was discussed.

7 Future meetings

Nothing was discussed.

8 Actions

Robert Milne to circulate the questionnaire about future events at King's Cross Central.

Robert Milne to request a Forum meeting that would examine the open space policy in more detail.

Robert Milne to pass on the concerns of Forum members about the dark zinc cladding proposed for the sports hall: in a straw poll four out of the ten then present thought that it was too dark.

Herman Triblenig to provide details of the deficiencies in fit-out and lay-out at 5 Saint Pancras Square and the Oasis Sports Centre for forwarding to the relevant Council officers.