

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

██████████
Goldsmiths, University of London
New Cross
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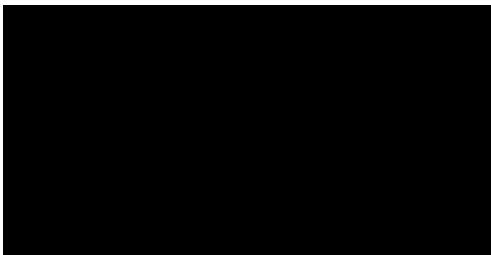
September 2019

Dear ██████████

London Review Panel: Goldsmiths Enterprise Hub

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of the Goldsmiths Enterprise Hub proposals on 12th September 2019. 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

Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment, GLA

██████████, Head of Regeneration, GLA

Project name and site address

Goldsmiths Enterprise Hub, Goldsmiths University, New Cross, London, SE14 6AF

Presenting team

██████████	Morris + Company
██████████	Morris + Company
██████████	Morris + Company

Goldsmiths Enterprise Hub introduction

Representatives from the Goldsmiths Enterprise Hub provided a detailed background to the project. They described their goal was to create an enterprise and entrepreneurship space for students, graduates and the local community. The location of the Victorian terrace was seen as ideal. Being situated on an accessible high street in the centre of the campus, it forms a natural link between the local community and the university. Goldsmiths was working closely with key stakeholders including LB Lewisham and the GLA to make this underutilised space open to a wider range of users.

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The London Review Panel commended the ambition of the project. The key themes that were discussed, including the building programme, business plan, high street presence, Hub design and stakeholder engagement, were all closely interlinked and needed to be considered holistically. Given the strong interrelationships of this project, the architecture and design of the Hub needed to respond as a social, cultural and economic support structure.

The Panel encouraged the team to develop the business plan in more detail. Identifying more clearly what activities will take place, and the programme of the Hub, would help define who will use the space. This would enable the designers to provide more definition to the design rather than providing multiple flexible but ambiguous spaces.

The relationship between the high street and the Hub was critical in ensuring the Hub felt open and welcoming. The Panel suggested that the programming and design of this threshold needed more consideration. The Panel encouraged the team to make architectural, aesthetic and material decisions to the frontage, link and screen by understanding what the Town Hall meant to local people. The heritage of the locality and the importance of symbolism was also highlighted by the Panel.

The Panel strongly encouraged the team to actively engage rather than consult with the local community to resolve key questions. A strong meaningful dialogue will help ensure a close link between Goldsmiths, the wider community and the hub. It was critical that the client and design team worked more closely together by using existing relationships, networks and outreach programmes to proactively engage with the local community to make programmatic and spatial decisions. This process of meaningful engagement would enable the team to confidently make the decisions required to take the project to the next stage.

Building Programme & Business Plan

- The Panel advised the team to develop and define a clearer plan for the activity and programme of the Enterprise Hub. The design needed to respond more closely to the proposed use of the spaces.
- The programming of the space was also critical in ensuring a closer link between the local community and the Hub.
- For the project to fulfil its ambition, a careful balance needed to be struck between the offer of different types of workspaces (i.e. the extent of mixed use versus dedicated space). The Panel suggested that having more clarity on what type of users were being targeted and understanding what their needs were would help develop the design of the spaces.
- 'Social innovation' was used as a broad-brush term and needed some more definition.
- As the client was not required to create revenue from the Enterprise Hub, the Panel encouraged them to explore other financial models they could leverage to support their users to grow their enterprises, for example deposit schemes or time-banks.
- The Panel noted that Goldsmiths were aware that not charging users could destabilise other local operators. The Panel strongly supported the client's intention to think carefully and strategically about its charging policy and its potential impact and to work collaboratively with other local operators and the university more generally.

