



Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Community Review: Rich Industrial Estate

Monday 20 May 2024
Rich Industrial Estate, Southwark, SE1 5TE

Panel

Gurmeet Sian (chair)
David Stoker
Lin Vong
Margaret Higgins
Mohammed Bentaleb
Rahul Mani
Rebecca Lefort
Sarah Osei
Simon Donovan
Sydney Simms

Attendees

Connor Fitzgerald	London Borough of Southwark
Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Yingli Tang	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark
Jessica Potter	London Borough of Southwark
Lauretta Doku	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

Rich Industrial Estate, Crimscott Street and Willow Walk, Southwark, SE1 5TE

2. Presenting team

Marion Clayfield	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Ricardo Rossetti	London Square
Oscar Mansfield Jones	DP9

4. Planning authority briefing

The application site for Phase 3 of the Rich Estate Redevelopment falls within Sub Area 2 of the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (AAP).

The AAP is seeking to provide 20,000 new homes, including 7,000 affordable homes, as well as 10,000 new jobs. Growth in the area will be further driven by the forthcoming Bakerloo line extension. The AAP identifies Sub Area 2, which the application site falls within, as having capacity to provide 760 new homes and generate 2,179 new jobs.

The AAP specifies that buildings fronting onto Crimscott Street should be between six and eight storeys high. The AAP is nearing the final stages of preparation and is therefore attributed significant weight in the determination of any planning application for this site.

The site forms part of the wider Rich Industrial Estate which was granted planning permission on the 7 December 2016 for redevelopment (ref. 15/AP/2474). The scheme being presented to the Community Review Panel is intended to be a 'drop-in' application providing 183 residential units, of which 37.3% would be socially rented tenure. The wider Rich Industrial Estate would continue to be developed as per the 2016 permission which is nearing the final stages of implementation. There are now residents living in accommodation within the neighbouring plots on the estate, and a number of the commercial units are occupied.

Southwark planning officers asked for the panel's views on the quality of the proposed residential development and associated landscape design.

5. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The Community Review Panel warmly welcomes the proposals for this part of the Rich Industrial Estate. The panel appreciates the care with which the architecture has been designed and likes its industrial character. The variety of residential units is also positive. The panel's main concern is the extent to which the scheme feels part of the wider Old Kent Road area. Although there are public routes through the Rich Industrial Estate, gated entrances make these feel private. There is also not yet much in the way of cafes, restaurants or shops to draw people in to use the public spaces. At a detailed level, the panel supports the use of brickwork, painted metal windows, and the variety of inset and projecting balconies. Where there are large windows, the risk of overheating should be considered. The panel is impressed by the landscapes that have already been completed to date, which seem well maintained. Whilst the proposed shared private garden will be valuable to residents, the panel notes that children passing by may feel frustrated if they can see in but not access this space. The arts centre that is already open on site could be better publicised, for example through building links with local schools. The panel suggests that offering commercial units of smaller sizes may make these more attractive to local businesses – another way of knitting the scheme into the Old Kent Road area. It also notes that the lack of parking may limit the ability of some people from the surrounding area to use shops, cafes or the arts centre. These comments are expanded below.

Integration into the Old Kent Road area

- The panel admires the quality of the completed development plots and landscape design at the Rich Industrial Estate. However, it does not think these feel well integrated into the wider Old Kent Road area.
- It asks for further thought about how people from the surrounding area could be made to feel welcome to walk through the site, and enjoy its facilities.
- Gated entrances give the impression that the routes and spaces are private – although they are intended to be public.
- The panel recommends that the gates should be opened during the day, with retractable bollards to control vehicle access. The gates could then be closed at night if required for security.
- It also encourages more thought about how shops, cafes, affordable workspace and community uses could be brought into the ground floor spaces.
- For example, a café where families could sit outside and watch their children play, would allow them to enjoy the new public spaces.

- Improved signage could also help make it clear that there are public routes through the site.

Architecture

- The panel is supportive of the architecture proposed, with thinks this will fit well with the character of the area.
- The brickwork, painted metal framed windows, and precast concrete lintels are successful in responding to the historic industrial buildings on the site.
- The faceted form of elevations facing Crimscott Road add welcome interest.
- The variety of balconies, some inset and some projecting, also add character, as well as providing private outdoor space for residents.
- Where there are large windows facing south or west, the panel asks for careful thought about overheating.

Landscape

- The panel is impressed by the landscapes that have already been completed at the Rich Industrial Estate, which seem well maintained.
- There are a mix of public and shared private spaces, which the panel appreciates are needed for residents.
- A shared private garden with payable elements is part of the current proposals. This will be valuable to residents, but panel noted that it could be frustrating for children passing by if they can see into this space, but not access it.

Arts centre

- Although the Community Review Panel members live in the area, most were unaware of the arts centre which is already open.
- It would encourage more publicity about the arts centre, for example through building links with local schools.

Commercial units

- The panel understands that the commercial units already completed have been slow to let. It suggests that larger units may not be suited to local businesses, who may prefer smaller units of around 200 or 250 sq ft.
- Bringing more community run businesses onto the site would help make it feel better integrated into the Old Kent Road area.

- Only wheelchair accessible parking is provided as part of the scheme. This may limit the ability of some people from the surrounding area to visit shops, cafes or the arts centre.
- The panel encourages the Council and applicant to consider how short stay parking could be provided, giving inclusive access to the commercial uses.

Next steps

- The panel asks the applicant team to consider its comments in liaison with Southwark planning officers, and looks forward to seeing the scheme built.