

**LONDON**  
**REVIEW PANEL**

Southwark Council  
PO BOX 64529  
London  
SE1P 5LX

May 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

**London Review Panel: The Blue Market, Bermondsey**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of The Blue Market, Bermondsey on 5<sup>th</sup> May 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 The Blue Market, Bermondsey

Tuesday 5<sup>h</sup> May 2020  
Review held remotely.

### London Review Panel

██████████	MDA
██████████	MDA
██████████	Brand Director, Kerb Market

### Attendees

██████████	LB Southwark
██████████	LB Southwark
██████████	LB Southwark
██████████	The Blue BID Bermondsey/ Market Rep.
██████████	Community Opportunity
██████████	Assemble
██████████	Hayatsu Architects
██████████	Stinsensqueeze
██████████	GLA Regeneration
██████████	GLA Regeneration

### Apologies / report copied to

██████████	GLA Regeneration
██████████	GLA Regeneration

### Report copied to

Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Philip Graham	GLA
Patrick Dubeck	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**

The Blue, Market Place, Bermondsey, London SE16 3UQ

## **Presenting team**

██████████	LB Southwark
██████████	The Blue BID Bermondsey/ Market Rep.
██████████	Assemble
██████████	Hayatsu Architects
██████████	Stinsensqueeze

## **LB Southwark introduction**

Representatives from LB Southwark gave an overview of the project and described how it was conceived by three community organisations with a shared ambition to revitalise the high street at Southwark Park Road ; Community Opportunity, a local social enterprise and charity, The Blue Bermondsey BID, representing the local business community and Big Local Works, who help improve the lives of local people with a focus on employment and enterprise.

LB Southwark highlighted the unique location of The Blue, positioned between several opportunity areas set to undergo dramatic change and development in the near future. The Panel heard how these significant regeneration projects will bring thousands of new homes and jobs to the wider area and how The Blue has the opportunity to serve as a strategic hub for these areas. The key aims of the project were set out; to transform the market square and Southwark Park Road, improve wayfinding and connections and strengthen the local economy.

## **The Blue Bermondsey BID introduction**

Representatives from The Blue Bermondsey BID gave a detailed history of the area, including the reformation legacy of Alfred and Ada Salter, the post-war factory landscape of 'the larder of London' and the subsequent decline of the area through the 1970-80s. The Panel heard how Bermondsey's historic town centre is now being championed by and for the local community through the Blue Bermondsey BID and other local organisations. The Blue Bermondsey BID described their commitment to drive investment into the area in addition to providing services to local businesses; building relationships with private sector business, the local community, public sector and other key organisations to help raise the profile of The Blue and change the perception of area, attracting investment and supporting the community and local economy.

## **London Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

The London Review Panel commend this ambitious and meaningful project and thank the team for the clarity of presentation and the quality of the proposals. The community-led vision is fully supported by the Panel, who look forward to seeing the project come to fruition. The Panel praise the project for capturing The Blue's strong identity and sense of place and recognise great potential in how the project could evolve.

The Panel encourage the team to reflect upon the programme of installation and the permanence of the proposals. The team are advised to allow the proposals to be phased, in order to test and learn and then to respond to those learnings. The Panel have confidence in the team to deliver a carefully crafted project that

responds to this. The volume of permanent built structures or objects in the proposals may suit the immediate needs and vision, however the Panel suggested that they might prevent the evolution of the project and limit flexibility and the capacity to grow over time.

Alongside the design considerations, the panel encourage discussion on the future governance and market operation, and the way in which the operation of the market will respond to local community needs and use. Acknowledging the commercial and regenerative tensions typically at play in a market, the Panel suggest the priorities of the market should be carefully considered and the governance structure aligned to these.

In general, the Panel view this project as exemplary, and consider further work required as a process of honing the content of the proposals and refining key decisions. Neighbourhood markets stand to gain in a post-pandemic world and The Blue faces an opportunity to harness that, building an enterprising, sustainable and successful environment, centered on the local community. Key to the success of this vision will be the implementation of social value leases and environmentally focused lease conditions, carefully managed through a progressive landlord-tenant relationship. The Panel applaud the impressive stakeholder involvement and governance of the project and view the inspiring work as a credit to those organisations, Southwark Council, the design team and the GLA.

