

Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Community Review: 2-22 Ossory Road and Credon House

Monday 23 April 2025

231 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5LU

Panel

Gurmeet Sian (chair)

Mike Levitt

Sarah Osei

Daniel Quinn

Attendees

Alex Cameron

London Borough of Southwark

Tim Cutts

London Borough of Southwark

Colin Wilson

London Borough of Southwark

Chloe McFarlane

Grosvenor (observing)

Kirsty McMullan

Frame Projects

Yingli Tang

Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Jessica 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

The proposals involve the redevelopment of three linked sites within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area:

- 2-10 Ossory Road, SE1 5AN
- 14-22 Ossory Road, SE1 5AN
- Credon House, Verney Road, SE16 3DA

2. Presenting team

Stuart Black	Summix Capital
Henry Holme	Summix Capital
Manasijevic Nenad	TP Bennett
Nick Rutherford	TP Bennett
Helena Burt	Rolfe Judd Planning
Ellis Heath	Rolfe Judd Planning
Sean Tickle	Rolfe Judd Planning
Stuart King	Terrapin Group

3. Planning authority briefing

The Ossory Road sites are in the northwestern corner of Sub Area 2, as defined by the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan (OKR AAP). They are also part of site allocation OKR 10, which expects any redevelopment of the site to provide new homes and light industrial uses. The Credon House site is in the northeastern corner of Sub Area 3 in the OKR AAP. It is also within site allocation OKR 13, which expects any development on the site to provide new homes and activate the Old Kent Road high street frontage.

At Ossory Road, two buildings are proposed at 12 and 13 storeys tall. These would provide 2,313 square metres of light industrial floorspace across the ground, first, and second floors, and 454 student accommodation rooms on the upper levels, alongside shared facilities. The proposals at Credon House would provide a 14 storey building comprising 26 affordable social rented homes. All three sites will also include ancillary plant, amenity spaces, and cycle and refuse stores. The development qualifies as contributing to Phase 1 of the Old Kent Road Housing Delivery Pipeline.

25 per cent affordable housing is provided across the three linked sites. The development would replace a similar, previously consented scheme. The main changes to the proposals since the consent are: an increase in the building height at Credon House; student accommodation instead of conventional C3 housing at Ossory Road; and adapting the designs to meet current fire safety building regulations.

Officers asked for the panel's comments on the proposed uses and whether they will create mixed and balanced communities, as well as on the height and massing, quality of housing, and façade treatment.

4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The Community Review Panel supports the proposals for the Ossory Road and Credon House sites, but further work is needed to embed the development into Old Kent Road.

The architecture is clean and attractive, but should go further to reflect the unique character of the local area. A place-specific identity should be developed in response to the vibrant social, physical and historical context. Use of colour, signage, materiality and active ground floor frontages would help to draw people in and feel safe at night. The co-location strategy is supported, but care should be taken to make the industrial units as usable and flexible as possible. The ability for future tenants to subdivide their spaces, add mezzanines, and control their loading and deliveries will help to attract a wider range of tenants, including smaller businesses. Sufficient extract and sound proofing will also be important, and will reduce impact on residents. The panel understands the current demand for student accommodation in the area, but asks that the scheme is designed to be adaptable to other uses in the future. More should be done to encourage students to integrate and to invite the wider community into the development, perhaps through a small space on the ground floor that brings people together. The clustering of student amenity spaces in one building could create a barrier for those living in the other building to access them. A more generous amenity offer at 14-22 Ossory Road and greater clarity on the security arrangements would help. The panel is comfortable with the increase in height at Credon House. Further thought is needed on the balcony placement and design to mitigate noise disruption for residents and ensure that they are usable. Open plan internal layouts could also be considered.

Character

- The external appearance of the three buildings is clean, attractive, and recognisable as London architecture. The window detailing, referencing the local vernacular, is also positive and brings more character to the proposals.
- However, the scheme does not yet go far enough to create an identity that is specific to Old Kent Road. The panel asks for further thought about what makes this development different from similar schemes elsewhere in the city.
- In the panel's view, Old Kent Road's industrial heritage, diverse communities, varied high street shops, and colourfulness – for example, the mural recently completed on Old Kent Road bridge – are what make the area unique. The scheme should build on these aspects for a more place-specific and playful approach.
- As most people would not have a reason to turn off Old Kent Road and walk down Ossory Road, the scheme should do more to draw people in. Active

ground floor frontages, offering glimpses of the light industrial activities within, would help to create interest.

