

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

Patrick Dubeck
Regeneration and Economic Development
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
SE1 2AA

January 2019

Dear Patrick,

London Review Panel: Crystal Palace National Sports Centre

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of the CPNSC on 9th January 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,



David West
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

██████████, Senior Project Officer, Regeneration, GLA

██████████, Principal Strategic Planner, GLA

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**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Crystal Palace National Sports Centre**

Wednesday 9 January 2019

Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, Ledrington Rd, London SE19 2BB

Held alongside London Review Panel meeting of Capel Manor College.

London Review Panel

David West (chair)
Sowmya Parthasarathy
Rory Hyde
Irene Djao Rakitine

Attendees (including Capel Manor College presenting team)

██████████	GLA Regeneration
Patrick Dubeck	GLA Regeneration
██████████	GLA Regeneration
Beth Lackenby	GLA Regeneration
██████████	GLA Regeneration
██████████	Hawkins Brown Architects
██████████	Hawkins Brown Architects
██████████	Consortium Sports Consultants
██████████	Kinnear Landscape Architects
██████████	LB Bromley
██████████	Capel Manor College
██████████	Fielden Fowles Architects
██████████	Fielden Fowles Architects
██████████	Fusion Project Management Consultancy
██████████	Fusion Project Management Consultancy

Apologies / report copied to

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

Report copied to

Lucy Owen	GLA
Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
██████████	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 name and site address

Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, Ledrington Rd, London SE19 2BB

Presenting team

Patrick Dubeck	GLA Regeneration
██████████	Hawkins Brown Architects
██████████	Hawkins Brown Architects
██████████	Kinnear Landscape Architects
██████████	Continuum Sports and Leisure Ltd.

GLA introduction

The National Sports Centre (NSC) at Crystal Palace was once the primary location for professional competitive sports in England and was one of 5 National Sports Centres under Sport England ownership. The centre was transferred to the ownership of the London Development Authority in 2006 and then to the Greater London Authority (GLA) in April 2012, ahead of the London 2012 Olympics. Post-Olympics and the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, the NSC has lost its international and national competition function.

The function of the centre has been changing incrementally without vision or guidance for its future. The centre is managed by GLL on behalf the GLA. The management contract with GLL for the NSC runs to March 2020 with an option to extend for one further year. The contract will then have to be retendered to potential operators which provides an opportunity for a fundamental review

The location of the NSC, linking areas of the South East, and its proximity to London gives it a broad and unique offer. It serves a wide reach of people within the South East and beyond for specialist sports, including athletics and diving. It continues to host regional competitive sport and acts as a popular local leisure centre. An options appraisal for the future of the NSC was carried out in 2014, but this was never implemented. The latest plan for the centre, buoyed by a new Mayor and LB Bromley's Regeneration Plan for the park, provides an opportunity to secure a sustainable future for the NSC. This plan has resulted in a feasibility study undertaken by Hawkins Brown and a vision for the centre which is presented today.

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The London Review Panel support the ambition and overall vision of the project and feel the pragmatism of the proposals is appropriate. The Panel offer thanks to the design team for the clarity of presentation and commend their integrated approach and design methodology. In general, the Panel finds the feasibility work encouraging and is confident that the work is leading to an interesting architectural and landscape discussion. The project objectives and proposed key moves are well-defined and endorsed by the Panel.

The design team is encouraged to further consider the programme mix and the role of the proposed 'Hub' building. The relationship of levels within the NSC and wider landscape should be resolved, with thought given to the level of intervention to the elevated walkway. As design work continues, a greater and more vigorous exploration of how the NSC fits into the wider park setting and masterplan is required, with an understanding of the NSC and park at the Macro scale.

Ambition, Approach and Vision

- The overall vision is to be commended and is fitting with the regional importance of the centre.
- The Panel agree with and support the 5 project objectives and 5 key moves and find them to be clear in approach and ambition.
- The Panel realise an opportunity for the NSC to become the 'heart' of the park, with the proposed 'Hub' space having an important role in the identity of the centre.
- In general, the Panel are reassured by the design approach and the recognised context of importance of the NSC and feel this will lead to careful and considered design development.
- 'Play as a pathway into sport' is welcomed as an apt agenda for the programming offer at the NSC, reflecting the ambition for a broader community pull.
- The Panel finds play intrinsic to the project vision and feel this should be strongly reflected in the design proposals. This would help modify the offer from exclusively sport, to all users in the community.

Masterplan and the Wider Park Setting

- The proposals are lacking an urban and landscape masterplan.
- The hierarchy of spaces both within the NSC estate and wider park need to be defined.
- A focus on the transition between park, play, sport and club level is encouraged.
- The interface between the park and sports will be a challenge. The Panel acknowledged that this stage of the design is a good point to 'plug in' to the wider masterplan and review how this influences the public realm and landscape.
- The Panel urge the design team to explore the implications of the proposals on the masterplan, in terms of sequencing, surfacing, lighting, interfaces and experience.
- The outdoor 'Hub' could provide a new public square for the park and the city.

NSC Use and Programming

- The Panel recognise the opportunity for the NSC to function better for local communities and identified the mix of programming as the key driver to a successful future.
- In general, the Panel are broadly supportive of the programmatic approach to the project but feel more could be made of the 'Hub' proposals.
- The 'Hub' could be more central to the scheme, with pedestrian routes leading to a central orientation point.
- The 'Hub' should appeal to all centre and park users, focusing on play and bringing people together.
- The Panel are broadly supportive of the retention of the 25m swimming pool, recognising it as an asset, especially for families.
- A clearer understanding of who the centre is for and how they would experience the centre would be beneficial for the scheme, the Panel agreed that 'everyone' needs to be defined better.
- The London Aquatics Centre and the Southbank Centre are offered by the Panel as suitable design and programmatic precedents. The way in which the Southbank under-croft has been transformed and connected to the river is successful and interesting in the context of the NSC architecture, particularly the activation at ground level.

Accessibility and Changes in Level

- The Panel are interested in understanding the wider access routes to the NSC. Further studies of routes through the site, the experience of those journeys and how they fit into the wider context would be welcomed.
- A radial approach to the network of paths within the park should be considered, with thought given to access from the North and West of the park, in addition to the train station and Penge gate.
- The Panel queried whether the proposed pedestrian access from the station is direct enough.
- The 'Hub' could be used to distribute all park users, a pause point and orientation space for the park.
- The way in which the scheme responds to the topography of the site would benefit from the design team working in section, considering elements such as the proposed new-build, indoor running track, and how this impacts the views and permeability of the park.
- As design work continues, the Panel would encourage a more rigorous testing of interventions to the elevated walkway and reasons to retain the structure. The changes in level should be used to enhance the walkway and integrate the park, rather than reinforce a barrier or boundary.
- The relationship with the Capel Manor farm site should be reinforced, with the landscape designed to create a more permeable connection.

Governance

- The Panel understands the complexity of stakeholders of the project and encourages the design team to look beyond the red-line boundary of the NSC, to connect with the wider park and communities.
- How this integrated approach to the wider park is funded should be considered and agreed.
- The Panel queried who has the role of leading and bringing together the separate projects in the park; the park improvements, the new GLA funded café, the Capel Manor College projects and the NSC, and urges a consideration of these as one cohesive masterplan.