

**LONDON**  
**REVIEW PANEL**

  
London Borough of Lewisham

May 2021

Dear 

**London Review Panel: Thomas' Lane Yard, LB Lewisham**

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Thomas' Lane Yard on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021. 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,

  
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

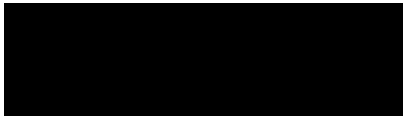
Patrick Dubeck, Head of Regeneration, GLA

# LONDON REVIEW PANEL

## Report of London Review Panel meeting Thomas' Lane Yard LB Lewisham

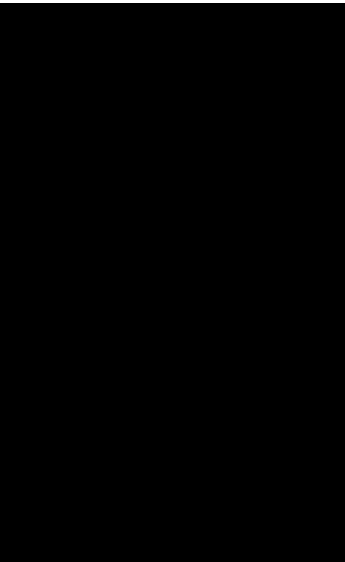
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
Review held remotely

### London Review Panel



MDA  
MDA (Chair)  
MDA

### Attendees



LB Lewisham (Strategic Housing Manager)  
LB Lewisham (Senior Project Manager)  
LB Lewisham (Regen & Urban Design Programme Manager)

Consultant Planner  
Hayatsu Architects  
Surman Weston Ltd.  
Turner Works  
Turner Works  
Turner Works

GLA Regeneration (Project Officer)  
GLA Regeneration (Panel Manager)  
GLA Regeneration (South Area Team Manager)

### 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**

Thomas' Lane Yard

## **Presenting team**



LB Lewisham (Senior Project Manager)  
LB Lewisham (Regen & Urban Design Programme Manager)  
Turner Works  
Turner Works  
Hayatsu Architect

## **LB Lewisham introduction**

LB Lewisham set out the context and strategic ambitions for the project. The site sits within an opportunity area which has the overall capacity for approximately 2,700 new homes over three separate sites. LB Lewisham owns a significant amount of land and housing in Catford and is looking to unlock the capacity for change in the area to ensure a dynamic town centre. Wholly owned by LB Lewisham since 2010, Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited will utilise GLA funding to enable the first phase of the wider town centre masterplan.

This first phase and the focus of this review will include restoring the derelict and locally listed Catford Constitutional Club (CCC) pub with additional community uses. Other elements of this phase include two mix-used towers to provide 105 new homes, with commercial workspace and kiosks within new public realm. The project site is located to the rear of Catford Road/Catford Broadway, connecting back to the high street via the CCC. There are opportunities to connect to the good transport network and local institutions including Ravensbourne Quarter. The project has been informed by following the wider Catford Town Centre Framework principles developed with SEW architects;

1. Consolidate the public realm
2. Enhance the sense of arrival
3. Establish green public spaces
4. Provide a more natural setting for the River Ravensbourne
5. Strengthen civic and cultural offer of town centre
6. Framing the new public spaces and create a permeable edge
7. Make the rear of Catford Broadway high quality with a mix of uses
8. New homes on key opportunity sites

Turner Works, Hayatsu Architects and Surman Weston have been commissioned to build upon the existing characteristics of Catford's yards and lanes to provide an interconnected network of green spaces with active ground floors. Public consultation was undertaken between November 2020 and February 2021 with a report concluding key outputs should include a greener, more vibrant and accessible town centre. The project aims to submit a planning application for the CCC towards the end of June 2021 and for the wider Thomas' Lane Yard buildings by the end of September 2021. Completion of this first phase is expected December 2022.

## **Design Team presentation**

Turner Works presented the site masterplan for the Thomas' Lane Yards proposals and public realm. The existing site contains a surface car park, is located to the rear of the main pedestrian thoroughfares on Catford Broadway and is a back-land site surrounded by the rear of shops and residences. It is further isolated by the existing housing estate and supermarket to the north which will be redeveloped as part of later phases of the Catford Town Centre Framework. The future framework is expected to follow the Thomas' Lane Yards proposals and be complete beyond 2025. The designs are centred around a new green space to connect the CCC, kiosk pavilion and new mixed-use towers, with further pockets of green space to the site boundaries totalling 3,000sqm of public realm. These routes and spaces will link to existing and future connections in the wider masterplan and informed by pedestrian desire lines and active servicing requirements. The proposals will aim to address public safety concerns around these back-land sites and improve the environment for existing residents. Public consultation has included a website, online workshops and information shared within a local newspaper with feedback being taken into the design's development.

