

Lewisham Design Review Panel

Terms of Reference

October 2024



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The Laban Dance Centre in Deptford
by Herzog and de Meuron – Winner of
Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2003



1. About the Lewisham Design Review Panel

The Lewisham Design Review Panel (LDRP) comprises a pool of 25–30 external built environment design experts and 2 panel chairs.

Experts on our panel include architects, urban designers, landscape architects, and heritage and conservation specialists. The panel is coordinated by the strategic planning team, who arrange for panel members to review major and complex design proposals for Lewisham.

The use of design review panels is promoted by National and London Plan Policy and is identified as playing an important role in the assessment and development of design proposals seeking planning permission (NPPF paragraph 133 and London Plan Policy D4).

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to have regard for recommendations made by design review panels when assessing planning applications.

Lewisham Gateway by PRP Architects, is a large scheme on a prominent site within Lewisham town centre, adjacent to Lewisham railway station. The scheme won best Borough-led Project at the Building London Planning Awards 2022.

2. The Design Review Process and Outputs

What does the LDRP review?

The panel usually reviews large and strategic design proposals for which planning permission is being sought.

Smaller development proposals that officers consider would benefit from independent design advice may also be referred to the panel — for example schemes with specific heritage and/or environmental sensitivities.

The panel may also review proposed design policies, strategies and guidance for Lewisham Council such as supplementary planning documents, masterplans, frameworks, and design codes.

Panel Members are expected to have up to date knowledge in all areas of design planning policy.

When should a scheme be subject to design review?

Very large and complex schemes seeking planning permission are likely to require several design reviews, especially if there are many issues that require resolution. Smaller schemes may only need a single review, depending on the level of support received by the panel.

Officers will recommend appropriate points during the pre-application process for design reviews to occur.

After a scheme has undergone a review the panel chair will recommend whether a scheme is reviewed again. It is usually recommended that large schemes receive their first design review early on in their planning process to allow for the panel to comment on early layout, scale and massing considerations.

It is of benefit to a scheme to have the support of the design review panel before a planning application for it is submitted, as the design review panel reports for projects are material considerations when determining planning applications.



TNG Youth and
Community Centre
by RCKa Architects,
photographs by Jakob
Spriestersbach

Who attends design reviews?

4–5 panel members are usually selected by the strategic planning team for each review based on their relevant specialisms to the design proposals being reviewed. Panel chairs may also attend some design reviews as panel members.

Lewisham Council reserves the right to invite guest panel members where specialisms not covered by regular panel members are required. For example, a highways specialist may be invited to attend a design review where there are complex traffic issues.

Alongside Lewisham officers involved in the scheme, additional attendees from the Council can be permitted to attend, subject to room capacity.

When and where are the design reviews held?

The LDRP usually meets on the third Wednesday of every month to review 1 to 3 schemes.

Standard reviews are held at a venue in Lewisham close to the sites being reviewed. This venue is selected by Lewisham planning officers.

For premium reviews the applicant can select the review venue and also the design review date, subject to the chair's availability.

Subsequent design reviews

Very large and/or complex schemes are likely to be advised to undergo a design review several times during the course of their pre-application process.

When a scheme is reviewed more than once the Council will re-invite panel members from the original panel to attend again, subject to their availability. This is to ensure consistency of advice.

When a scheme comes forward for a follow-on review and there is a new panel member invited to attend, they are required to familiarise themselves with the previous LDRP reports and associated design team presentations to understand the context of the advice given to date.



Lewisham Exchange by JTP Architects, benefited from the advice of the LDRP sessions from 2015–2017

