

Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Community Review: 78-94 Ormside Street

Monday 10 July 2023

Treasure House, 682 Old Kent Road, London SE15 1JF

Group

Gurmeet Sian (chair)	
Hugh Balfour	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Julia Feeney	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Hazel Flynn	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Mike Levitt	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Saidat Oketunde	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Sydney Simms	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel

Attendees

Patrick Cronin	London Borough of Southwark
Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Abigail Joseph	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Tyreece Asamoah	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Shelene Byer	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
James Glancy	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Aaron Mo	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Victoria Oluwables	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Peter Warren	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Madison Westwood	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Lauretta Doku	London Borough of Southwark
Jess Potter	London Borough of Southwark

Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. 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.

1. Project name and site address

78-94 Ormside Street, London SE15 1TF

2. Presenting team

Lewis Lovedale	Stephen Davy Peter Smith Architects
Peter Smith	Stephen Davy Peter Smith Architects
Max Plotnek	MJP Planning

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is currently occupied by a single two-storey building with a double frontage onto Ormside Street and Manor Grove. The premises was formerly a printworks but is now vacant. It is in poor condition with no notable architectural merit and would not be retained.

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing building on the site and construction of a new part-nine storey and part-seven storey mixed-use development. The applicant has extant planning permission for a redevelopment to provide a mixed-use building of 10 storeys, containing 56 homes and 2,058 sqm of flexible commercial floorspace. This scheme contained a basement, which accommodated approximately one third of the flexible commercial floorspace. The applicant now proposes an alternative scheme with no basement.

A revised scheme is now proposed that would deliver 49 homes in a range of sizes (with at least 35 per cent of these in affordable tenures), along with approximately 1,250 sqm of commercial floorspace. This would be supported by play and communal space for residents, provision for deliveries and servicing, cycle storage and on-site wheelchair parking.

The scale and mass of the building addresses the site location on the corner junction between Ormside Street and Manor Grove, with the tallest element at this location, stepping down to the adjacent sites to the north and the east. This approach follows the now lapsed permission and the masterplan illustrated in the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan, aiming to reflect aspirations for the future development for the area.

Council officers are generally supportive of the proposals, but asked for the panel's views on a number of issues: the potential for active frontages; the amount of commercial floorspace; whether its design is practical; the layout of flats, dual aspect performance, quality of outlook; private outdoor amenity space, communal roof terrace and play provision; proposed heights; and architectural design and character.

4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel supports the proposals, which it thinks can make a positive contribution to the area, but raises specific points about commercial units, residential accommodation and amenity space. The panel considers the architecture imaginative, interesting and varied, and feels that the heights are appropriate.

The panel asks that 3 and 4-bedroom units are allocated for social rent to help meet local need, and that social rent units are distributed around the development rather than concentrated on a single floor. Family-sized units should also be located next to play space, rather than one-bedroom units. The roof garden is a positive feature, but work is needed to consider how it can serve the needs of different age groups. The panel suggests that growing space is also included. It is essential that amenity space can be affordably maintained in the long term, with a maintenance plan to show how this will be achieved.

A strategy is needed to ensure commercial units are designed to meet the needs of potential occupiers, informed by expert advice and consultation with local businesses. Units are potentially too large for many businesses and should be as flexible as possible, for example allowing vehicle storage. Businesses currently operating in the area which require vehicle transit should be considered as potential occupiers.

The panel asks Southwark officers to consider how facilities such as shops and cafés can be provided for new residents, potentially in buildings currently designed solely for commercial use. The panel also asks Southwark to consider how demand for street parking generated by new residents can be managed.

These points are expanded below.

Architecture and height

- The panel supports the architectural approach, which adds interest and character and stands out from more standard designs elsewhere. The way the site's history has inspired the approach is appreciated, and the panel also likes the recessed balconies, and varied textures, materials and colours.
- The panel also thinks the proposed heights are appropriate for the location.

Commercial units

- The panel is concerned that the commercial units lack a clear design strategy, and that they are not configured with the right users in mind. The spaces seem too large for the smaller firms who are expected to occupy them.

- The panel is also concerned that the design excludes businesses that require vehicle transit in and out of their premises, which includes many of those currently based in the area. There is a risk that businesses dependent on access to central London and rapid turnover, currently based on Ilderton Road, will be designed out of the area.
- It asks that expert analysis is used to show how these units can be designed to meet local demand, to help ensure that are occupied once completed.
- The panel also suggests that the applicant should engage with local businesses to help understand the nature of demand in the area, and the type of spaces that are needed.
- The panel asks that units are designed to be as flexible as possible, to maximise the range of businesses that could use them. For example, a roller door onto the service yard allowing a business to store a vehicle inside at night could make the spaces significantly more adaptable.

Residential quality

- The panel questions the decision to locate the residential units for social rent together. It believes distributing these flats throughout the development will create a more integrated community, and asks the applicant to challenge registered social landlords who make this a management requirement.
- The panel emphasises the demand for family-sized units for social rent in the area. The 3 and 4-bedroom units should be allocated as social rather than private for sale housing to help meet this need.
- The panel is concerned that one-bedroom flats located next to the communal amenity and play space will suffer noise problems. They are more likely to be inhabited by more vulnerable residents. It would be more logical to situate 3 and 4-bedroom flats, likely to be occupied by families, next to the play space which would give them direct access as well as reducing the risk of disruption.
- The panel points out that, although future development is expected, the site will be located next to an industrial unit for some time at least. It is therefore important to ensure flats are effectively soundproofed so the quality of life for residents is not undermined by living in a working industrial setting.

Local facilities

- The panel feels that retail space is needed in the area. Although the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan requires commercial space in Sub-Area 4, the closest shops are some distance away. The area also lacks a café space, which would also serve employees working in commercial units.

- The lack of local facilities is likely to reduce quality of life for new residents and particularly impact older people and those who are less mobile. The panel asks Southwark officers to consider how facilities can be provided for the area, in the same way that Victorian development incorporated corner shops and pubs. The 78-94 Ormside Street proposals could include a retail unit or café.

Amenity space

- The panel supports the provision of a communal roof terrace, which it thinks is a very positive addition. It also likes the potential for the podium shared amenity space to connect to outdoor space in a future development.
- However, it suggests the landscape design should be developed further to consider how different age groups will use the space together, and to propose a strategy that shows how their needs can be served.
- The panel suggests that communal planters should be considered for the communal amenity spaces. Growing is likely to be popular and could help bring residents together. Large planters could be included to provide space to grow fruit and vegetables.
- The panel is pleased to see that the roof terrace includes play space. However, it cautions against sand play area, which is likely to create maintenance problems.
- The panel emphasises the importance of a robust landscape design that can be effectively maintained over a long period of time and will not place a disproportionate burden on service charges. A maintenance plan should be developed for the communal amenity space to show how this will be addressed, and included as a condition in any planning permission.

Parking

- The panel appreciates that the development is subject to Southwark Council's car-free policy. However, it notes that the completed development at 62 Hatcham Road, also car-free, has generated significant demand from residents to park in surrounding streets and asks the applicant and Southwark officers to consider how this can be managed for 78-94 Ormside Street.
- The panel also notes the importance of considering where tradespeople working at properties in the development can park their vehicles. While the proposals include short-stay parking spaces for delivery vehicles parking, the panel is concerned that vehicles that to park all day will have nowhere to go.

Next steps

The panel is available to review the proposals again, if required.