

LONDON
REVIEW PANEL

[REDACTED]
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London School of Mosaics

December 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

London Review Panel: Ludham Undercroft, LB Camden

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Ludham Undercroft, Camden on 17th December 2020. I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer ongoing Mayor's Design Advocate support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham, Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA

Patrick Dubeck, Head of Regeneration, GLA

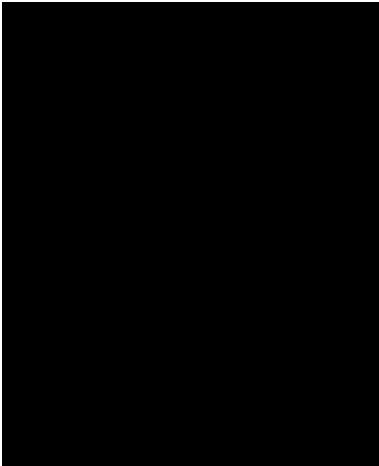
LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Ludham Undercroft, Camden**

Thursday 17th December 2020
Review held remotely

London Review Panel



MDA (Chair)
MDA

LB Camden
London School of Mosaics
Public Works

GLA Regeneration
GLA Regeneration (Panel Manager)
GLA Regeneration

Report copied to

Jules Pipe

Philip Graham

Patrick Dubeck

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

GLA

GLA

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 location

Ludham Undercroft, Ludham Estate, Gospel Oak, LB Camden, London

Presenting team

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LB Camden

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London School of Mosaics

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Public Works

Client Team introduction

The London School of Mosaics (LSOM) summarised the existing situation of the school and adjacent site that forms the location of these proposals. The school has been working with the support and funding from LB Camden and the GGF to develop proposals for the refurbishment of additional undercroft space to expand the current offer and to meet resident's needs. Social value outputs will be included within the lease for this additional space to ensure delivery of the joint ambitions around inclusive economy, skills training and social cohesion. Plans are in place to provide an evaluation of the project to capture the impact of the project in achieving its social value objectives.

The LSOM team are looking to use this project to better engage young people and diverse local communities through an inclusive programme and offer. The team hope this project can become a model for the transformation of leftover and blighted spaces into accessible social infrastructures that are central to the community. This project was presented as Phase 3 of an evolving programme. An aspirational Phase 4, focussing on the public realm improvements in and around the site was also presented but is beyond the scope of this review.

LB Camden introduction

LB Camden provided additional context and local authority objectives for the project. LB Camden described the site context within the Ludham Estate in Gospel Oak which is an area of significant deprivation. This locality contains two of Camden's most deprived neighbourhoods and is in the top 10% of areas of deprivation in England, with issues including low skills and poor health prevalent in the community. Significant change is planned for the area soon including major regeneration in the wider neighbourhood alongside mixed-use development on the nearby Murphy's industrial site between Gospel Oak and Kentish Town.

There are concerns about affordability and the gradual loss workspace across Gospel Oak, with significant market pressure to convert existing workspace to residential uses. This is contributing to the slow decline of start-up spaces for small businesses. LB Camden are keen to maximise the underused spaces in the borough to deliver the needs of local people. LB Camden seek to engage positively with the existing users and residents to develop a space to serve the local community by delivering affordable employment space.

Design Team presentation

Public Works were appointed to undertake a feasibility study through the GLA's ADUP framework in 2018 to develop proposals to create space for up to 75 artists to open start-ups, artist studios and workspaces, incubation spaces for community and youth led organisations and develop open access community spaces to enable LSoM to expand its social programme to offer soft skills development for local residents. Public Works developed an understanding of the working processes and existing operations of the LSOM and how local people interact with the school whilst based on site one day a week.

The Ludham Estate is a 1970's/1980's, 4-storey social housing block orientated east-west, faces onto an open but underused green space and the adjacent 6-storey Waxham Estate residential block to the north and Lismore Circus to the south. There is an arcade of shops at ground level under the residential uses which face south although many of these are shuttered much of the time creating a feeling inactivity and decline. The railway line creates a hard boundary to the south of the site making the public realm in this area (Lismore Circus) very isolated. In combination these conditions have generated safety concerns from residents and limited use of the route. There are external walkways above the undercroft that lead to first floor level through a series of ramps and stairs which complicate wayfinding. There is an issue regarding where the waste management currently within the undercroft will move to.

The team described the lack of social infrastructure and workspace available to local people and noted the estate has not been improved in several years, with degradation of the steel grates and concrete visible but repairable. The north part of the existing structure is in a better condition than the south which has issues with leaks. LB Camden have committed to £580,000 of repairs and enabling works to the undercroft as part of their match funding offer.

The current LSOM entrance is to the west of the site. There are a range of other uses within the existing school including meeting rooms, a library, use by local artists and charities as well as the schools programme of courses in ceramics and clay.

Development of adjacent undercroft space will provide affordable workspace and studios that complement the activities of the school whilst catering to the needs of the local community. These are clustered into workshops for the LSOM mosaics and ceramics workshops, artists' studios, and community/youth facilities. These three uses are linked by a shared internal street that can be partitioned or connected to suit the users. The team have developed these proposals alongside a business model which anticipates the profits from renting the spaces to be reinvested into training programmes for local people in creative industries. Commercial hire of some spaces has been proposed to subsidise the affordable rents.

