

Design Review Panel

Summary Feedback Notes

Wednesday 23 March 2016

WESTFIELD ARIEL WAY

Panel	LBHF	Architects and Agents
Robin Partington – Chair Barbara Woda Max DeRosee Melanie Whitlock Paul Sandilands Jonathan Manser	Paul Goodacre Jennifer Grove Adam O'Neill Neil Button	Bob Allies Alfredo Caraballo ALLIES & MORRISON Duncan Bower WESTFIELD

Main Issues Raised during the Design Review Panel

1.	The use of the neighbouring railway arches
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2.	Permeability and the routes to the entrances
3.	The route and connections from the neighbouring residential development to the John Lewis Store
4.	The level changes around the base of the building and how it relates to the public realm
5.	Animation of the ground floor and base of the building
6.	The nature of the link and its relationship to the two buildings on either side
7.	Details of the proposed link, and when it will come forward for consideration
8.	The relationship with the listed Dimco building
9.	The reason behind the chosen design aesthetic for the elevations

Panel Summary and Recommendation

The design concept of an “object” building for the proposed Department Store is very much welcomed and is seen as a wholly appropriate response in the evolution of the Masterplan and the location and presence of the site in its wider context.

The principle of the two differing elevational treatments coming together as facades fronting onto the enclosed street is encouraged, and is considered to be important ingredient for the success of this space, its sense of enclosure as a street and for the buildings themselves.

The Mall extension building is more convincing in its execution, as a carefully articulated foil to the listed Dimco building and would sit well as an extension of Westfield to the south.

The Panel felt that in order for the Department Store to fulfil its intended role as a stand-alone “object” building that anchors the northern end of the retail offer, and a focal point for its wider context, the design needed greater solidity and depth, a more heroic and convincing solution.

The current design appears to have three distinct ideas running through the composition and none of the ideas were strong enough to ground the building. If the composition was more unified, the Panel felt it would benefit from a greater sense of gravity as a singular form.

The feeling that the proposed elevation was simply a skin, lacking depth and integrity drew the most discussion. The Panel did not feel comfortable with a skin of masonry floating above a fragmented glass box which was not helped by the lack of structure connecting to the whole to the ground.

The Panel felt that the railway station precedents suggested by the architects could inform a solution that would help the building to create a better relationship with the ground. There may be clues in the rhythm and form of the adjacent railway viaduct helping to create a dialogue between the two structures, and a greater sense of belonging overall, whilst also allowing the base to be open and engaging.

The panel felt that the glazed corner was a particular concern where the department store entrance was not a successfully integrated into the proposed design, the geometry of the entrances having an uncomfortable relationship with the curved glass setting. The Panel felt that the articulation of the building façade and its structure should deliver the entrance.

The Panel considered that the base of the building was not inviting or engaging, with the glazed base feeling defensive rather than welcoming. The panel felt the architecture of the base of the building should reach out, engage with and inform the design of a high quality public realm around it, in order to successfully integrate the design into its wider context.

The Panel felt that there should also be careful consideration given to the skyline of the building to ensure it retains its qualities as an object building, and also the roof, the buildings fifth elevation, as it will inevitably accommodate plant, and will be overlooked by residents in the new blocks neighbouring the Centre.

Finally, the presentation drawings showed signage attached in a superficial and apparently random manner across the elevation. The panel feel that the signage does not help the composition or design integrity, and dilutes the idea of a concept building.