



FRAME PROJECTS

## **Old Kent Road Community Review Panel**

### **Report of Community Review: 257–283 Ilderton Road**

Monday 15 January 2024

Treasure House, 682 Old Kent Road, SE15 1JF

#### **Panel**

Gurmeet Sian (chair)  
Mohammed Bentaleb  
Simon Donovan  
Julia Feeney  
Hazel Flynn  
James Glancy  
Rebecca Lefort  
Mike Levitt  
Sarah Osei  
David Stoker  
Lin Vong

#### **Attendees**

Pan Chong	London Borough of Southwark
Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Ali Weatherup	London Borough of Southwark
Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark
Lucy Block	Frame Projects
Yingli Tang	Frame Projects
Kate Trant	Frame Projects

#### **Apologies / copied to**

Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
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## **1. Project name and site address**

257–283 Ilderton Road, Southwark, London SE15 1NS  
Planning application reference: 23/AP/1317

## **2. Presenting team**

Robert Grant	EQT Exeter
Russell Petrie	EQT Exeter
Alex Wythe	Alan Camp Architects
Gillian Allan	360 Architecture
Sam Blacker	ROK Planning
Alun Evans	ROK Planning
Katy Greenwood	ROK Planning
Kim Humphreys	Carvil Ventures

## **3. Planning authority briefing**

The site is located within Old Kent Road Site Allocation OKR16, which aims to create 2,200 homes and 2,698 jobs. The Community Review Panel (CRP) has commented on the scheme at a previous review (7 November 2022) at the pre-application stage. At that point, the scheme consisted of 196 conventional homes, a self-storage unit and workspace. However, the initial mixed-use scheme containing residential apartments was no longer viable, and the developer submitted a full application for a revised scheme that would still deliver self-storage facilities and light industrial workspace but replace the residential component with student rooms in a building of 9–30 storeys.

The main amendment to the scheme since the previous review is a change of use class, from conventional residential accommodation to purpose-built student residential units, providing up to 592 beds. The overall design and massing remains almost identical to that previously presented, although the façade design and materiality has developed since the earlier iteration.

Officers would welcome the panel’s views on the type of affordable workspace it would like to see in the area and the functionality of the proposed light industrial workspace. Comments are sought on whether the scheme’s proposed heights and massing integrate satisfactorily with the surrounding area, particularly the emerging nearby tall buildings, and the evolving context of Ilderton Road. The panel is invited to comment on the approach to the student accommodation and the design of the scheme’s landscape and amenity spaces.

#### **4. Community Review Panel's views**

##### *Summary*

The panel thanks the applicant for the presentation and finds much to commend in the proposals. As a standalone design, the development has a number of positive elements; however, the panel is concerned about the scheme's role in the neighbourhood and its contribution to the local community. The panel has reservations about whether this building type is needed in the area, and suggests that increasing conventional housing provision for local people would be preferable.

Nonetheless, if a need has been identified for these facilities, the panel suggests that further work is done to ensure that the scheme contributes positively to an inclusive neighbourhood, for example, by designing the building as a clearer destination point to attract local people, and creating greater opportunities for interaction between the local community and the student population.

The provision and quality of the light industrial spaces is well-received, and their potential synergy with the self-storage facility. The scheme has the potential to contribute positively to regenerating the Old Kent Road.

The panel supports the allocation of Section 106 funding to creating local community benefits such as subsidising housing rental costs for local young people and contributing to the development of local social housing sites.

The greening and biodiversity opportunities offered by the roof areas are welcomed, although the panel observes that residents' access to these spaces is restricted. The panel is concerned about the affordability of the student accommodation.

The panel feels that the proposed tower is too high, and that the materials and façade design may contribute to an overbearing appearance on the skyline. The design of the self-storage frontage is successful and, while the panel likes the use of the red brick in the scheme, it has questions about the overall material palette.