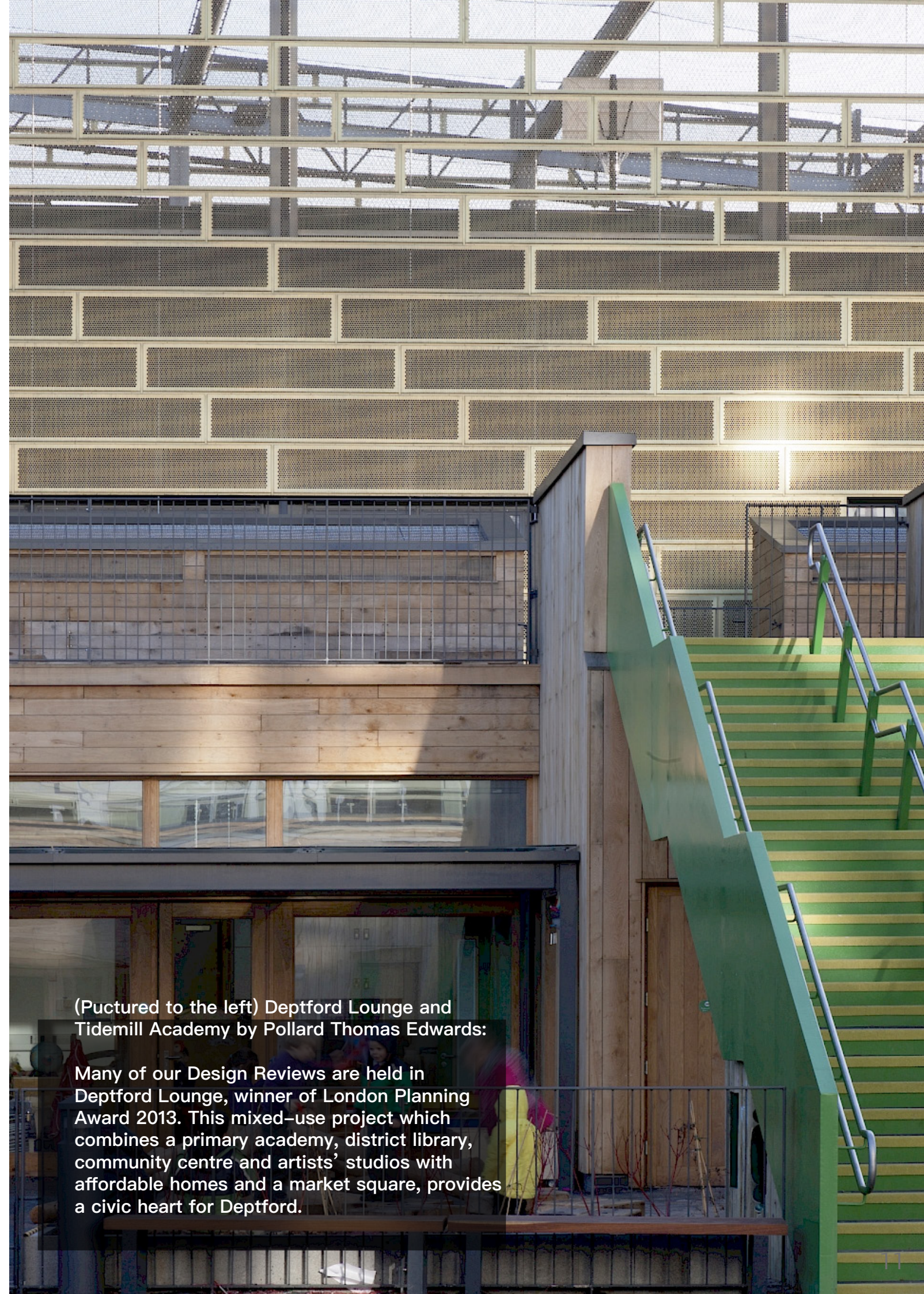
Prior to review day

Draft presentations of proposals that will be reviewed by the Design Review Panel must be issued to Lewisham Council at least 7 working days prior to the review. Lewisham Officers involved in the scheme will review the draft presentations and may request that additional information is included in the final presentations.

The draft presentation and an officer briefing note are issued to the Panel Members selected to review a scheme 5 working days in advance of the design review.

The officer briefing note describes the site, policy context and planning history of the scheme, provides a summary of officers' views on the design proposals and highlights any aspects of the design proposals where the Panel's advice is sought.

Panel members are expected to review the design team presentation and read the officer briefing note in advance of the design review.



(Pictured to the left) Deptford Lounge and Tidemill Academy by Pollard Thomas Edwards:

Many of our Design Reviews are held in Deptford Lounge, winner of London Planning Award 2013. This mixed-use project which combines a primary academy, district library, community centre and artists' studios with affordable homes and a market square, provides a civic heart for Deptford.



