

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

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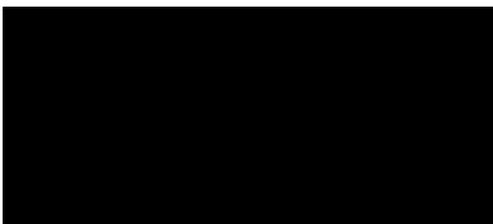
15th November 2018

Dear ██████████

London Review Panel: Waterloo City Hub

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of Waterloo City Hub on 18th October 2018. On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer the panel's ongoing support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,



Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Lucy Owen, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA

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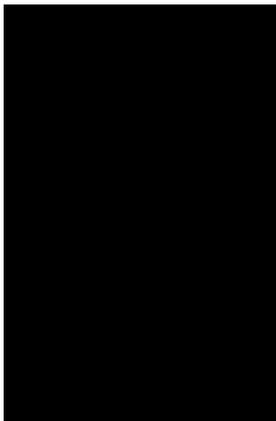
**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Waterloo City Hub**

Thursday 18 October 2018
Manor Park Room, 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BH

London Review Panel

██████████ (Chair)
██████████
██████████

Attendees



GLA Regeneration
GLA Regeneration
LB Lambeth
LB Lambeth
Transport for London
Frame Projects

Report copied to

Lucy Owen GLA
Jules Pipe Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

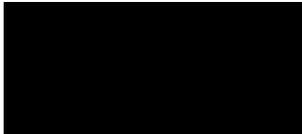
Confidentiality

Please note that while schemes not yet in the public domain, for example at a pre-application stage, will be treated as confidential, as a public organisation the GLA 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.

Project name and site address

Waterloo City Hub

Presenting team



Transport for London
Transport for London
Transport for London

LB Lambeth's views

Waterloo and the South Bank is key location for Lambeth for several reasons. It is a significant employment location for the borough, which also experiences significant residential growth. Passenger numbers are increasing at Waterloo Station, which is also emerging as a retail space, and the South Bank culture and leisure offer is growing. Waterloo is identified as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan, but targets for jobs and homes have already been surpassed in planning consents. The Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2007) asserts the requirement for a vastly improved public realm including a new 'City Square' and better pedestrian connections throughout the area. Lambeth Council Waterloo Area SPD (2013) and its Local Plan (2015) put emphasis on the quality of place and identity, to help the area grow and compete as part of the London Central Activities Zone, positioning the South Bank as the world's pre-eminent cultural offer. In its new draft Local Plan the council is seeking Metropolitan Centre status for Waterloo, confirming the continued requirement for improvements to the public realm. A Public Realm Delivery Plan has been commissioned from Publica to show how these can delivered, and the Waterloo City Hub project forms part of this strategy. Lambeth Council is therefore looking at the quality of adjacent streets and spaces, to ensure the Waterloo City Hub project meets surrounding areas, successfully. Third parties are also developing associated projects in the locality including works to animate a new link between Waterloo Station and Upper Ground, using undercroft areas between the IMAX cinema and Waterloo Bridge led by the Southbank Centre and improvement works to Elizabeth House.

Presentation

The Waterloo City Hub scheme is intended to improve the public realm and enhance walking, cycling and public transport routes at Waterloo roundabout, and on Waterloo Road. This involves removing the existing roundabout layout, introducing new crossings and creating segregated cycle routes. A new public square will be created, and a route to Upper Ground and the South Bank will be introduced, with a flight of steps and adjacent set of ramps leading down to the level of the IMAX cinema. The project aims to reduce accidents and improve safety without increasing bus journey times. To achieve this, bus stops will be moved from Tenison Way to an improved bus interchange on Waterloo Road, with a more pleasant waiting environment for passengers. The project forms part of the Healthy Streets portfolio and aims to both enable active travel and reduce collisions. Public realm improvements will provide the neighbourhood with a focal point and a more distinct identity by replacing roads with public realm.

London Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel supports the overall aims of the project and is pleased that it addresses many current problems with transport and movement. This is a major project for central London, and the project sponsor and design team are urged to ensure its ambitions match the scale of the opportunity. This will require resourcing commensurate to the scale of complexity, and alignment of the different work streams within the project itself as well as continued coordination with stakeholders.

The Waterloo City Hub project proposes some of the most radical repurposing of space in London, and it is therefore important that the project team does more to consider the wider context. The project should fully align with the economic, environmental and cultural opportunities created by the council's Public Realm Delivery Plan. Continued joint working between public sector organisations will be essential to this. The new pedestrian route to Upper Ground via the IMAX will be a very important element of the scheme, and further design work is needed to maximise the potential of this primary route. The team should do all it can to coordinate with future improvements at Waterloo Station and surrounding developments. This should include showing how transport priorities have been set. For example, modelling to test the experience of walkers and cyclists using key routes across the site, would be helpful to inform the designs. The panel cautions against closing the most direct pedestrian route on to Waterloo Bridge. It supports plans for rationalising bus stops and improving Waterloo Road. The bus station is at the centre of the Waterloo City Hub design, and the panel feels further thought is needed about the experience of using this space. Further thought should be given to landscape character, the underlying topography, the different edges that define the space, and planting specifications that ensure trees thrive in the long term. Side streets connecting Tenison Way to the existing bus stops could be decluttered, whilst maintaining their existing distinctive character. These comments are expanded below.

