

14 January 2011

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PLANNING  
17 JAN 2011



Our ref: CSE-19324

Dear Louise Thayre

**Greenwich Council: Enderby Wharf (Ian Simpson Architects)**  
**Planning application reference: 10/3063/F**

Thank you for consulting the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) about this proposal. Following a site visit, a meeting with the design team and the local authority and a previous panel review, the planning application drawings were considered at an internal review meeting on 20 December 2010 chaired by Jim Eyre, with panel member Tim Ronalds, and design review staff. CABE's views, which supersede all views that may have been expressed previously, are set out below. This is our formal response to the planning application.

*Summary*

We commend the design team for its rigorous approach in designing this scheme. The development's coherent relationship with the river and its clear hierarchy of public, semi-public and private spaces and pedestrian routes results in a scheme with a clear and simple concept that makes the most of the site. However, we have some concerns, in particular, about that the scale and massing of the development at the northern and eastern boundaries. We are also not convinced about the architectural approach to the residential blocks and insufficient detail has been provided about the design of the hotel and cruise liner terminal and in relation to the public realm and landscaping scheme. We think that these issues should be resolved prior to planning permission being granted.

*Site layout*

Overall, we think the arrangement of the buildings on the site presents a strong diagram that has a logical relationship to the cruise ships and the river. We consider



that the arrangement of the hotel, cruise liner terminal and Enderby House as three separate buildings is successful and that these buildings have a coherent relationship with the adjacent residential blocks. We are less convinced however, that the massing of the development adjacent to the northern boundary of the site works with the industrial area to the north. We question whether it is desirable to build right up to the boundary of the site at this point given the existing land use and long term development of the neighbouring site. We are similarly concerned about the inclusion of numerous windows within this elevation. We feel that this part of the development should be reconsidered.



The scheme provides a clear hierarchy of public spaces, semi-private courtyards and private gardens and a coherent arrangement of pedestrian routes through the site. The approach into the site from Blackwall Lane to the east is an important entrance. To create a sense of place for people arriving at the terminal, it is important that this route is active with pedestrians and vehicles and has a character that is as conducive to the cruise terminal as it is to a residential development. The local planning authority should make certain that the detailed design of this route is of sufficient quality to ensure that a strong character and sense of place is achieved.

Whilst the main east-west route into the site is important, we feel that the design should not focus on this element to the detriment of other routes and spaces within the site. It is not clear, for example, how residents will access local shops, services and facilities. It is essential to the success of the scheme as a place to live that alternative routes connect up with existing pedestrian and cycle routes, and they are legible, accessible and safe, making it easy for people to find their way into, out of and through the development.

#### *Scale and massing*

We feel that the scale and massing of the residential blocks fronting onto the river is appropriate and is justified due to the long views of the development across the river. However, we are not convinced that the scale and massing of the residential blocks along Christchurch Way is appropriate in this location. It is not clear why the blocks are the height that they are. There is a significant height difference between the proposed buildings compared to the existing ones which we feel is unnecessarily dominant and could have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of existing residents.

#### *Architecture*

We support the overall architectural approach to the upper floors of the residential blocks, with the use of different materials and colour schemes for the 'river facing elevations', 'land facing elevations' and Christchurch Way buildings. However we are not convinced about the relationship between the upper storeys and the masonry



plinth base of the blocks. Specifically we are concerned about the way the upper storeys overhang the masonry plinth. We feel that this overhang appears oppressive and too relentless. We also consider that the distinction in the architectural expression between the upper storeys, occupied by predominantly private housing, and the masonry plinth base, occupied by predominantly affordable housing, could heighten the distinction between the private housing and the affordable housing which could be too hierarchical and derisive. We feel that this contrast in architectural expression between base and upper elevations should be resolved prior to planning permission being granted.



Whilst we consider that the arrangement of the hotel, cruise liner terminal and Enderby House is successful, we are not convinced that these buildings work architecturally as a suite of buildings. Their design is not sufficiently progressed, with limited information provided about the materials and detailing of the elevations and the character of the surrounding public realm. Further work is required to ensure that the detailed design of these buildings is of sufficient quality to reflect the setting of the listed Enderby House and their position as part of an international gateway to London. The success of the redevelopment of this site will depend upon the delivery of high quality architecture, design and construction throughout the procurement and construction phases.

#### *Public realm and landscape design*

We think that the hierarchy of public spaces and the differentiation between public and private spaces is clear. However there is a lack of information about the detailed design of the public realm and landscaping scheme, for example what is the boundary treatment between the public, semi-private and private spaces? The detailed design of these spaces and consideration of how these areas will be used at different times – when the cruise liner terminal is in operation and also when it is a quiet residential area will be very important to the success of the scheme as a whole. The local planning authority should make certain that the detailed design of the public realm and landscaping is delivered to a high level of quality.

We support the location of residential entrances onto the street to activate the building frontages. It is important that the interface between the buildings and the outdoor spaces is human in scale where people are made to feel welcome and safe. Again the quality of the detailed design of the street will be important. The local planning authority should also be satisfied that the impact of the buildings on the amenity of the outdoor spaces is acceptable. We are concerned that these spaces could be overshadowed and windswept and as such of poor amenity value.



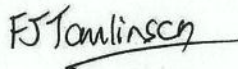
### Residential amenity

We commend the quality of the internal layout of the residential blocks comprising a limited number of apartments accessed off each stair / lift core, and the provision of a large number of double aspect units. However, we are concerned about the impact of a scheme of this density, and specifically the likely surges of vehicular movements corresponding with the arrival and departure of cruise liners, and how this could adversely affect the amenity of residents. These vehicular movements will need to be carefully managed to limit the level of disturbance to residents and the local planning authority should ensure that suitable management arrangements are put in place.

To ensure that residents have sufficient amenity space and access to the riverside throughout the phased construction of the scheme it will be important to ensure that the public realm is delivered in association with the construction of each residential block. The local planning authority should also be satisfied that the capacity of public transport and local services and facilities is sufficient to meet the needs of the increase in resident population in the area, both from the Enderby Wharf site and neighbouring sites.

Please keep CABE in touch with the progress of this scheme. If there is any point that requires clarification, please telephone me.

Yours sincerely



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cc	Ian Simpson	Ian Simpson Architects
	Malcolm Woods	English Heritage
	Matt Murphy	Design for London
	Kevin Reid	GLA

### Declaration of interest

Liz Peace is a CABE commissioner and is also chief executive of the British Property Federation. In this role, she does not have direct involvement in development schemes proposed by Federation members.

### Public scheme

As this scheme is the subject of a planning application, we will publish our views on our website, [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

### Affiliated panels

CABE is affiliated with independent design review panels which commits them all to shared values of service, the foundation of which are the 10 key principles for design review. Further information on affiliation can be found by visiting our website: [www.cabe.org.uk/design-review/regional](http://www.cabe.org.uk/design-review/regional)