##### *Heights and massing*

- While the panel recognises that the height of the tower is in keeping with the other emerging tall buildings nearby, it is concerned that 30 storeys is too high, and asks for further consideration of the building's height.
- The panel feels that the façade design and materials may contribute to a potentially overbearing appearance on the skyline and would like to see the development of alternative treatments.

### *Contribution to context and local community*

- While the proposals offer many positives, the panel feels that the scheme is disconnected from the neighbourhood, with few opportunities for the student residents and the local community to interact.
- It would like to see further consideration of the introduction of publicly accessible areas on the ground and first floor, such as a café, exhibition spaces and other public uses. This would create a sense of destination and improve the connection with Old Kent Road.

### *Landscape and amenity space*

- The panel welcomes the greening and biodiversity opportunities offered by the roof areas. However, it notes that residents' access to these spaces is restricted to the second and tenth floors, and would like to see consideration given to increasing access.
- The panel appreciates the constraints on the ground floor greening at Ilderton Road created by the council's preference for wider pavements, but supports consideration of further greening opportunities at this level.

### *Student accommodation*

- A core role of the panel is to assess the implementation of the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP), in which student accommodation is not considered. While the panel is happy to review this scheme, it expresses concerns over the potential diversion from the AAP.
- The panel would like to see how the scheme could include a proportion of housing for permanent residents. It recommends that the council considers the retention of at least part of the site for affordable homes for local residents.
- The panel has concerns about the affordability of the student accommodation, with the entry level at a higher cost than the London Plan's threshold for Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). It asks that the council considers contributing more to creating genuinely affordable student housing in the borough.
- The panel highlights the importance of the provision of facilities such as laundry, cleaning, recycling and refuse disposal in the student accommodation and would welcome further detail on these aspects of the scheme.

### *Workspace typology and design*

- The panel admires the provision and quality of the light industrial spaces and their potential synergy with the self-storage facility, and supports the objective to maintain the flexibility and affordability of these spaces.

- The panel feels that the proposed workspaces have the potential to attract small businesses, community start-ups and makers. It asks that further thought is given to ensuring that these activities contribute positively to the neighbourhood and the local community.

#### *Architecture and materials*

- The design of the self-storage frontage is successful and the panel admires the wraparound element of this part of the scheme.
- The panel likes the use of the red brick in the scheme, but recommends the introduction of more colour in the overall material palette, as well as further thought given to more textural variation on the building's façades.
- The building's exterior design does not communicate its internal functions, and, aesthetically, it does not yet sit comfortably in its immediate context. The panel suggests further consideration is given to the building's exterior design.
- The panel admires the visual appearance of the building in the presentation, but questions how the building will look once it has weathered. It asks for careful consideration of the specification of materials.
- Further thought on the potential for increasing the height and size of the windows, as well as full-height glazing, would be welcomed by the panel.
- While the demand for student accommodation is currently high, the panel stresses the importance of flexible design to meet future changes in requirements.

#### *Management*

- The panel recognises the challenges created by the three individual activities in the scheme – the student accommodation, self-storage and the fablab spaces – being managed by separate agents. It underlines the importance of the role of the managing agents in ensuring that the scheme contributes positively to the neighbourhood and local community, and would welcome further clarity on how the partnership between the three agents will work.

#### *Community projects*

- The panel supports the applicant in developing proposals for the allocation of funding from the developer towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure. For example, in collaboration with the council, funding could be allocated to subsidise housing rental costs for local young people; development of this suggestion would be welcome.

- This type of funding could contribute to the development of local social housing sites, and the panel recommends further investigation of this proposal.
- The panel recommends looking at precedents such as A House for Artists, an affordable housing scheme for 14 artists and their families in Barking and Dagenham where, for reduced rent, the artists deliver free creative programmes for the neighbourhood.

*Next steps*

- The panel would like to see the applicant work with planning officers to resolve the issues identified by this review as part of ongoing amendments to the planning application submitted.