On review day

For schemes seeking planning permission design reviews are usually attended by the case officer, urban design officer, and the LDRP co-ordinator.

The design team should typically have no more than 6 attendees at a review unless agreed otherwise by the LDRP co-ordinator.

1) Site Visit

On the day of the design review the panel attends a site visit which is led by Lewisham planning officers. Site visits are not attended by the design teams making the proposals. For subsequent reviews only panel members who were not on the panel for the first review will need to visit the site.

2) Formal Design Review

The site visit is followed by the formal design review. The review meeting starts with introductions and a verbal briefing by the case officer describing the scheme stage, officers' opinions of the design proposals and specific aspects of the designs on which the panel's advice is sought.

3) Presentation

The design team then presents the scheme. This is usually led by the scheme architect.

4) Panel discussion

The panel is then given the opportunity to ask clarification questions of the design team, after which the panel chair guides the panel discussion, structuring it around design themes relevant to the proposal.

5) Summary

The discussion is concluded with a summary by the panel chair. The design team may be given a brief opportunity to respond to the panel's comments.

All attendees should act professionally and contribute towards the discussion without interrupting others.

If there is disagreement amongst the panel members on specific topics, the chair will represent the different views and balance of opinion expressed in their verbal summary and the LDRP report.

6) Report

Notes of the panel discussion are taken by a Lewisham officer. These are used by the panel chair to produce the LDRP Report. An audio recording may be made of the panel discussion to assist with writing the LDRP notes of the review, subject to permission being given for this by all in attendance at the review. The audio recordings are deleted after the reports have been completed.



Brent Knoll School by LSI Architects is a new build exemplar SEN school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Following review by the LDRP the scheme received planning permission and was completed in 2017.



Grade 1 listed St Paul's Church in Deptford (1730)

DRP reports

A DRP report is produced for each design review which provides a record of the panel discussion. The report is written by the panel chair and will be issued to the design team within 10 working days of the review.

Meeting notes of everything stated at a design review are made by the LDRP co-ordinator and supplied to the panel chair to assist them in writing the report.

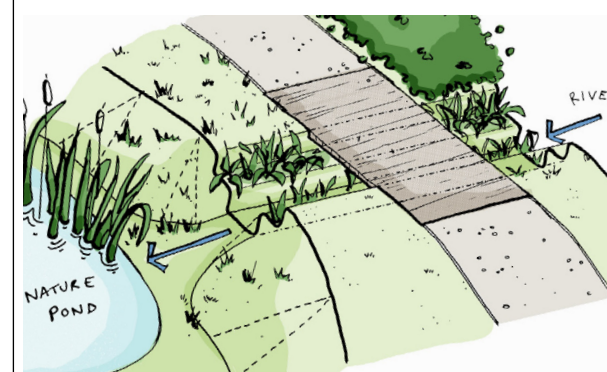
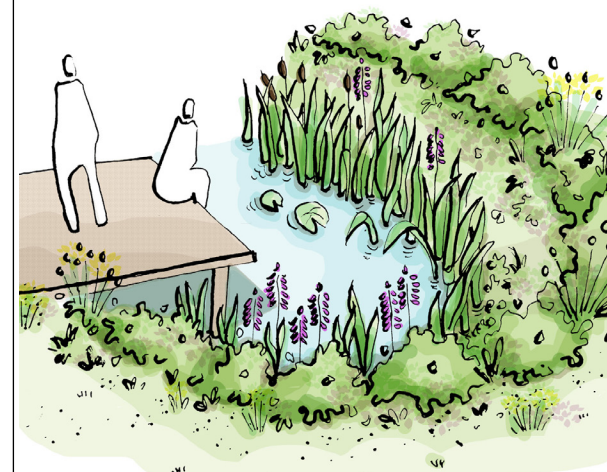
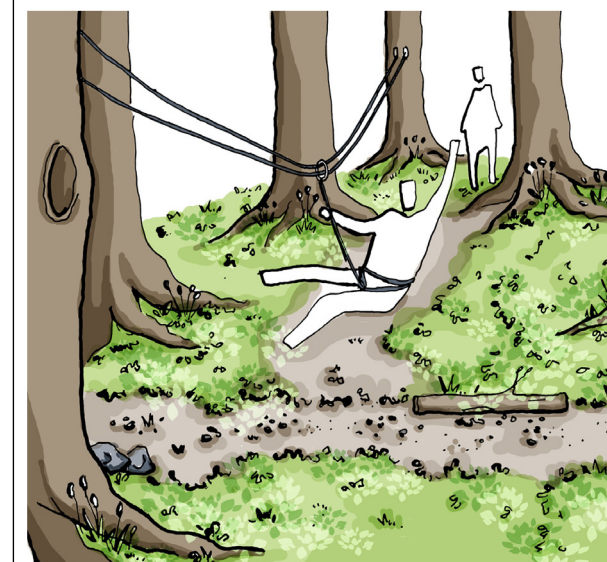
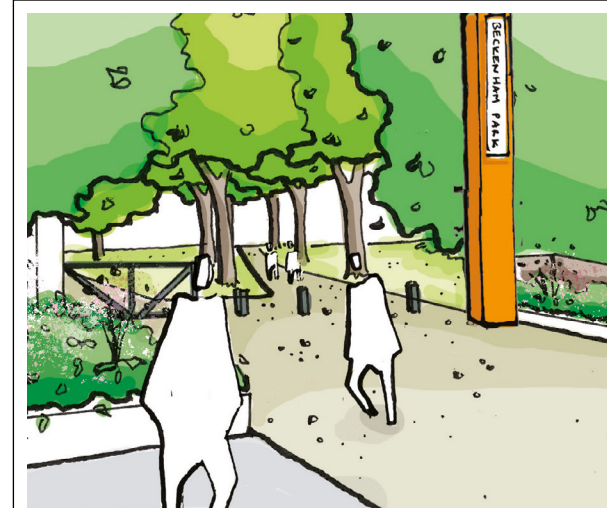
Panel members and Lewisham planning officers in attendance at a design review are given the opportunity to comment on draft LDRP reports before they are approved by the panel chair who has final sign-off.

