

ORCHARDSON STREET

Location

Church Street Regeneration area, Westminster

Client Type

Local Authority [Westminster City Council]

Key Collaborators

Westminster City Council Westminster Legal teams, UKPN

Workstage

RIBA 0-2 Concept, Early stage design

Summary

Orchardson St is currently home to the council's Lisson Grove Offices and Westminster Adult Education Service. WCC is proposing to build 150 new homes with business and enterprise space at ground floor level.

The Challenge

There had been difficulty with the identification of existing underground assets and establishing with the Utilities provider potential work required to test and trace it with the aim of finding out whether it is an operational power supply or redundant. A lack of understanding between WCC Legal and the Distribution Network Operator around related issues led to an impasse, which stalled work on the development.



Infrastructure Coordination
Development Service

ORCHARDSON STREET

Our Approach

The Infrastructure Coordinator has effectively been the 'translator' between two forms of specialism – legal and technical – commencing with explaining how the Distribution Network Operator may have assets that they are unaware of and explaining the tasks of the Unidentified Cable Process and discussing liability. The IC provided various documents to assist in communicating the explanation of the situation and the risks and next steps.

The project was at a stalled impasse, so the IC provided intelligence and data using GLA resources and project information to successfully unblock.

Key Outcomes

Had the situation remained in the status quo, legal fees would have significantly increased as questions were raised and responses not fully understood. The 'translation' piece ensured that the right questions were asked of the correct teams, in the appropriate manner. By improving communication between teams and re-focusing enquiries, miscommunications were clarified, issues unblocked, and significant programme gains were made, mitigating impact on the project progress. This demonstrates the benefits of early engagement with the Service for the main works ahead of construction beginning in 2024 and to last for around three years.

Testimonial

"You immediately identified and understood the difficulties faced in identifying the cable and in getting UKPN to confirm their ownership. You assisted by conducting your own investigations with UKPN over the "Unidentified cable procedure." You were proactive in discussing ways to resolve our issue. You arranged several useful meetings between WCC and UKPN to discuss ways in which this problem could be resolved....[the Coordinator] has been extremely supportive for our project and continues to support us with our infrastructure issues."

Sandra Shadrack, Senior Lawyer,
Westminster City Council



MAYOR OF LONDON