- The project team should also test how the development will appear during the hours of darkness when the ground floor units are not in use. It would be beneficial if the frontage design and security arrangements allow the public to see in at night and help to make the street feel safe.
- To strengthen the connection to the site's heritage, the architectural character of the buildings at Ossory Road should emphasise the industrial use more than the residential.
- The panel suggests developing an aesthetic that complements The Bottle Factory maker space building on the eastern side of Ossory Road, and the cobbled context of the street. Credon House can be more residential in nature.
- The panel also suggests selective use of bright colours as part of a design response appropriate to this predominantly young area. The bright orange used in Hackney Wick, for instance, shows how colour can contribute to placemaking and reflect the vibrancy of the local community.
- Carefully designed signage, lighting, and materiality will also help the development to be inviting and of its place.

Industrial units

- The panel welcomes the co-location of light industrial and residential uses at Ossory Road, but is concerned that there may not be sufficient interest in the industrial units unless they are designed to be more flexible.
- The industrial spaces appear to be designed for large, single tenants to occupy an entire floor. The panel thinks that smaller units, for local businesses or makers, would be more in keeping with the character of Old Kent Road.
- An operator may be needed to manage a larger number of smaller units, but this scenario could create efficiencies by sharing bathrooms and kitchen facilities.
- The project team is also encouraged to continue discussions with The Bottle Factory about possible partnership to find suitable tenants.
- The scheme should be designed to accommodate the needs of future tenants, particularly if their work produces noise or smells. The panel asks that the best possible provisions are integrated into the proposals from the outset, removing the factors that could limit which kinds of businesses can work here.
- There should be sufficient extraction and sound proofing, ensuring that the businesses do not disturb residents, especially if they operate out of hours.

- The panel suggested that it would be beneficial if internal ceiling heights could enable the future addition of internal mezzanine levels, allowing businesses to grow without moving.
- Roller shutters should be considered for the unit entrances to deal with the practicalities of loading and unloading. These functional aspects will also have a visual impact that could help the scheme to feel more industrial, creative, and of its place.
- The parking strategy should be reconsidered. Businesses producing small but high value items, such as ceramics are likely to prefer the ability to load directly from their unit.

Ossory Road student accommodation

- The panel is concerned about the amount of student accommodation being added to the area, but understands that Southwark Council has assessed the demand and considers it to be significant. The Ossory Road buildings should be designed to be adaptable for other uses, if local needs change in the future.
- The panel asks for more work to help the students who will live here to integrate into the area. As well as bringing their spending power to local establishments, being part of the community will help to tackle student isolation.
- The scheme should also have a public offer to invite the wider community in. A small space on the ground floor of 2-10 or 14-22 Ossory Road could provide a place to bring people together, for example, an exhibition space. This could appeal to maker tenants, local artists and students, as well as the public.
- The panel understands the benefit of clustering the shared amenity spaces, but is concerned that asking students to move between the buildings could be a barrier to using the spaces. If most of the shared spaces are located at 2-10 Ossory Road, those living at 14-22 may not feel as welcome to use them.
- As the amenity spaces will be in highest demand in evenings, the students could feel unsafe moving between the buildings in the dark. There should also be more clarity on the external conditions on Ossory Road, such as whether it is gated at night and what lighting is provided.
- The panel appreciates that conversations have commenced with Secured By Design officers, and that a student management plan will be submitted as part of the planning application. However, it could be worth increasing in the amenity provision at 14-22 Ossory Road. The provision would not need to be equal in size or facilities to 2-10; a shared living room would offer somewhere to relax and socialise without having to go outside.

Credon House social housing

- The panel is comfortable with the increase in height at Credon House.
- It is concerned about the usability of the balconies. They face west, overlooking the Small Beer Brew Co. where noise from people or events could be disruptive. The panel also notes that in the near future, the brewery will become a noisy construction site.
- If there is no better location for the balconies, then winter gardens should be considered, to offer some acoustic protection from the changing site context.
- The panel thinks that residents will appreciate having morning light in their bedrooms and evening light in their living spaces, when they are most likely to occupy these parts of their home.
- The project team could consider an open plan layout for the kitchen, living and dining areas in the homes, as this could offer more flexible living.

Next steps

- The Old Kent Road Community Review Panel is available to review the scheme again should this be helpful to officers.