Design teams seeking planning permission are expected to respond to the comments made by the design review panel at subsequent pre-application meetings and in the design and access statements of planning applications.

It should be noted that the advice of the design review panel only becomes formal planning advice if it is provided directly by planning officers.

On the rare occasion that there is disagreement between the panel's comments and the planning officers' views, it is for the LPA to decide what weight to place on the panel's comments, balanced with other considerations.

A DRP report remains confidential until a planning application is submitted for a proposal, at which point the report becomes available on the public record. For schemes that are taken to planning committee, the LDRP reports may be published with planning committee papers.



7. Additional Information for Applicant Design Teams

Types of design reviews

The strategic planning team and the applicant decide on the length of a design review required proportionate to the scale and complexity of the scheme being reviewed.

Type of Review	Format
Standard review – up to 100 residential units	[1.5 hours] Introduction (5 minutes) Case Officer briefing (5 minutes) Design Team presentation (20 minutes) Panel discussion concluded by a Chair summary and a brief opportunity for the design team to respond to the Panel comments (60 minutes)
Premium review – usually over 100 residential units	[2.5 hours] Introduction (5 minutes) Case Officer briefing (5 minutes) Design Team presentation (40 minutes) Panel discussion concluded by a Chair summary and a brief opportunity for the design team to respond to the Panel comments (100 minutes)

Fees

Please refer to our website for design review fees. To confirm a design review, payment for the review must be made one month in advance of the review.

Cancellation fees apply. Please refer to our [website](#) for more details.

The design team presentation

The design team presentation should include the following:

A brief description of the proposal — including the size of the site, uses, and the number of residential units proposed.

Policy and guidance context for the site and proposals.

Site context, planning policy context, local character — existing and emerging, constraints and opportunities.

A description of the design process undertaken to date including any discounted options with explanations of why they have been discounted.

The proposed development – layout (urban structure and urban grain), height, scale and massing, appearance (elevational treatment and materials), landscape/public realm, and the proposed development’s relationship to the site context. Cross sections and 3D visualisations are expected to be included.

Sustainability objectives.

For schemes that have been previously reviewed by the panel, a description of how the panel’s previous comments have been addressed.

