



BARNET QUALITY REVIEW PANEL

1 MAY 2024
- 1 MAY 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Frame Projects
Unit 15 Waterside
44-48 Wharf Road
London N1 7UX
020 8164 9980
office@frame-projects.co.uk
frame-projects.co.uk

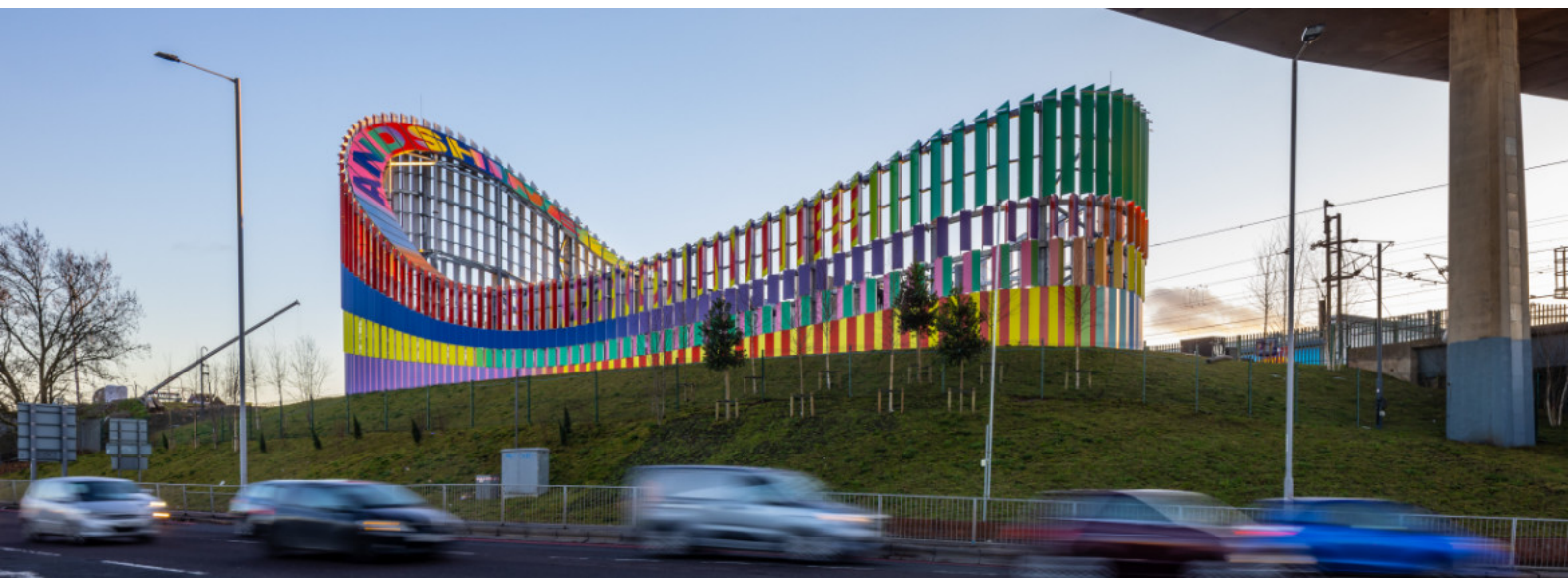
INTRODUCTION

The Barnet Quality Review Panel was established in May 2024 by Frame Projects on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet. It is chaired by Russell Curtis, Founding Director at RCKa, and consists of 28 professional members selected through an open recruitment process in collaboration with Barnet officers.

Terms of Reference, available on the planning authority's website, sets out the role and remit of the panel, and the way in which it supports the planning process. Schemes requiring design advice are identified by planning officers and referred to the panel for review. Officers provide a briefing on the planning context and on key issues, both in writing for the meeting agenda, and in person at the panel meeting. Advice given by the panel is recorded in a report, to assist with continuing pre-application negotiations or to advise the planning committee on submitted schemes.

The Barnet Quality Review Panel advised on 23 schemes in the year from May 2024 to May 2025. Eight of these schemes were reviewed on more than one occasion. First reviews usually take place at a stage when a client and design team have decided their preferred option for the development of a site and have sufficient materials available to inform a comprehensive discussion. A second pre-application review will often be held to provide advice on more detailed design matters, before planning submission.

Cover image: Brent Cross Town Visitor Pavilion, Moxon Architects © Simon Kennedy
Image: Brent Cross Town Substation by IF_DO © John Sturrock



London Borough of Barnet

Barnet Quality Review Panel

Frame Projects

Yingli Tang, Frame Projects

Yingli@frame-projects.co.uk

A group of people are standing in a line on a sidewalk, waiting for a bus. A yellow bus is visible in the background. The people are dressed in casual and business-casual attire. The scene is set in an urban environment with a paved sidewalk and a road in the background.

REVIEW TOTALS

Number of reviews

23

Number of site visits

15

Number of first reviews

15

Number of follow up reviews

8

Full reviews
(chair plus four panel members)

17

Chair's reviews
(chair plus one panel members)

5

Panel briefing
(eight panel members)

1

PANEL COMPOSITION

PANEL MEMBERS USED THIS YEAR

No. of different panel members used

27

Male panel members

59%

Female panel members

41%

Members of a diverse ethnic background

26%

PANEL COMPOSITION

Total panel member attendance for each area of expertise during the reporting period

Architecture

10

Urban design / town planning

5

Heritage / conservation

3

Sustainability

4

Landscape / public realm

3

Transport planning

2

PROPOSALS REVIEWED

APPLICANT TYPE

Private developer

22

Local authority

1

STAGE OF PROPOSAL

Pre-application

21

Planning application
submitted

2

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Masterplan

3

Mixed use

16

Residential

13

Commercial

4

Public realm

8

EMERGING THEMES AND ISSUES

The schemes reviewed by the Barnet Quality Review Panel in its first year have been dominated by large residential developments and by mixed use schemes containing a significant residential element. The panel works closely with Barnet's planning and design officers, providing independent advice to help achieve the highest possible quality for developments in the borough. Across the schemes reviewed during 2024/25, some key themes have emerged which are summarised below.

High-density residential schemes feature regularly in the panel's programme, and present particular challenges. The panel would like to see applicants providing justification for the densities they propose, demonstrating why they are appropriate for the locations in question.

The number of high-density residential schemes creates challenges in balancing the need for new homes, with a commitment to high quality development that is compatible with the distinctive character of places across the borough.

Cost pressures are evident from the extent to which applicants seek to maximised value through increasing heights and density. The challenge for Barnet and the panel is to draw a line when these moves threaten quality of place. It is important to set the expectation that applicants will tackle cost issues by applying design expertise, rather than overloading sites.

Image: Claremont Park © Townshend Landscape Architects



Many residential schemes in Barnet are located in low-PTAL areas. More thinking is needed on how transport infrastructure can respond beyond the scale of individual developments to meet the needs of denser, more populous places.

The panel has seen how difficult it is for strategic infrastructure, in particular highways, beyond the boundaries of a planning application to respond to a changing context. When residential development is proposed where there were previously industrial uses, the urban grain needs to respond. It is important to avoid situations where, for example, family housing is located on roads that were designed for lorries, and create hostile neighbourhood barriers.

All these issues are products of growth, and the challenge of delivering the housing the borough needs to flourish and progress. If the neighbourhoods we are building now are to last, providing homes for generations to come, they must be delivered to the level of quality we know is possible.

Image: Grahame Park, Peter Barber Architects © Morley von Sternberg

