

28 June 2006

Phil McCutcheon
London Borough of Hackney
Dorothy Hodgkin House
London
E8 1HJ



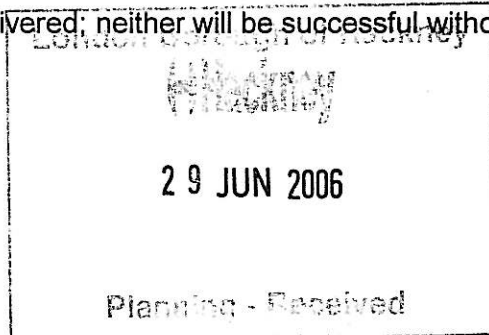
Our Ref: DR/L/12/3600

Dear Mr McCutcheon

HACKNEY: DALSTON LANE SOUTH
Your ref: 2006/0886

Thank you for consulting the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) about this proposal. This letter is CABE's formal response to the planning application for this scheme. CABE reviewed a previous version of this scheme and issued comments on 24 October 2005. Although many aspects of the proposal are different from that which we previously reviewed where our previous comments still apply they are reiterated here. The planning application drawings have been discussed with chair of the design review panel Paul Finch and members of design review staff at a meeting on 19th June 2006, and our views are as follows.

We welcome the opportunity to review this scheme again and note that the client and design team have responded positively to the comments we raised. As we have previously pointed out, this scheme forms a pair with the Dalston Interchange project. We are very supportive of and impressed by the close working arrangements between the two projects' public sector clients to deliver high quality investment in Dalston going beyond the provision of the new East London Line station to include a mixed-use development and a major new public space in an area with limited provision of high quality public spaces. We have also been impressed by the way in which the two design teams have worked alongside one another to make a proposition that amounts to far more than the sum of its parts for the existing and new residents of the area. The challenge for the clients is to ensure that both schemes are delivered; neither will be successful without the other.



Commission for Architecture
and the Built Environment

The government's advisor
on architecture, urban design
and public space

In terms of the masterplan of the two schemes, we think that the approach to the provision of a transport hub, a new public space with mixed use development around it, and the provision of significant housing development is convincing. We are particularly pleased to see that the two teams have concentrated on ensuring that the developments create a permeable network of streets and spaces. Broadly speaking, we think that the level of development proposed is acceptable for a scheme adjacent to and above a new underground station.



On this proposal we make the following comments.

Public open space

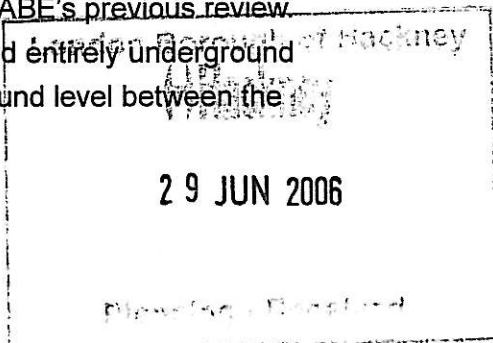
We think that the design team has responded very well to our previous comments. With the appointment of a landscape architect it is evident that a strong approach has been adopted that provides a clear and simple diagram with nevertheless a variety of landscapes within it capable of attracting a range of users. The drawings look extremely promising, however to provide open space of lasting value the management and maintenance of the public space is a significant consideration; particularly given that the area's public realm is not generally well tended. The clients and the local authority will need to establish now a clear means by which this significant new public square will be managed and maintained in the future; CABE would expect the local planning authority to ensure through conditions or other agreements provision for this. We are also pleased to note the presence of a new library on the square to help animate it and reinforce its strong public function. We hope that the library will be delivered with the same spirit of championing lasting quality.

Change in level

We think that the level change between the public space and the retail edge of the Dalston Interchange project has now been tackled well and appears to provide a simple, straightforward solution; particularly given the constraints imposed on the design team by the fixed level of the new underground station relative to the surrounding streets.

Housing

The housing proposal has changed considerably since CABE's previous review. We are pleased to note that the car-parking is now located entirely underground and access to it is located discreetly. The interface at ground level between the



retail and housing components is handled very well providing housing to on Beechwood Road and retail spaces onto the public square. The inclusion on the proposal of a range of flat types is to be applauded and will encourage a mixed community of residents. We note that the density is high, but believe that the area is capable of accommodating this intensity of development particularly given that the scheme provides a high quality public space and a range of local amenities (civic and commercial). The provision of communal spaces for the residents is also to be commended. As with the public space, the quality of life of the residents will be enhanced by the proper maintenance and management of these spaces, and assurances should be sought from the client on this matter. Equally the proper maintenance and management of the buildings themselves will contribute to the success of a scheme of this density.



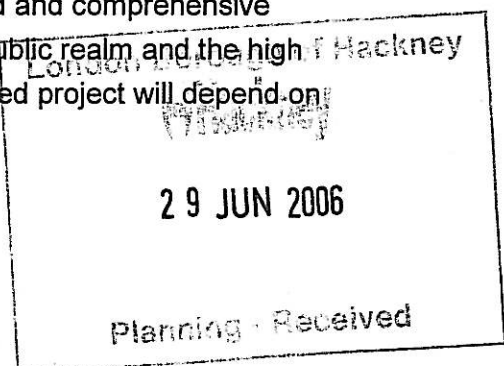
Creating lasting value

We would strongly urge the London Borough of Hackney to develop its Area Action Plan in close alignment with this project to ensure that the benefits this scheme will bring are thoroughly integrated into the plans for the surrounding areas. We are mindful that the public realm in this part of London is perceived to be unsafe and appears to be poorly maintained and managed; therefore we would also urge the Borough to look to all possible models to deliver lasting value. This is an area in which the public sector clients involved in the delivery of these projects need to work closely together, for example a Business Improvement District (BID) might provide a useful model.

Finally we would make the point that it is imperative that the project delivers a high quality place both in terms of buildings and public realm. As land owner the London Borough of Hackney is well placed to control the quality of the outcome. And, as a partner, the LDA must support and maintain this commitment to quality through delivery. The planning process can also play its part in this; CABE's publication '*Protecting Design Quality in Planning*' (2003) gives advice on this issue, it can be found at www.cabe.org.uk

Conclusion


CABE is pleased that our previous comments have been addressed so positively and we are very supportive of the scheme. Our only caveats are firstly, that to be successful this scheme requires a thoroughly considered and comprehensive approach to the management and maintenance of the public realm and the high density housing, and secondly the quality of the completed project will depend on



good details and materials and in this regard we would recommend that the architects are retained by the clients to completion.

If there is any point on which you would like clarification, please telephone me.

Yours sincerely



Selina Mason

Director of Architecture and Design Review

cc

Grahma Goymour

Arup Associates

Sarah Buckingham

English Heritage

Tobias Govert

GLA

David Ubaka

TFL

Declaration of interest

Paul Morrell, is a CABE Commissioner (not present at meeting): his company Davis Langdon are engaged as Cost Consultant for this project for the London Development Agency. In addition, they are acting as Cost Engineer for the East London Line in general, as part of the team lead by Programme Manager Parsons Brinckerhof for TFL.