Ladywell Leisure Centre by Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios: Proposals for a 100% affordable housing development on the site of the former Ladywell Leisure Centre by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios was reviewed by LDRP in August 2021 and June 2022 prior to granting of permission in 2023.

8. Additional Information for Panel Members

Terms of engagement

Panel members will be engaged by Lewisham Council under contracts for services (the Contract). On written acceptance by the Council of the submission from a panel members to join the Design Review Panel, the Panel Members will execute the Contract.

The Contract will be for a period of five years (“Initial Term”) unless terminated in accordance with its terms or otherwise terminated. The Contract shall continue or “roll over” on a yearly basis after the end of the initial Term of Contract, on the same terms unless written notice is given to terminate the engagement prior to the “roll over” in accordance with the Contract terms.

Insurance

Panel Members are required to have valid professional indemnity insurance to cover their design advice provided for the Lewisham Design Review Panel. Panel Members are recommended to notify their insurers of their role on the Design Review Panel and seek their insurers agreement that their design advice provided for the DRP is covered by their insurance. Panel members should provide copies of the listed insurance certificates to the Council and provide the Council with updated certificates whenever they are renewed. There is no minimum level of professional indemnity insurance required.

Resignation from the panel

If panel members are no longer available to attend design reviews or are regularly unavailable for reviews they are invited to attend, the London Borough of Lewisham (LBL) shall be entitled at its absolute discretion to terminate their contracts.

In this circumstance LBL has the right to invite design experts to join the panel who applied to be on the panel for its most recent panel refresh and scored highly against the assessment criteria.

Panel Member Availability

If Panel Members are no longer available to attend design reviews or are regularly unavailable for reviews they are requested to attend, the Council shall be entitled at its absolute discretion to terminate the Panel Members contracts.

Panel member fees

Panel members are paid £500 per day / £250 per half day review.
Panel chairs are paid £700 per day / £350 per half day review.
Panel chairs are also paid £100 per hour to produce the LDRP reports.

Included in the panel fees is a requirement to read the officer briefing note and draft design team presentations in advance of the review sessions and review the draft Design Review reports.

Travel Expenses and all other expenses are included in the Panel Member fees.

Invoices from panel members are requested once the DRP report is issued (10 working days from the day of the review). Once the Council has received the invoice, payment will be made within 10 working days.

Faircharm Creative Quarter by Karakusevic Carson has created a mixed-use neighbourhood of homes and creative workspaces. The scheme benefited by the advice of LDRP prior to approval.

9. Declarations, Conflicts of Interest & Confidentiality

Declarations and potential conflicts of interest

Panel members invited to sit on a panel for a specific design review are required to declare whether they have any personal or commercial interests related to the proposals being reviewed.

All interests related to the individuals employed to produce the design proposals, the companies working on the proposals, and the site of the proposed development itself must be declared in writing by prospective panel members.

Once any declarations have been made the Council will determine whether any interests declared by prospective panel members represent a conflict of interest that precludes them from attending specific design reviews.

If it is deemed that an invited panel member has an interest that does not represent a conflict of interest, the Panel member will be allowed to participate in the review and the interest will be noted verbally at the beginning of the review by the panel chair and formally recorded in the LDRP report.

If any panel member is employed on a project being reviewed by the LDRP this information should be shared with the panel chair in advance of the review and stated by the chair verbally at the start of the review and in the LDRP report.

Should a panel member be employed on a project being reviewed by the LDRP they should not present the project to the design review panel or attend the design review.

If a panel member undertakes paid or unpaid employment on a scheme that has been reviewed by the LDRP within 1 year of its design review, the panel member must inform the strategic planning team of their appointment as early as possible.



The redevelopment of Leegate Shopping Centre by Rolfe Judd was reviewed by DRP twice before planning permission was achieved in 2023.