The proposals will need to accommodate the significant existing structures and services within the existing parking bays. The proposed entrance is located to help activate the underused route on the south of the building. The two sites are to remain interlinked with ease of circulation between the school and the studios with studio managers overseeing the day to day operations. Trustees and governors of the LSOM would have oversight of the

workspace management. The team are looking to improve the daylighting by removing window grills and cutting back perimeter vegetation as well as working with service engineers Max Fordham to provide appropriate lighting and ventilation. A signage strategy is proposed to help navigation and access points across the site. There is a problem with waste locations scattered around the site and the project aims to address this with the two waste collection points proposed.

The construction approach is simple to reduce costs and retain the workshop robustness with existing residents and tenants being included in the construction process where possible. The construction will use a managed procurement method to oversee the works packages, splitting them up to better select local suppliers and working in partnership with the Kings Cross Construction Skills Centre to include young people in skills training. Through this method of local procurement in the construction stage the proposals aim to increase the sense of ownership of the project within the community.

London Review Panel's Views

Summary

The panel believe this is clearly an ambitious project tackling a range of issues on many fronts. The level of coordination and exploration for the case for social value to this depth by the team, stakeholders and LB Camden is to be commended. How this ambition translates into rents and management of the spaces has been well considered but needs further clarity when communicating with partners and stakeholders. The panel advise the team further to consider the wider network of routes into and through the site and how this will inform the location and hierarchy of entrances into the building. For LSOM this is an ambitious role to take on within the community. The team have done a lot of work and research and the panel now encourage the team to progress the project and apply their knowledge and processes in its delivery.

Engagement and procurement strategy

The panel commend the team on their commitment to embedded and iterative community engagement. The panel encourage the team to continue to forefront and welcome the community into the project as it progresses on site and into the future phases. The panel commend the proposed construction management procurement strategy as a way of multiplying social value delivered through this type of project. Including local suppliers, trades people and opportunities for skills training, the delivery process will help build community ownership of the facilities.

Routes into and through the site

The panel acknowledge the complex circulation routes around the estate and the site. The panel strongly encourage the team to further test their wider movement analysis and proposed entrance arrangements to ensure that access, servicing, and management arrangements are not unduly complex and costly. The panel suggest the team develop a wider circulation strategy plan and signage strategy that supports legibility. The panel would advise the team that the through-routes need to be considered in terms of how often they are open, how protected and safe they feel and how to encourage people who aren't familiar with the area or LSOM to engage and explore. This is particularly important for the justification of the new entrance point as the southern road is deemed problematic.

Entrance locations and hierarchy

The panel question whether the long, relentless walk to the proposed main entrance along the south route is appropriate. The design team's proposal for an improved lighting scheme along this southern route is welcome but the panel would advise the team to reassess whether this is the best location for the main entrance.

This assessment should be informed by the wider movement and access strategy discussed above. It should seek to avoid duplication or confusion of the existing and proposed entrances, to ensure efficient ongoing management, and to realise the benefits of overlapping programme set out in the presentation. A clear diagram that shows the intended users and security lines at different times of day and during different layout arrangements can highlight where conflicts may occur and can be avoided. Unless clarified

this could cause confusion for users and visitors of both spaces, create safeguarding issues, and unnecessarily add to overall management costs.

Management of the LSOM and proposed workspaces

The panel note the team's proposal for managing the LSOM and workspaces as a single entity, with the workspace being an extension to the school but with a different focus. The panel agree that both sites should have joint management in place though suggest there may be difficulty in translating the vision of what was presented into the day to day reality. The panel can see the team have a good grasp of the operations of the internal spaces and the panel can see this will be an interesting mix of uses. The panel challenge the team to ensure there remains a cross-feeding of culture between the LSOM and workspaces proposed through the management and access across the spaces. As noted under the previous section the panel have some concerns around viability of day to day management operations.

Building on the suggested user and access management diagram suggested previously clear governance and management arrangements across the spaces should be established to optimise beneficial overlaps and synergies. The panel suggest the team test scenarios of how the intended management of the internal shared spaces can work with different events and at different times of the day.

Planned business model

The panel challenge the team to review their proposed business model and to include the margins and risks in the revenue funding to inform the structure of rates they will need to charge. This will impact staff and utilities requirements to run the space which will inform decisions on entrances and facilities. The panel recommend the team seek clarification from LB Camden regarding the lease start date, noting that a start date prior to the project being in operation will impact the business plan. While the LSOM have experience operating some of the site, the panel caution against assumptions of scaling up and the critical points where it can impact the intended operations.

Social Value lease

Capturing the principles of social value contribution from tenants into leases has been seen in projects such as Pop Brixton and International House. In preparation to agreeing a social value lease with LB Camden, the panel recommend the team develop their lettings criteria, operational costs and costs per square meter to tenants that clearly set out the tiered rates proposed. Clarifying these points will help communicate with wider partners and can also support lease arrangements for the additional space. The panel advise that the more tenants and operators there are, the more tensions there will be. Clarifying the expectations and management of users and operators of the spaces will help avoid future conflicts.

External expression of the project

The panel suggest that once the team have established the fundamentals described in the previous sections, that the team has an opportunity to further develop the external expression of the works being proposed. This could go beyond the removal of the window grills and new entrance to include other facing treatments for the workshop bays and could be considered in a future phase once the current proposals have been realised.

Quality of internal space

The panel acknowledge that achieving natural light in the undercroft will be a challenge due to the nature of the structure and its historic use but encourage the team to explore creative solutions to improving the quality of the undercroft spaces.

Next Steps

The panel would welcome the opportunity to further comment on this exciting and aspirational scheme and would recommend further MDA support and scrutiny of the emerging management plan. Please discuss with the GLA project officer how and in what format further support can be provided to the team.