

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

██████████
Studio Voltaire,
1A Nelsons Row,
London
SW4 7JR

March 2019

Dear ██████████

London Review Panel: Studio Voltaire

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the review of the Studio Voltaire proposals on 28th March 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,



Daisy Froud
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

Patrick Dubeck, Head of Regeneration, GLA



**Report of London Review Panel meeting
Studio Voltaire**

Wednesday 28 March 2019
Review held at: City Hall, Queen’s Walk, London SE1 2AA

London Review Panel

Daisy Froud	(chair)
Paloma Strelitz	MDA
Fabienne Nicholas	MDA

Attendees

[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	Studio Voltaire
[REDACTED]	Studio Voltaire
[REDACTED]	Matheson Whiteley
[REDACTED]	Matheson Whiteley
[REDACTED]	Matheson Whiteley

Apologies / report copied to

[REDACTED]	LB Lambeth
[REDACTED]	LB Lambeth
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration
[REDACTED]	GLA Regeneration

Report copied to

Jules Pipe	Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Debbie Jackson	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 name and site address

Studio Voltaire, 1A Nelsons Row, Clapham, London SW4 7JR

Presenting team

██████████	Studio Voltaire
██████████	Studio Voltaire
██████████	Matheson Whiteley Architects
██████████	Matheson Whiteley Architects

Studio Voltaire introduction

Studio Voltaire introduced the project and set out the case for change, citing the challenges of rising studio rents, increasing maintenance costs and growing demand for studio space as drivers for development. The key deliverables for the project were outlined as the safeguarding of the existing studio space and an increase in the number of affordable studios available. The scheme responds to a London-wide demand for affordable studio space, together with a local demand for community space and aims to have more of a civic role in the local area. The project will also cater for increased support available for artists, signalling a programmatic shift in the user relationship; away from tenant/ landlord to a more supportive, pastoral role. Studio Voltaire described the intention to build an artist's community that is mutually beneficial, where professional development and specialist training is offered alongside affordable studio and live/ work units, shared facilities (including a sculpture workshop) and a community participation space. The programme for this space is to include events, Action Space uses and community private hire.

Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The London Review Panel are supportive of the scheme and expressed their excitement in both the richness of the design brief and of the project potential. The Panel urge Studio Voltaire to take advantage of identified opportunities to provoke conversations through the design of the public-facing spaces, encouraging co-design and design participation of both artist-users and the local community. Utilising the current public programming could facilitate this, through non-traditional consultation events. During the construction works, the Panel advocate an active programme for Studio Voltaire, with a window; physical, digital or conceptual window into the project progress. The Panel view a collaboration between artist(s) and contractor as a positive way to build ownership and help communicate intent to the community.

The Panel encourage an exploration of sightlines and visibility to begin to address the safety and access issues on Nelson's Row, working with LB Lambeth to ensure the site feels safe, open and welcoming. LB Lambeth are urged to take the opportunity to programme required upgrades concurrently to avoid construction clashes.

The Panel acknowledge the GLA as active funders offering further guidance and advocate the use of both the Special Assistance Team and the London Review Panel as design work progresses.

Public Space Design

- The Panel recognise the design is in the early stages and view the timing of this design review as an opportune moment to input on and influence the project.
- The opening-up of the existing courtyard wall makes sense to the Panel who agree it would unlock the space, extending the invite to those who may not otherwise feel welcomed.
- The Panel see an opportunity for the courtyard garden to stitch the proposed entrance spaces together, including the internal entrance space and streetscape, similar to the South London Gallery garden.
- The Panel regard [REDACTED] as an excellent artist to be working with for this element of the project and await developed proposals with anticipation. The GLA are keen to be involved in the commission and would encourage any LB Lambeth street improvement proposals and discussion to be integrated.
- The entrance was identified as a critical point to communicate a welcoming outlook for the project. The design team are advised to consider the sightlines, signage, materials, boundary line and dwell space that could be implemented to give a sense of permeability to the entrance journey.
- The ambition of a 'Public Room' is to be applauded, particularly in the context of competing or contrasting users; artists and the public. The Panel would encourage a wider conversation with the local community about what would make this space feel open or public and consider this a good question to pose to a focus group or workshop. This engagement should include the café operator once chosen. There is also an opportunity to access the Specialist Assistance Team to help inform the engagement process.
- The Panel put forward a precedent to consider; Central St Café at St Luke's which offers varied table settings, removing the barrier of uncertainty for users.
- The intention to involve further artist collaborations in the fit out of the scheme, such as the toilets, is commended by the Panel, and these opportunities should be explored and programmed with the GLA.
- The Panel consider the continuation of Studio Voltaire as a space of production integral to the character and essence of the project. The café and public spaces should display a behind-the-scenes awareness and not present as a sterile space or vacuum from the activity.

Access & Street Presence

- The Panel consider the sequencing and intent of LB Lambeth's proposals for Nelson's Row important and observed the difficulty in creating a safe and welcoming entrance without some change to the highway layout. Discussions with Lambeth should be sought urgently to align the Studio Voltaire proposals with wider street improvement ambitions.
- The Panel understand that the road and pavement layout is overdue an upgrade and note the recent accessibility audit confirmed the unsafe existing approach. The stage 2 application stated LB Lambeth were investing in the street improvements here and this work is key to the safety and access of this entrance space.
- Altering the existing access yard to a more welcoming, public entrance could transform the ethical responsibility for public safety. The Panel view the design and positioning of wayfinding and identifier signage as significant, to confirm the most appropriate and safe route for visitors.
- The design and functionality of the gate to the garden space should contribute to the street presence and the entrance journey. A piercing of the wall or suggestion of an entrance, whilst maintaining the function of outdoor café space and garden could facilitate a safer approach to the building. Particularly if a dwell space or refuge from the road is incorporated.

- The competing interests of the scheme will have to be managed appropriately (artists' studios vs public space) to facilitate appropriate security arrangements and safe deliveries of materials and café supplies.

Visibility, Off-site Programming and Community Engagement

- The Panel recognise an opportunity for collaboration including codesign with artists and the local community, to shape the principles of the public space fit-out and build a shared sense of ownership of the facilities.
- Studio Voltaire are advised to carefully consider how to continue to communicate with the local community for the duration of the works, to ensure a permeability and ongoing presence.
- The Panel endorse the use of participatory workshops as a vehicle to maximise discussion and consultation about the function and requirements of the public space and support the GLA's offer for the Special Assistance Team to help design this engagement. The design team and Studio Voltaire are encouraged to identify appropriate moments in the programme for this engagement.
- Studio Voltaire's work with local schools is also considered a potential route to have a more participative response to the design proposals, how the space should feel and how this might be framed.