Character and identity

- The panel feels that the character and cultural identity of the Waterloo area should provide the starting point for the project's overall design approach.
- The distinctive identity of the area is inherently complex as a result of centuries of development, including noisy locations, gritty spaces and architectural elements of different periods, which are all highly distinctive.
- A precise account of what forms the character and use of the area should be developed so the design team can ensure their work enhances local identity.
- Extending the site analysis further beyond the project boundary could provide a greater level of ambition and could also help to resolve wider pedestrian movement issues.
- The proximity of the South Bank, and the area between the station and the river have potential to help inspire a vision for the Waterloo City Hub as a clearing around and on which the many activities can play out.

Neighbourhood ambitions

- The panel emphasises the need for co-ordination of the Waterloo City Hub project with wider economic, cultural and environmental objectives for the surrounding area.
- Conversations between public bodies and developers need to continue to ensure this project connects beyond its boundaries and becomes an integral part of wider improvements that serve long-term ambitions for the neighbourhood.

- Redevelopment work will be required in future at Waterloo Station. Although Network Rail's timescales are uncertain, the panel endorses the need for the Waterloo City Hub to anticipate future improvements where possible, as well as with future development of Elizabeth House, and to design in flexibility to respond to them.
- The new public space and the route to Upper Ground also needs to be designed with future change in mind.
- The spaces should be designed with flexibility to encompass change around its edges. For example, the new spaces must continue to work if the IMAX cinema is redeveloped.
- A plan should be produced including elements, such as servicing, that cannot be controlled as well as those that can, to show how they will coexist with the improvements.

Movement network

- The panel suggests more analysis is needed to understand how movement networks connect beyond the project red line.
- In particular, it will be important to understand relative numbers along walking routes across the area to destinations beyond, to support decisions on the location of crossings and on pedestrian desire lines.
- The project has competing objectives: reliable operation of the road and public transport network; and an improved pedestrian and cycling environment.
- A clear story should be developed to explain decisions making where trade-offs are needed between vehicular and pedestrian / cyclist priorities - and how both quantitative and qualitative information has been deployed.
- A connection diagram showing the hierarchy of transport uses across the site would be helpful. This could, for example, help explain the nature of pedestrian and cyclist experience on different routes.
- As the existing pedestrian crossing on Waterloo Road north of Mephram Street is being removed, it will be important that the crossing further north at St. John's Church is as generous and prominent as possible.

Walking and cycling routes

- The new route from Waterloo Station via the IMAX to Upper Ground, following the pedestrian desire line to the South Bank, is particularly important and should therefore form the core of the design process.
- A stronger driving concept is needed to unite the different elements along this route, and a section showing level changes would be helpful as part of this process.
- The project should also consider how people will walk and cycle informally, using routes not specifically designed for them to do so. These informal routes should be considered alongside the dominant route design, to understand how spaces will be used in practice.
- The panel suggests that the proposal for continuous footways, extending over side roads, could also include low traffic junctions on the east side of Waterloo Road.

Public square

- The panel recommends that global comparators are used to explore the scale and nature of the new square. It will be a gateway square that people will pass through but will also be sunny, with potential for people to spend time in it.

- The Scoop at City Hall and outside spaces at the Royal Festival Hall provide examples of how this might work. The main square in Marrakesh, which is full of activity but also simple in its design, providing large amounts of space, could also be a helpful comparison.
- The design team should investigate whether lights on building surrounding the new public realm can be repaired, to help improve the quality and appearance of the area.
- The panel questions the proposed zig-zag ramps between the two sets of stairs, and thinks this is unlikely to be a desirable route. Creating step free routes that are designed into the landscape in a smoother, less obtrusive way would be a preferable solution.
- Consideration should be given to how the direct pedestrian connection along Waterloo Bridge can be maintained. In the current proposals it will be removed for a cycle lane, but, as this is the pedestrian desire line on to the bridge, it is likely that people will continue to walk in the road rather than choosing a longer route.

Materials

- The panel recommends further thinking about the surface materials to be used. Rather than using an expensive material such as granite, which is likely to be imported from China, consideration should be given to using high grade concrete or asphalt instead. These will require careful detailing.
- The streets connecting Mepham Street and the bus station under the railway viaduct could be cleaned and decluttered, to enhance their existing character, which could also help reduce costs.

Bus station design

- The bus station is at the centre of the Waterloo City Hub design, and the panel feels further thought is needed about the experience of using the space.
- The team should prioritise clearing the space, avoiding structures such as the kiosk and trusting the transport function to deliver ready-made activation.
- Views from the bus station should be modelled to understand how much natural visibility will be possible from the station. If buses obscure the view, consideration should be given to how sightlines can be improved.
- The panel suggests that the canopy should be more directly related to the adjacent railway viaduct, rather than designed as a separate element. The space already feels complicated, so extending the architecture of the railway may be a more logical approach.

Landscape design

- The panel feels that the overall landscape character of the scheme needs further consideration. For example, the area could become known for its greenness, and the landscaping used to enhance the existing eccentric character of the area.
- Quality of planting will be crucial to ensure that trees survive in the long term.
- The panel suggests fewer, larger trees, which will more expensive but contribute greater quality to the new spaces.
- Trees should be planted on the square, avoiding steps, walls and ramps, with a minimum of 15 cubic metres of soil provided for each tree. Cluttered planting should be avoided.
- It will be essential that trees and plants are well irrigated, and project budget should be allocated to this in preference to expensive surfacing.

- The panel feels that the overhead vines on the IMAX roundabout should not be preserved at all costs, as they reinforce the idea that the lower-level pedestrian routes are part of a basement. It is important that this level becomes seen as a ground level a part of the new route.

Next steps

- The panel offers its continuing support to this project, and is available to review future iterations of the designs as they develop.