



Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Review Meeting: Hatcham Road Design Code

Tuesday 7 September 2021

Video conference via Zoom

Group

Gurmeet Sian (chair)

Hazel Flynn

James Glancy

Saidat Oketunde

Victoria Oluwables

Peter Warren

Madison Westwood

Attendees

Tim Cutts London Borough of Southwark

Wing Lau London Borough of Southwark

Tom Bolton Frame Projects

Abigail Joseph Frame Projects

Meghna Patel Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Tyreece Asamoah Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Lucy Atkinson Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Hugh Balfour Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Shelene Byer Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Aaron Mo Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Alicia Chaumard London Borough of Southwark

Colin Wilson London Borough of Southwark

Confidentiality

As a public organisation the London Borough of Southwark 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.

Declarations of interest

Office Sian, a practice owned by Gurmeet Sian, Chair of the Old Kent Road Community Development Panel, is part of a development team employed by Southwark Council on a site within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, at the Ledbury Estate. Gurmeet works alongside the practice leading the team, Karakusevic Carson Architects, not directly for Southwark and does not take part in any design review of schemes on the Ledbury Estate or adjoining sites.

1. Site address

Hatcham and Ilderton Roads OKR16 site allocation

2. Presenting team

Vaughn Horsman	Farrells
Matias Piazza	Farrells
Tara Gbolade	Gbolade Design Studio
Delagah Dadbeh	Exterior Architecture

3. Planning authority's briefing

The council has been selected by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to take part in the testing of the National Model Design Code. The council is preparing a design code for Ilderton Road and the area around Hatcham Road and Penarth Street. The code will cover the design of new development and the character of streets including landscaping, footways, public spaces, servicing and the design of ground floor building frontages.

When completed, the design code will feed into the draft Old Kent Road area action plan (AAP). The AAP is the council's plan for managing growth and change in the area over the next 20 years, with the aim of delivering 20,000 new homes (including 5,000 new social rented homes) and 10,000 new jobs.

A design team has been procured to develop the Design Code in a 6-month programme. They have carried out several consultation workshops and a business presentation as part of the process, and will be submitting to MHCLG at the end of this month.

Southwark officers ask the panel to consider the following questions-

- Is the design code clear?
- Does the design code give enough guidance and certainty?
- Is the character of the area brought through in the design code?
- Does the design code give enough guidance for developers to work from?
- Does the design code establish a good ground floor strategy and how can it be improved?

4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel considers that the Design Code achieves clarity, providing developers with the guidance and certainty need to create an exciting new neighbourhood. The area has a strong history and culture, which the Design Code successfully identifies. There is a balance to be struck to ensure the Design Code is neither too prescriptive nor ambiguous, and that it enables creative development that nevertheless forms part of the area's wider character. The panel suggests that Southwark Council has an important role to play in promoting a narrative of a change for the Hatcham Road neighbourhood, and generating excitement anticipation about what is planned. Enabling businesses to operate alongside residential development will be key to the creation of a successful place. The extent to which the development provides recreational opportunities for residents, as well as visitors, will also be an important measure of success. Stronger links beyond the site could strengthen the Design Code, both to local schools and to the wider setting to the east of Ilderton Road. The proposed design approach to light industrial units will attract a different type of business to many of the current occupiers. The panel raises concerns that taller developments could overshadow the area's narrow streets. The ambitious sustainability proposals are very welcome. The panel suggests that landscape proposals should consider the vertical as well as the horizontal plane, and that care should also be taken that planting does not hinder street movement. The panel also asks for consideration of whether the number of new jobs projected for the neighbourhood is realistic. These comments are expanded upon below.

Place making

- The panel feels that the proposals to revitalise the Hatcham Road neighbourhood are exciting, and that the Design Code expresses a plan that could combine a working neighbourhood character with that of a potential destination. The Northern Quarter in Manchester is a good example of a place where the commercial and community uses have been balanced with light industrial uses, to create a vibrant location. However, balance is essential and, if the Hatcham Road area is forced to accommodate too many uses, it may undermine its potential.
- The panel suggests that Southwark Council should market the objectives of the Design Code as a long-term proposal and champion its narrative, both within the council and beyond. This would help to build the wider support that will be crucial to successful implementation.