Confidentiality

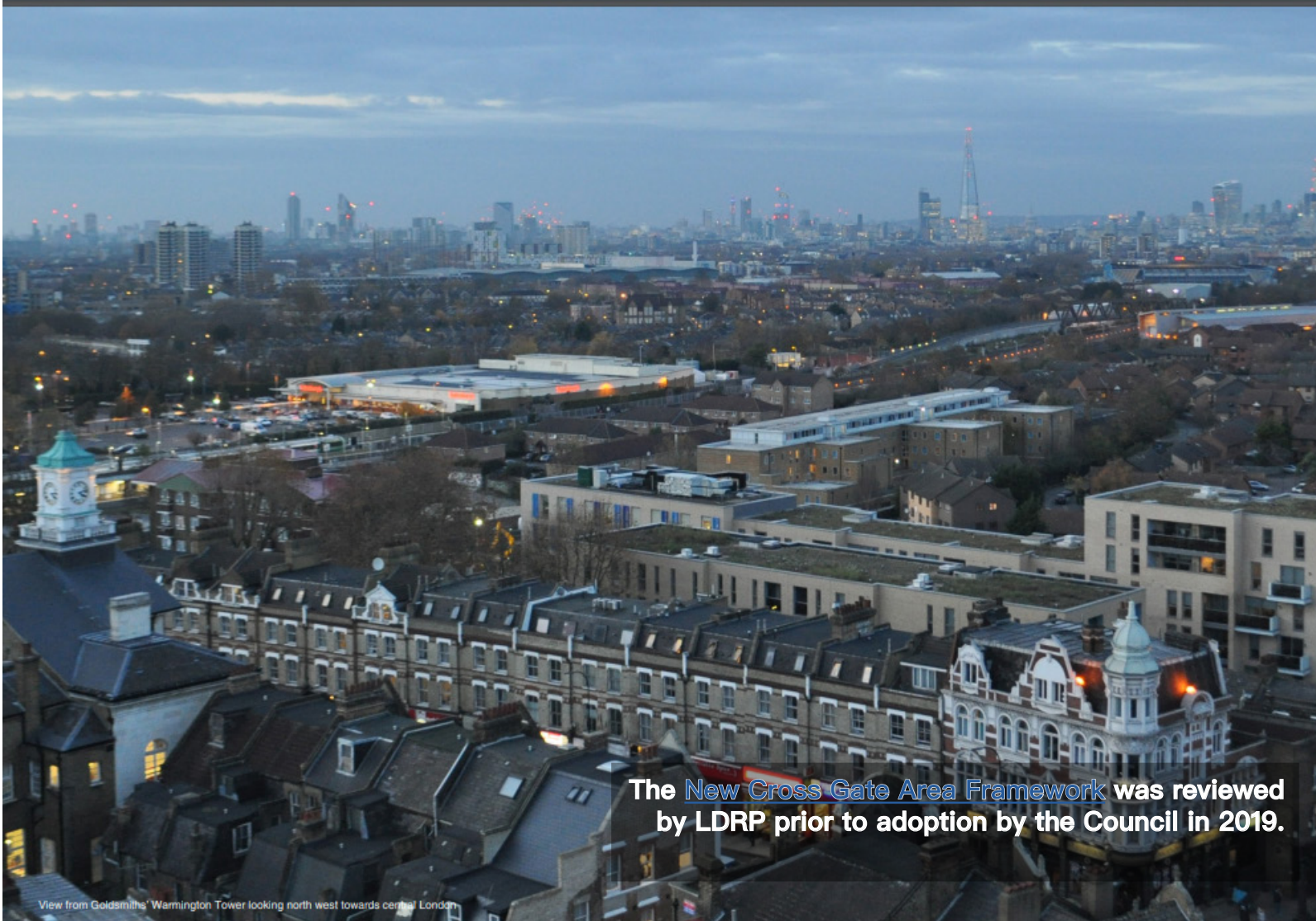
Panel members are not permitted to discuss the proposals they review outside of the design review process. Panel members should have no direct communication outside of design reviews about the schemes they are reviewing for the LDRP with individuals representing the schemes being presented to the Panel.

If panel members are contacted directly by anyone representing the design team to discuss live design proposals they must inform the strategic planning team.

If a panel member reviews a scheme, they should not comment on the proposal through a public consultation exercise.

Extenuating Circumstance

Occasionally there may be extenuating circumstances that require a change to the Terms of Reference for a specific design review. Any such changes must be agreed with the head of strategic planning as early as possible and before a review goes ahead.



The New Cross Gate Area Framework was reviewed by LDRP prior to adoption by the Council in 2019.

