

Voice 4 Deptford – Objections to Convoys Wharf – 2020 Revisions

Phase 1 – Revisions to Applications for Plots 08, 15 & 22

It looks, from the **Site Wide Design Proposal**, as if the developer wants to bring more variety into the design and materials of the buildings, that Voice 4 Deptford have been asking for, taking away the 'anywhere' look. However, they are not applying it to Plot 08 and only to a certain extent to Plot 15 which are the main RMAs under consideration.

Where they refer to Pepys estate, we point out that the Pepys estate had originally one third green and public space and greater density than proposed for Convoys Wharf. This was achieved through a creative approach to the design of the interior space which was supported by the exterior architecture. (Design follows function.) Everyone was provided with open views on to an immediate green space, together with middle and longer views.

This is not the case with what is proposed on Convoys Wharf. Plot 08 blocks everything, with its positioning, scale and size/density, the views for everyone. It blocks looking in to the site as a long vista from Deptford High Street to the River Thames foreshore. It blocks looking out for all residents to relate to their immediate new location and the established existing surroundings. It is in close proximity to 5 Listed Heritage assets on the site. Yet its bland and bulky 'anywhere' design is a major imposition. Quotes from Initial Cultural Strategy, November 2019: "It is set to a different geometry and scale to the Olympia building deliberately ...". "There is limited scope for incorporating children's play within the limited street frontage delivered as part of Plot 08 RMA".

Voice 4 Deptford would remove the building on Plot 08 entirely. To transform it into green open public space connecting with the Olympia building and incorporating a designated children's play area. This would be like removing a boulder that was blocking a stream. It would mean that, approaching from Deptford High Street, Convoys Wharf would open up to receive people and the other blocks would have a better relationship to a central space. The site would be transformed and become a much more desirable and pleasant place to live. It would be more able to deliver the kind of activities that Deptford people are calling for, which would also be to the advantage of new residents.

The buildings closer to the river also need to a much better design to relate to the heritage of the site, as a former Royal Dockyard on the River Thames. This is the most important and primary reference point and should not be lost in bland abstraction; as for example the proposed interim restaurant building on the jetty for Plot 22.

Plot 15, has been changed to now have more **Affordable Rent** than Affordable Shared Ownership (**Intermediate**). With 65 units for Rent & 59 Intermediate (previously 60 units for Rent & 64 Intermediate). Yet remaining the same 124 units in total, and still only 23 as 3 bed+, overall, staying at just 18.55%. Meaning that over 81% are 1 & 2 bed (designed not for families). This is not addressing the real social homes need of Lewisham's Housing Waiting List of 10,000, where the main demand is for 3-bed + family housing for Rent.

Plot 15 continues to propose a dark red brickwork (described as 'rustic red') with dark green metal window frames. A very gloomy 'materials palette' choice. Very oblique heritage inferences, are described, Quote: "...the commercial activity to the ground floor...is a nod, although not of a maritime nature, to the previous bustling activity...at this location over a significant period of time". And, "The proposed private courtyard... would contribute to the re-

greening...". Clearly demonstrating the lack of any real intent to celebrate or grasp the full heritage context of the site. Underwhelmingly, the lack of design ambition is shown by Quote: "Plot 15 is a lower rise supporting building within the masterplan context". A cited 'learning architectural influence', is Deptford High Street. Yet, you would never know it. The over dominant influence imperative, is to build luxury apartment units (as 1 & 2 beds) in high and densely configured blocks.

The proposed Street tree planting, is regimented – with trees constrained on a straight-line grid – not at all naturalistic, like John Evelyn's.

Plot 22 has revised the pedestrian and vehicular access, to be from the New King Street entrance and along a newly proposed road access East of Plot 08. The building on the jetty is still being proposed as a temporary "Marketing Suite", which is discriminatory in the people it targets and **will prevent** general Public access to the jetty for a long time - even as a potential use as a River Viewing Platform. Quote: "Phasing. The building and landscaped curtilage will become publicly accessible from the point that the River Bus service comes in to operation, (upon the sales of 750 of the main development site apartment units)."

Planning Statement for Plot 22, has not been updated.

General comments

Public Consultation - There continues to be no Public Consultation over the description and naming's of the new areas, buildings, streets and other details, on this very large heritage and historical site. There is no 'buy in' from the Deptford community for this scheme. Rather, it is being imposed upon us.

Impact - There continues to be evasion on the overall built environment impact of the scheme, with no mention made of the proposed very high 38-storey tower in Phase 1, to the East and dominatingly alongside Plot 08. Or the other 2 very high towers of 38 & 48-storeys that will be placed to dominate the site in later Phases. All 3 combining to dominate, obscure and overshadow the Listed Olympia Warehouse. From the River Thames view it will only be 'glimpsed' through one main gapping of new high-density buildings by those passing by. The masterplan is disrespectful to the heritage, history and context of the site. To make it welcoming to all.

Heating system - There is a problem with the proposed Combined heat and power plant – energy – that is still being promoted. No revised documents. Lendlease have changed their approved planning application, for Plot 2, to build out a heat exchange local to each block, rather than a centralized gas-powered plant. This involves roof line flues to be installed.

Carbon and climate change. Gas is no longer approved, because of carbon emissions, as a heating source for large schemes. The UK National Target is to be carbon neutral by 2050.

Financial viability - There are no revised documents. Are Plots 08, 15 & 22 financially viable, in themselves, with a profit, a neutral return on costs, or a deficit? Has the required financial viability assessment been carried out for Phase 1?

Marketing sales – where will it be marketed, the Far East or UK first? The 'model' of marketing luxury apartments worldwide as 'investment boxes' is an oversaturated one in London. Many apartments are lying empty. Those that are sold – and occupied – are difficult to sell on (losing

around 15% to 20% of their value). If leasehold there are issues for potential buyer with getting a mortgage. Ground Rents are being sold on to investment companies, who are then post-applying very large increases, deterring potential leaseholders.

Economic outlook - Britain's exit from the European Union – Brexit – brings uncertainty with new residency requirements and visas.

The Corona virus is close to being a pandemic, meaning travel restrictions will again impact on marketing and residency. Whole towns and cities are being 'locked down'.

The markets are echoing the 2008 global financial crisis. This application is modelled on a global investment for profit basis and is therefore vulnerable to these forces.

Flood Plain – Deptford Flood Map: <https://www.getthedata.com/flood-map/deptford>. Convoys Wharf is not identified. It is located adjacent to low risk residential areas. Yet with a direct river frontage it may have higher risk points, as a Dock, like the opposite Millwall Docks. Deptford and New Cross lie in a natural flood plain of the meandering River Thames. All are protected by 2m raising of River Wall in the 1980's and the Thames Barrier. Yet a North Sea Surge could overwhelm even this. The Barrier is due for further works in the 2030's, or another Barrier to be built further downstream. The Pepys estate, 1960's, features tall tower blocks on stilts, undercrofts to open up vistas through and no sleeping residences on the ground floor. The Convoys masterplan is proposing podium structures and retail outlets at ground level to mitigate against flood risk. Yet the architecture could be much more adventurous in features and style at the ground and first floor levels. Signifying better the historical context. The adjacent Borthwick Wharf is an example of an earlier stylistic response, Thames side. As well as building in a more innovative and sustainable way, like the Passivhus Standard. Supported by the Draft Deptford Neighbourhood Plan.

Voice 4 Deptford

28th February 2020

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