Hayatsu Architects presented the proposals for the locally listed CCC building which connects the Thomas' Lane Yard to Catford Broadway via a lane. The CCC is anticipated to be complete by 2022. The existing building comprises various elements of different ages, with the library portion being the earliest dating back to 1736. The existing condition is poor, with parts of the structure unsafe, exposed sections of roof allowing rain ingress and level changes making accessibility across the whole building difficult. The proposals have focused on minimal external interventions to unlock opportunities within the building and return it to use as a pub with additional community spaces at first floor. New connections between the Victorian and Georgian parts of the building and a new platform lift within a triple height space will make it fully accessible. A new pub garden will activate and extend the mix of uses in the public realm and connect to the other proposed green spaces.

Turner Works presented the proposals for the two new mixed-use towers which would stand at 9 and 13 storeys and are anticipated to be complete by 2025. The proposals provide non-residential uses at ground and first floor totalling 1,200sqm with 20+ new business and 100+ new jobs. There is the potential for co-working spaces, workshops, studios and community rooms in these non-residential spaces to activate the public realm. Residential tenure will be split with social rent in one tower and a mix of intermediate and private in the other to provide 105 new homes. 50% of the new homes will be affordable of which 40% are social rent. Several massing options have been tested and the designs include a brick and precast faced with robust balconies. The kiosk pavilion will provide an activating feature of small workspaces within the central green space and act as a new piece of infrastructure for the new yard supporting potential street markets.

## **Project team responses to MDA clarification questions**

***Who have you engaged with to inform the business plan?*** The team confirmed that Turner Works as lead designer had significant experience in this type of workspace to inform the business plan. Wider consultation has only just started on the Thomas' Lane Yard which has made it difficult to engage with stakeholders what types of space might be needed. The team are working with operators locally and a coworking space at a council building has also informed the business planning. There has been significant input for stakeholders through the Catford Town Centre Framework consultations. The proposals provide for flexible floorspaces that can be let to a range of scales of businesses, with the brief adaptable to accommodate local need. Potential operators for the pub within the CCC are also in discussions with the team.

***Do you have time to refine input from businesses with the impending planning deadline?*** The project team confirmed that the project is at the end for RIBA Stage 2, with consultation for the CCC ahead of the consultation for the Thomas' Lane Yard blocks. The team is waiting for the Catford Town Centre Framework to become adopted before undertaking more detailed consultation of the Thomas' Lane Yard element of the scheme.

***Is the team clear about who the end users are and how you will accommodate existing diverse communities and address their issues within the project's strategic aims?*** The project team have used the production of the Catford Town Centre Framework to understand the demand and needs for small businesses including a desire to be at street level for more interaction with other businesses and the public. The proposals aim to provide a rich mix of employment spaces and street market stalls. The team have also had insights from the workspace operation located within Lewisham Town Hall, where there is a waiting list for space. Lewisham as a 'borough of sanctuary' have a focus on integrating refugees in the community with successes in starting small food businesses and to be supported through the proposal's community kitchen.

***Given the need for business space, is the team confident the spaces being provided will be affordable to those local groups and businesses in terms of the leases matching up with budgets and rents?*** The team stated that Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL) will operate and manage all commercial workspaces in the precinct and on Catford Broadway to include the CCC.

***How has the engagement undertaken by the team addressed concerns of local people that these types of projects could result in being priced out for residents and businesses?*** The team confirmed that there has been huge enthusiasm from the local community who actively seek this project to progress to ensure the back lands sites are made safer and more jobs are provided. The team are mindful of the concerns about local people feeling pushed out and the council is prioritising this concern in the project response including in the new social rent homes and the varied workspace unit sizes from stalls, kiosks and larger units.

## London Review Panel's Views

### **Summary**

The panel commend a strong team has been assembled, who have worked at pace.. This is a very interesting scheme that provides a huge opportunity as the first phase of an ambitious and much needed masterplan for this area. The fact that LB Lewisham have the ownership allows for, and requires, a high level of leadership and responsibility over its long-term stewardship to drive forward this ambition.