Places and Change

- Relevant Guiding Principles:
- Distinctive Place: Celebrate and promote distinctive place identities
 - Distinctive Place: Support initiatives by local community groups
 - Distinctive Place: Ensure new development enriches local character and protects existing assets
 - Equitable Place: Provide genuinely affordable housing on public land and in partnership with developers
 - Creative Place: Reinforce the creative identity of New Cross

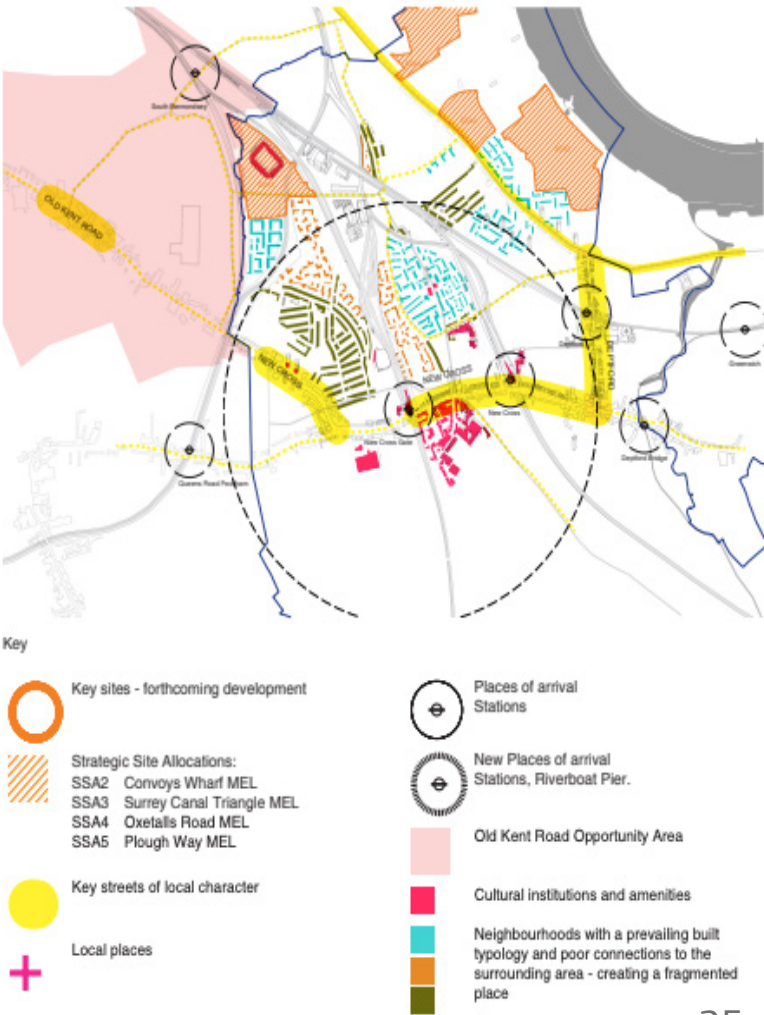
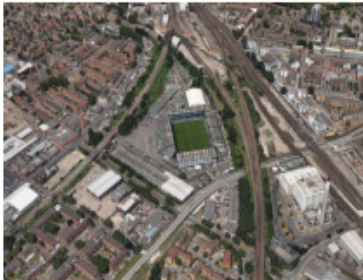
This strategy focuses on how the creation of new places, including LBL strategic sites, can positively influence and relate to existing places within the study area.

Where there are areas of major change, including the designated strategic sites Surrey Canal Road and Convoys Wharf, new local centres with a mix of uses have been proposed. These local amenities should be well connected to surrounding existing neighbourhoods so to extend their benefit to these areas. In addition the New Cross Gate Station/Sainsbury's and Goodwood Road sites are designated strategic sites likely to have major influence on their surrounds.

New Cross Road and Deptford are established high streets, these 'destinations' are supported by good transport infrastructure and active economies. Forthcoming development should continue these established uses, and respond to the increasingly urban character of the area.

There are also local places that provide amenities to neighbourhoods, such as Goldsmiths and along Evelyn Street. These should continue to provide a mix of uses.

1 - ANALYSIS





<https://lewisham.gov.uk/my services/planning/conservation/design-review-panel>