

# Design Review Panel

## Summary Feedback Notes

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016

BBC Gateway Site Wood Lane

Panel	LBHF	Architects and Agents
Robin Partington - Chair Dan Burr Max de Rosee Paul Sandilands Melanie Whitlock Will Wimshurst	Paul Goodacre Davina Barton	Robert Maxwell, Allies & Morrison  Billy Choi, Allies & Morrison

### Main Issues Raised during the Design Review Panel

1.	Servicing of the offices and people moving across the site
2.	Amount of proposed office space
3.	Sustainability of retail

4.	Amount of daylight on the square
5.	Proposed tower
6.	Possibility of a wind tunnel being created
7.	Use of the main square
8.	Public realm featured in the detail application
9.	Height of retail units
10.	Use and practicality of white terracota
11.	Relationship between terracota and aluminium linings
12.	Size of the lower of the three blocks
13.	Appearance of tower slicing through the podium
14.	Ground floor usage
15.	Amenity space on the bays
16.	Accessibility of the area
17.	Direction of pedestrians passing through the site
18.	Impact of change in scale

### **Panel Summary and Recommendation**

The panel thanked the applicants for their presentation on the complexities of the design proposals

The lower of the three podium blocks is a concern to the panel. It isn't clear if it is an uncomfortable extension of the podium, or one of three blocks over the podium, and would benefit from a clearer differentiation. The panel feel that the composition would benefit if it were part of the three blocks, and an additional two floors would

help make a logical progression in scale between the three blocks, and sufficient separation in height from the podium for it to provide a clear setting in key views.

The podium would also benefit in having a clearer form aligning the Wood Lane frontage. Whilst the panel appreciated the desire for the “legs” of the taller buildings to arrive at ground, wherever possible. It is a successful device on the western elevation, but less so towards the southern end of the Wood Lane elevation where the podium is split by the leg from the lower block above, leaving an uncomfortable triangle to hold and anchor the main entrance to the building, effectively fracturing the podium. The panel felt the podium would create a much stronger relationship supporting the enhanced cluster of towers above if their structure was held back on this corner allowing the podium to run through.

The panel also thought that the articulation between the three blocks would benefit from a stronger and more legible shadow gap detail between them. The proposed full height glazing may achieve this as glass tends to go black in distant views, but the drawings shown suggested a muted contrast which the panel felt was less successful. Greater width or depth to the recess may also help to reinforce this contrast.

The panel remain to be convinced by the bay windows on the lower levels of the three blocks along the western elevation. Again, as configured they tended to diminish the clarity between the podium and the taller blocks, do they belong to the taller components or the podium ? The changes above would suggest that there is a need to encourage a stronger relationship to the taller components rather than hover around the threshold of the podium on either side. The panel suggest that the design might benefit if they were more playful rather than mechanical, perhaps rising above podium height before feathering out. One more design iteration could help to resolve this and strike a better balance.

The panel were concerned that the generous nature of the 21m wide street may not guarantee successful public realm, based on the scale of the space alone. If public realm is too wide with little animation within the body of the street providing a humane sense of scale it could feel unloved and uncomfortable transient space rather than the desired glue that unites the surrounding buildings. If you place a piece of white paper over the detail of the buildings on the masterplan drawing and simply look at the design of the space between them, it does not have a strong sense of identity or the gravity to anchor the taller elements with a convincing public realm, the glue feels too weak.

The space may benefit from being more structured, perhaps avoiding bands that cross or block the flow of the street, and encourage geometry that reinforces its linearity helping to tie in its northern end making it feel less of a dead end. Layers could help to provide a clearer setting for trees and street furniture, perhaps animated by a smaller scale pop up retail offer in the form of elegant kiosks or ‘pit stops with shelter that would help to pre-populate this important route when it is less busy, helping to reinforce its sense of address and place making qualities.

The design of the spaces between buildings and their associated roles needs more development.

The use of green terracotta tiles was supported by the panel. The podium has a mix of materials and detailing which gives the façade a sense of human scale. These could also be incorporated into the taller elements so that the differentiation is made by the volume and colour, whilst adding a finer grain of texture and detail to the taller components, helping them to engage with the wider public realm rather than feeling remote.

The panel felt that amenity spaces for the buildings occupants such as the use of roof gardens or terraces wherever possible would benefit the scheme as a whole.

The panel would like to see second site come back to Design Review Panel for consideration