***The panel advise the team to ensure that inclusivity is embedded in the proposals, its processes and outcomes.*** The panel agree the project should emphasise the place through a sense of ownership and belonging. The panel's view is that there is a disconnect between the admirable principles set out by LB Lewisham and the evidence presented which demonstrate how these will be delivered. The panel advise the team to use this transformative project to ensure the spaces created are truly inclusive for everyone with access to opportunities and authorship of the designs and management strategies. The team understand the context and are encouraged to look for and provide opportunities to new and existing groups in the local community to make the most of the existing and diverse community. In this scale of transformation, the team must identify and accentuate the opportunities spatially, socially and economically using the regeneration process as a catalyst. Through investing millions in public money, the team needs to connect to existing local strengths including the businesses, professionals, institutions and groups that are 'hard to reach' who are at risk of being alienated from this process and its outcomes.

***The panel believe the designs of the housing are good quality but raise a concern of the tenure split strategy and the resolution of potential conflict between adjacent uses.*** The panel commend the design team on the care and effort to ensure the homes are quality places to live. The panel note the tension between the tenure split and encourage the team consider how this first phase of the masterplan will set a precedent for future phases with regards to how the mix of tenures will be realised. Concerns are raised regarding the perception of locating the social rent homes closer to sources of noise and the team are encouraged to consider how best a mixed tenure neighbourhood works to avoid perceived or real separation based on wealth. There is likely to be a greater number of family homes in the social rent and this may compound conflicts with non-residential uses they are situated close to such as the pub beer garden. To avoid problems in the future careful planning of how these various uses will spill out into the public realm will be needed, with curation and management strategies required to ensure issues are avoided and addressed productively.

***The panel advise the team to consider the real and perceived safety of the public realm spaces to ensure sightlines and alleyways do not isolate and create blind corners and hidden areas.*** There is a real issue in this area and particularly in these back-land sites regarding safety and the team must eliminate and not contribute to this. The panel agree the kiosk could provide an interesting and activating piece of public realm infrastructure but caution the team to consider how it contributes to the safety of the space. The wider character and use of the space was also not clear, whether it was domestic, workspace, or planted.

***The panel recommend the team to consider the distinctive character of the main yard space.*** The panel noted the development of design thinking for the public realm in general and a desire to increase greening. The panel felt that the design thinking could be developed further including how the yard space at Thomas Lane Yard is differentiated from the adjacent yard spaces and the public spaces of the nearby Catford Broadway and the high street section of Rushey Green.

***The panel recommend the team undertake meaningful and integrated consultation and communication of the project with the local community prior to the planning submission of the Thomas Lane Yard element, due in September.*** The panel understand that much consultation has taken place with regards to the Catford Town Centre Framework but would urge the team to develop on this with more detailed and involved engagement with local and diverse groups to ensure community buy in and benefit on the specific scheme. While the panel understand the difficulties in engaging on a project that is ahead of its Framework masterplan being sign off, the team are encouraged to build and grow ownership with the people who will take over these places. This is a place that should endure for a long time and only by building and maintaining community support can this be achieved. It is important for the team to develop from existing conversations with key stakeholders and not go over the same ground. It is easy to lose trust and risk losing people if the team races away from these conversations to a planning deadline. The team are encouraged to hold on site events in person where possible and continue to develop forums where stakeholders can discuss difficult issues and conflicts that emerge from the proposals and its occupation. The panel advise the team ensure voices not currently heard are sought and to utilise the local assemblies that are established in the area as a forum. Young people in particular should be invited to shape the proposals and its uses in order to help identify and embed opportunities for them and their peers in the emerging scheme.

***The panel advise the team to consider the long-term ownership, governance and maintenance relationships with the project.*** The panel can see the team have done market research in the business model which forms one set in a series of many years of development in this area. The team should consider how these designed spaces meet the business needs and how this will help curate and adapt the spaces to ensure ongoing success. The panel recommend the team be clear about the mechanisms set in place for this long-term management and hand over arrangements. The panel encourage the team to integrate these proposals into future phases regarding a socio-economic framework. This should include the curation and management of public realm spaces and the kiosks. The team need to consider the cost to this management, how the designs contribute to this cost and what Lewisham's longer-term objectives and stake in the management shall be. Well designed spaces should become well used places if the right management is built in from the beginning.

***The panel recommend the team clarify what the level of fit-out for the workspaces shall and inform this based on engagement with potential business need.*** Many new and small businesses with little capital may require spaces ready to move into that include toilets and bike stores rather than a shell only space. LB Lewisham will need to clarify what tenants are expected to provide in terms of social value, income and rental levels, the viability of which has a relationship to what Lewisham will provide in terms of the capital works.

**Next Steps**

The panel would welcome the opportunity to further comment on this exciting and aspirational scheme at a future appropriate stage in the project development.