High Street Presence and Hub Design

- The Panel encouraged the design team to focus more on the threshold of the Enterprise Hub and the relationship to the high street. How the Hub presented itself publicly would inform how the local community felt about its accessibility, and who the Hub was created for.
- While the aim to not make the space look like a generic 'co-working' space, with the associations of a certain type of 'appropriate' user that this might communicate, they were not sure that the current design approach had quite achieved that. This is a particularly sensitive issue in areas undergoing rapid change, where certain looks, feel, colours and symbols can be associated by longer-term communities with incoming users i.e. "not for me".
- The design team could respond to this in several ways, through the approach of the architecture and its materiality and signage; but also by determining its use - how the front was used, what activity was programmed in the front, what one saw through the shop window and how one was greeted upon entrance.
- The Panel suggested that users should be either greeted by desk space, or through the café rather than a reception desk.
- The design and scale of furniture also needed to be considered. For example, a standing receptionist or standing working desks orientated towards the high street could enable eye contact, which could make people feel more welcome.
- The front space should also be programmed to have rotating uses at different times of the day or week. For example, talks and events could take place in the front space in the evenings, which would be a good way to bring activity onto the street. The architecture needed to enable this kind of activity.
- The Panel supported the use of the workspaces at the ground floor to be more porous and flexible, with more dedicated workspaces located on the upper levels of the building.
- However, the Panel also urged the team to think more carefully about who exactly the users were going to be. Flexibility was important but currently the spaces were too ambiguous.

Conservation and Heritage

- The Panel reiterated the importance of the Town Hall and what it meant to local people. Therefore decisions on the aesthetics, materiality and position of the screen and link to the Town Hall, should be informed by this understanding, understanding 'heritage' in its widest sense (as about cultural properties as opposed to simply archi-historical ones).
- The Panel encouraged the design team to take a clearer stance on whether the frontage was trying to stand out, be bold and attract attention, or whether it was more 'of the place'. Meaningful consultation, and collaboration with the local community, could help enable this decision.
- The Panel encouraged the team to think of conservation beyond statutory listing, and to also consider the heritage of the wider area and how local people felt about its identity.
- The name of the Hub, colour and material choices were all important factors to consider as symbols that spoke to the local community.

Stakeholder Engagement

- The Panel strongly encouraged the client and design team to go beyond 'consulting' on the design. They needed to proactively engage to develop a strong brief to influence the programme and design of the Hub.
- This needed to be an ongoing process, to enable the Hub to adapt even when it was open.
- It includes not just exploring what people would like to happen in the space, or what it should look and feel like, but working with potential users, particularly those who may not assume this kind of space is for them, to actively identify and articulate 'barriers to participation', and then considering how design and programme decisions can help address these.
- The project would benefit from the client and design team working more closely together on engagement, rather than seeing design engagement as an isolated activity. They should now build on the initial design workshops by drawing on the client's existing expertise in stakeholder engagement, and on their relationships, networks and outreach programmes, to structure the ongoing approach, linking the design team's engagement work into this to enable meaningful and informed spatial and programme focused decisions, and to test emerging design ideas.
- It was an unsurprising response, for example, that the community would like the Hub to be 'open and welcoming', but how the programme, activity and design approach now respond to this (i.e. what this *means* for future users rather than people round the Design Review table) could only be answered – as opposed to hypothesised about - through this engagement process, working through possible ideas and scenarios with potential users and allowing them to take some ownership of the outcome. This includes those who at the moment might not immediately think this is a space for them (i.e. who might not come to a workshop.)
- The Panel encouraged the team to take the engagement activity out to the community through (i) targeted outreach and workshops with local groups and (ii) finding local opportunities for broader consultation such as Deptford Market.
- The Panel also highlighted the importance of governance and ensuring that local representation was included in the ongoing decision-making of the Hub and not just the design.
- The Panel suggested that the team should think creatively about procurement, and to include questions on stakeholder engagement and social value into the process of tender. This scale of construction provides a good opportunity to explore working with local companies and supporting the local economy.