#### *Communication & Approach to Engagement*

- The Panel were impressed with the methods of community engagement and outreach, noting the high response rate to consultation and how the project demonstrates evolving best practice in its approach to engagement.
- The Panel acknowledged the distillation of many different views and ideas into one final resolution is a difficult process which can lead to the inclusion of too many ideas.
- The Panel welcome the inclusion of play and a consideration of how children interact with the space. The Panel view 'play' as critical to the success of the project and identified this part of the proposals as an ideal area to experiment with and test over time.
- The role of the community is commendably central to the governance and steering group. The Panel applaud the positioning of the existing community in the task of growing a place and welcoming new people and neighbourhoods.
- The Panel urge the team to allow space for others to join in the process of review and critique of the project as it develops, and not rely on solely the core decision making group.
- Whilst this project demonstrates exemplar community engagement methods, the Panel remind the team to keep sight of the core purpose of engagement; decision making and learning with the community.
- The Panel praise the use of the shop unit as an anchor for the engagement process and the continuation of collecting data and feedback from the community is encouraged. The Panel view this activity as critical for a successful project, to build upon the brilliant and inclusive work done to date, to learn and react going forward, taking decisions collectively.
- The Panel support the graphic design and wayfinding proposals which demonstrate a clear analysis of desire lines and an understanding of the area.
- The Panel encourage a bolder approach to the proposed scale of the wayfinding and graphic signage. The public library on the market square is viewed by the Panel as an important community asset whose presence should be confidently celebrated.
- The Panel queried how much the wayfinding strategy had been tested, particularly in reference to new and future communities of the Biscuit Factory development. The Panel acknowledge the difficulty of testing this in the short term, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting how people move around. The Panel note the necessity of being able to adapt, change and learn is heightened and underpinned by this period of unknown.

- As design work continues, the Panel encourage a greater inclusion of the character and essence of the area in the graphics and way finding proposals. Capturing the target market and attracting people to an enjoyable and inclusive marketplace should be central to the strategy; bringing fun elements of the rich history of the area into the future signage, such as the Garibaldi, Bourbon and Twiglet inventions.

#### *Market Curation, Operation & Offer*

- The Panel commend the proposed zoning of the market and view the layout as practical from an operational perspective.
- The Panel suggest the curation of the market should be focused less on the number and layout of stalls, and more on the adaptability of the market as a whole.
- The Panel recognise the ability to test a proposal as a valuable opportunity, particularly in a community where significant changes are planned over the next decade.
- Utilising the already engaged community to further feedback on ideas, allowing the community to be part of the testing and learning process is strongly encouraged by the Panel.
- The Panel question the permanence and use of the proposed markets stalls and suggest the permanent structures may add a level of inflexibility to the market.
- Some concerns were raised by the Panel regarding the design of the proposed permanent market stalls, which have a similar functional offer to a gazebo design. The Panel cited examples of fixed market structures, such as at Camden market, where the introduction of fixed kiosks increased footfall and interest and allowed stall holders to personalize and appropriate.
- The future governance of the market was of interest to the Panel, and the way in which the operation of the market will respond to ongoing community engagement. Acknowledging the commercial and regenerative tensions typically at play in a market, the Panel suggest the priorities of the market should be carefully considered and the governance structure aligned to these.
- The Panel identify an opportunity for this project to lead on new approaches to waste management, delivery logistics and supply chains. The implementation of the cargo delivery scheme for local shops is a commendable example.
- The Panel view a real opportunity in harnessing the control that single ownership authority offers and having the ability to control systems and outputs through policies and leases, as well as furthering social value objectives through landlord-tenant relationship and lease conditions, for example; encouraging living wage policies, measurement of carbon footprint and environmental policies.

#### *Agility & Adaptability*

- The Panel queried why the idea of flexibility has been positioned as key to the project. The Panel observe that typically very few market operators rotate traders, with fixed anchor tenants seen as necessary for businesses. The Panel advise that simplifying the proposed structures would make the market easier to operate.
- The current design proposals present a number of fixed landscaping features and permanent structures, responding to the differing needs of various stakeholders including the local community and market. However, the panel question whether the approach of comprehensively providing to meet everyone's needs could undermine the overall space and future use including the ability to adapt, phase and learn to inform the evolving nature of the market.
- As design work continues, the Panel would encourage scenario testing of the fixed landscaping and permanent structures, which would help unlock the proposals. For example, how the space would be used in summer, winter, weeknight, weekend, day and night. Scale comparisons of public spaces that are well known would also assist in furthering the understanding of usage and need.

- Adopting a responsive approach to the implementation of the designs, allowing for adjustments and alterations to the scheme following future community feedback and observed learnings, would be of benefit to the long-term success of the project.
- The Panel advise a sharpening of project priorities, particularly in response to the current economic forecast. The Panel urge the project leaders to be precise about project outcomes, and to clearly set out the ambitions for leases, local employment, supply chains, training and skills.
- Flexibility on leases for the retail units may be a way to allow more people to have access to commercial space, with a variety of businesses and enterprises occupying areas of the same unit.
- The Panel urge the team to have clarity on the target audience for the market, both in terms of customers and retailers/ traders.