



Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Formal Review: 6-12 Verney Road and 25 Mandela Way

Monday 30 January 2023
231 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5LU

Group

Gurmeet Sian (chair)
Julia Feeney
James Glancy
Mike Levitt
Aaron Mo
Saidat Oketunde
Sydney Simms
Peter Warren

Attendees

Paul Case	British Land
Miles Price	British Land
Ian Perrell	The Harris Partnership
Gabrielle Appiah	Aecom
Chris Stanton	Building Design Partnership
Gillian Nicks	DP9
Greg Callahan	Stantec
Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Ewan Lawless	London Borough of Southwark
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Abigail Joseph	Frame Projects
Gail Ross	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Tyreece Asamoah	
Hugh Balfour	
Shelene Byer	
Hazel Flynn	
Victoria Oluwables	
Madison Westwood	
Troy Davies	London Borough of Southwark
Wing Lau	London Borough of Southwark
Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark

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1. Project name and site address

6-12 Verney Road, London SE16 3DH
25 Mandela Way, London SE1 5SS

2. Presenting team

Paul Case	British Land
Miles Price	British Land
Ian Perrell	The Harris Partnership
Gabrielle Appiah	Aecom
Chris Stanton	Building Design Partnership
Gillian Nicks	DP9
Greg Callahan	Stantec

3. Planning authority briefing

6-12 Verney Road

The site covers approximately 0.74 hectares and is surrounded by primarily industrial uses. It is located in the wider setting of the Grade II listed Canal Grove Cottages. The land sits in a highly urban location which is in close proximity to the classified arterial routes of Old Kent Road and Rotherhithe New Road. It also forms part of site allocation OKR 13 of the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (OKR AAP) and aims to support the pedestrianisation of Verney Road. The scheme will be serviced from Verney Way to prevent servicing vehicles passing John Keats Primary School and the residents of Bermondsey Works, and to help ensure delivery of Surrey Canal Park.

25 Mandela Way

The site covers approximately 0.73 hectares and is surrounded by primarily industrial and commercial uses to the north, east, and west, with residential use to the south on Marcia Road. It sits in the wider setting of the Thomas A'Becket and High Street Conservation Area. The land is located off Old Kent Road and is serviced by an access lane off Mandela Way. It forms part of site allocation OKR 3 of the OKR AAP and aims to support the provision of light industrial and distribution-based uses. The scheme will provide an active frontage facing onto Dunton Road.

The redevelopment for each site comprises four-storey buildings providing innovative logistics, storage and distribution space. The proposals aim to achieve functional, flexible, high quality sustainable designs that are suited to their highly urban location. Each site will have its own individual application.

The council asked for the panel's views on the scale, height and massing of the proposed buildings on each site. The panel was also invited to comment on whether it had any concerns about the proposed use and operation, or the contribution of the sites to the wider area action plan.



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4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel universally supports both schemes and has no concerns regarding the proposed use for the sites, providing they are operationally well managed in terms of vehicular movement, sustainable transport vehicles are used at both sites, and the facility is managed ethically in terms of employment.

The panel likes the transparency and materiality of the buildings, particularly where views of the activities within are afforded from street level. However, it would like to see more active uses incorporated on the Dunton Road frontage of the 25 Mandela Way scheme to increase footfall and movement as this sits directly opposite the site allocated for a new Bakerloo Line Station. The panel also feels the design of the upper floors of the Verney Road scheme is too dominant, and suggests reducing the emphasis on a warehouse aesthetic to break down their scale, perhaps considering more Victorian brick railway architecture as a precedent. The panel also suggests that both buildings could be designed to be more architecturally distinctive and to play a greater role as local landmarks.

The panel welcomes the team's focus on enabling local employment at both sites. The panel feels it is important that the affordable workspace provision is carefully designed for use by the community and local businesses. These comments are expanded below.

Use and management

- The panel welcomes the sustainable transport strategies for both sites, and the use of smaller electric vehicles and cargo bikes in lieu of white vans. It asks for assurances that this sustainable transport approach will continue on both sites in the long-term, under future occupiers. There is a risk that, were this to change, the two sites could generate unacceptable disruption for nearby residents.
- The planned area of affordable workspace proposed in both schemes is very large. It therefore needs to be well planned and well equipped to ensure it can cater for a variety of uses, and for the multiple occupancies anticipated. The panel considers it important that the workspace benefits local businesses and the local community.
- The Dunton Road frontage of the 25 Mandela Way scheme will form a prominent part of the street frontage directly opposite the entrance to the proposed Burgess Park Bakerloo Line station. The panel feels that this frontage should be better activated. It suggests considering locally valuable uses are considered that could increase footfall, for example a post office or a bike shop.



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- The panel also suggests that relocation of some of the affordable work space to the ground floor frontage of Dunton Road could also generate activity at street level.
- Good operational management of the facilities will be critical to ensure transport to and from the buildings does not create local congestion on the roads. The panel are particularly concerned about the impact of large HGVs that will enter and exit the facility throughout the day. While it accepts the proposals for managing vehicles, it emphasises that the scheme's success will depend on these being delivered.
- The panel also emphasises the need to embed an ethical approach to employment in the planning application for the sites, to provide confidence that the focus on local employment will be maintained, and that the facilities will not become standardised distribution facilities offering poor quality jobs.

Massing and architecture

- The panel supports the stepping back of the 25 Mandela Way scheme from the Marcia Road residential properties as a successful way to preserve privacy and avoid overlooking.
- The panel welcomes the transparency of the buildings at street level which enables views of the activity within. It also likes the amount of natural daylight shown internally in precedent images, and encourages the delivery of well-lit working environments.
- The panel feels that the façades on the upper levels of the Verney Road scheme lack variety and are too dominant in appearance. It suggests revisiting the façade design to break down the building scale, potentially incorporating more influence from the Victorian brick railway architecture previously found on the site, and shown as a precedent.
- The panel also asks whether there is scope for both buildings to be more visible, and to be designed to stand out more. It suggests there is scope for both to create local landmarks, potentially benefitting both the neighbourhood by providing distinctive structures that are currently lacking, and advertising the operators and owners.

Parking

- The panel queries whether a single disabled parking space is sufficient for each site, given the number of people that will be employed (295 at Mandela Way and 400 on Verney Road). However, it welcomes the decision to provide no other parking provision on the sites, to encourage sustainable travel to work and local employment.



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Landscape

- The panel supports the green buffer zone proposed for the boundary with the Marcia Road residents for the 25 Mandela Way scheme, but queries whether more green space could also be introduced at 6-12 Verney Road.

Community involvement

- The panel welcomes the encouragement of local employment at both sites once they are in use, as well as during construction.

Next steps

- The panel is confident that its comments can be addressed in discussions with Southwark officers.

