

Design Review Panel

Summary Feedback Notes

ARK SWIFT PRIMARY ACADEMY

Australia Road

16 October 2017

Panel	LBHF	Architects and Agents
Max de Rosee [chair] Gary Colleran Melanie Whitlock Kate Digney Alessia Mosci Paul Simms Fred Pilbrow	Paul Goodacre Kerstin Kane John Sanchez Lydia Nutt Sally Prowd	Lee Bennett – Sheppard Robson Archs. Gavin Robinson- Sheppard Robson Archs. Andrew McLean – Vengroue Neil Henderson – Gerald Eve

Main Issues Raised during the Design Review Panel

1.	Comparison of existing and proposed playspace provision
2.	Quality of trees proposed to be removed
3.	Location of replacement trees
4.	Options to retain trees
5.	Specification of replacement trees
6.	Dimensions of boulevard and square
7.	Character of adjoining space to the north
8.	Entrances around the perimeter of the site and highways detailing/treatment at entrances to boulevard
9.	The focus on the boulevard
10.	Orientation of the office block
11.	SE corner of the office block
12.	The use of the boulevard by emergency vehicles
13.	Residential presence at ground floor
14.	Private amenity space
15.	Communal space and privacy considerations
16.	Possibility of decking over the parking area
17.	Dimensions of the footprint of the office block
18.	Light reaching the centre of the floor plate of the offices

19.	Floor to floor heights of the office block
20.	Future occupants of the office space
21.	Management of the public realm
22.	Phasing

Panel Summary and Recommendation

The Panel thank the team for their thorough presentation of their proposals. It is felt that the concept is much tighter and working much better than the earlier proposals, and the direction of travel is good and supported.

The proposed, permanently available route through the site, the boulevard, is particularly welcomed; opening up the site and engaging with the local community and townscape. However, as a key component of the scheme, the panel are disappointed that the design of the route is constrained by the need to accommodate emergency vehicles. The Panel have real concerns that the quality of landscape design would be compromised such that the boulevard would not be able to achieve its full and anticipated potential. Significant replacement tree planting looks like it might be further compromised by the underground services along the route of the boulevard which would severely reduce the space for tree planting. The proposed replacement tree programme may well achieve the desired 2 for 1 ratio but in terms of quality, would not be like for like.

The site has a potential to deliver an uplift in ecology and the panel would encourage the applicants to demonstrate any ecological benefit in their submission.

The Panel enjoyed the mix of uses proposed for the site, but acknowledged that with that desire to achieve that urban quality comes real management issues especially when the dual use of spaces is proposed. The panel suggest that a management strategy for the spaces is included in the forthcoming planning submission, such that the planning authority have some comfort that the uses can operate alongside each other successfully.

The Panel question the width of the entrance to the boulevard from Australia Road and whether the team could relieve some of the pressure at the entrance to the route that would form at school drop-off/pick-up times. The applicants should look at highway issues at this entrance and the suggestion of a generous raised table would help to provide an appropriate “welcome mat” to the school and campus in general for those coming from the estate to the west.

The scale of the commercial building was discussed at length and mixed views were expressed. Concern is expressed over the potential impact it would have on light reaching the new square. The success of the square would be measured in how it fulfils its role as a congregational space, an outdoor entrance foyer to the surrounding

buildings and a linking element to the adjoining site. It therefore would need to be as attractive and as comfortable to be in as possible. The panel ask that the applicants team review light impacts into the square and ensure that they are comfortable that it would achieve its desired function.

The Panel welcomed the design development sketches presented at the review which showed the south-east corner opened up to create a colonnade giving a directional quality and also a greater civic presence in recognition of its prominence in views along the street.

Overall, the Panel acknowledged that this was a big building at approx. 40 x 40. And as a result, the elevations would need to be carefully controlled The Panel enjoyed the quality the design team were aspiring to.

The Panel understood the desire for the educational elements to be more flamboyant, and agreed that it is right to express the different functions, but felt that they had not found their voice yet. The panel also felt that a stronger integration with the architecture above may help the composition.

The surface parking proposed is unfortunate and would need to work hard to be visually attractive. It would largely affect the adjoining site so would not really be a good neighbour.

The Panel thought that the scale of the residential elements was good, and that they were respectful of the character of the surrounding blocks and maintained good distances to them. However, there were some hard questions about the amenity space especially with regard to quantum of play space and the strategy for playspace as well as overlooking and privacy issues arising from the roof top playspace and the relationship with adjoining flats. Screening would be important here and elsewhere on the site where different uses come together. A design strategy for the screens needs to be developed and incorporated into the submission. It is considered that the communal amenity gable spaces on the western key worker block would be unlikely to be successful, and the possibility of incorporating these in to the adjoining flats might be more successful in the long term.

The Panel enjoyed the diagram and are excited by the Ed city concept. The design team have set up a strong concept and the panel encourage the team to develop the detail so that it delivers its character and potential. The panel consider that focus should be initially directed to the spaces in the site and feel that the applicants should be stronger and bolder about how the boulevard and square, as main components of the campus, are programmed and detailed.