Character and identity

- The panel welcomes the care taken in identifying the historical character of the area, its form, materials and past uses. The panel agrees that there is a balance to be struck, so that the Design Code is not too prescriptive or ambiguous. However, it emphasises the importance of ensuring it is equipped to deliver a coherent place with a communal atmosphere.

- The panel considers that the Design Code captures the character and identity of the Hatcham Road clearly and effectively, including the way it describes the current industrial buildings, with pitched parapets, chimneys and metalwork. It supports the use of a subdued colour palette and references to industrial detailing to reflect this character.
- The panel agrees that the Design Code should promote a unifying character for development in the area, but should aim to avoid creating buildings that are too homogeneous. There may be room to allow more façade variation, to give current occupants greater prominence in the new development.
- Before the Second World War the Hatcham Road neighbourhood was residential, with a tight Victorian grid of streets. The panel suggests that more attention could be given to this original land use pattern. The character of the place before it became industrial could also be used to inform the residential character of new developments.
- The panel raises concern that tall developments risk overshadowing relatively narrow streets, which would undermine the character and appeal of the area.
- The panel agrees that giving the area a definite name could help to reinforce its sense of place. Suggestions include Hatcham or Penarth.

Connections

- Ilderton Road creates a barrier on the east side of the site. The panel asks if there is a way in which this road could be made more inviting for pedestrians, and accommodate the expected increase in residents as developments come forward. For example, the footpath on the west side of the road could be widened.
- Consideration should also be given to how the Hatcham Road area connects across Ilderton Road to the east, where the pre-war street grid continued. Southwark should consider how it can coordinate with Lewisham Council to strengthen east-west pedestrian routes connecting to green spaces and the future Surrey Canal Road Station.
- The panel suggests that the Design Code should include new, direct routes allowing children to access Ilderton Primary School and Pilgrim's Way Primary School without walking along the narrow and busy Ilderton Road.

Landscape and sustainability

- The panel is impressed by the comprehensive sustainability strategy included in the Design Code, and attention given to incorporating nature into the neighbourhood, and supports these proposals.
- It points out that Southwark has an important role to play in coordinating schemes in the neighbourhood, so that collectively they contribute to developing the public realm, through street improvements, parklets and other green spaces.

- The panel supports the inclusion of approaches such as the greening of pavements, which are already being incorporated into consented schemes nearby.

Community benefit

- As well as attracting jobs and visitors to the area, the panel suggests that more thought should be given to how the area can provide facilities to encourage residents to remain in the area, rather than needing to go elsewhere, for leisure and recreation. The provision of recreational facilities for residents will be a significant measure of the Design Code's success. This could include infrastructure such as bicycle parking.
- Although the timescales for the Design Code may not allow further consultation, the panel suggests that schools and faith groups should also be engaged in future, if this is taken forward.
- The panel asks for assurances that the neighbourhood has the capacity to deliver the additional 1,700 jobs proposed.

Light industrial uses

- The panel supports the proposals for developers to provide shell and core light industrial units, with maximum flexibility for users to adapt them. It notes the importance of avoiding clutter in these spaces, such as down stand beams and columns, so the use of spaces is not restricted.

Streets and servicing

- The panel welcomes the proposals for one-way traffic movement and shared pavements, but asks that the way businesses operate is carefully considered. Many units will be in use around 24/7, and it will be difficult to balance and accommodate their needs, for example for late night vehicle movements, with those of residents. The panel suggests that guidance is provided on the way in which delivery times are managed to avoid disturbance to residents.
- The panel supports the aim for all servicing areas to be internal, but notes that this is likely to result in changes to the current tenant mix. For example, such spaces are less likely to be viable for existing businesses, such as car mechanics and welders. On the other hand, new space layouts will attract new types of tenants.

Next steps

The Community Review Panel is available, if required, to provide further advice on the Design Code at a later stage.