



OPDC
PLACE REVIEW
GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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OPDC
OLD OAK AND
PARK ROYAL
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

INTRODUCTION

Frame began managing the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) Place Review Group in 2018, on behalf of OPDC. It is chaired by Prof. Peter Bishop, and consists of 20 professional members, recruited through an open recruitment process and selected in collaboration with OPDC officers.

A Terms of Reference document, available on the OPDC 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 a review. Officers provide a briefing on planning context and key issues, both in writing for meeting agendas, and in person at review meetings. Advice given by the panel is recorded in a formal report to assist with continuing pre-application negotiations, or to advise the planning committee on submitted schemes.

The OPDC Place Review Group advised on 12 separate schemes in the year from January 2020 to December 2021, three of which 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 development of a site, and have sufficiently developed designs to allow a comprehensive discussion. A second pre-application review will often be held to provide advice on more detailed design matters, before planning submission.

Frame Projects has developed a process for monitoring and evaluating the impact of design review panels. This process allows us to gain insight into the effectiveness and performance of each of our panels, as well as valuable information on the significant emerging issues from panel reviews. It also provides public transparency and allows for continual improvement of our services. This process includes collecting quantitative information based on the reviews carried out from January 2020 to December 2021. It also includes feedback from panel members, applicants and local planning authority representatives gathered through anonymous surveys.

This framework builds on initial work carried out by Public Practice to develop a monitoring tool for design review.

Quantitative data was gathered from reviews that took place from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021.

Due to government restrictions relating to COVID-19, all review meetings managed by Frame Projects were conducted online via video conference between March 2020 and October 2021, after which online meetings resumed.

PANEL

Authority	Old Oak & Park Royal Development Corporation
Review Panel name	OPDC Place Review Group
Panel management	Externally managed, Frame Projects
Contact name for panel	Reema Kaur, Frame Projects
Contact email address	reema@frame-projects.co.uk
Report produced by	Panel Coordinator, Frame Projects

Image: Cargiant © Mattr Media Ltd



REVIEW TOTALS

Number of first reviews

14

Number of follow up reviews

3

Number of site visits (virtual)

12

Number of site visits (in person)

2

Formal reviews (chair plus four panel members)

12

Chair's reviews (chair plus one panel member)

1

PANEL COMPOSITION

PANEL MEMBERS USED THIS YEAR

No. of different panel members used

21

Male panel members

62%

Female panel members

38%

BAME panel members (based on 17 diversity forms)

10%

PANEL EXPERTISE USED THIS YEAR

Urban design / town planning

20

Architecture

16

Inclusive design

2

Landscape

7

Sustainability

7

Transport planning

3

PROPOSALS REVIEWED

APPLICANT TYPE

Private developer

11

Local authority

2

Public private partnership

1

STAGE OF PROPOSAL

Pre-application

12

Planning application
submitted

2

Amendment to
approved application

0

TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Student accomodation

1

Mixed use

5

Data centre

5

Public realm

2

Transport

1

Other

0



Frame Projects has worked with the local planning authority to identify schemes to assess as part of the monitoring and evaluation process. These consist of schemes that have been reviewed by the Place Review Group, and where a planning decision has been determined between 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021.

The schemes used for feedback in this evaluation are:

- Central Middlesex Hospital Refectory Site 20-0031-FUMOPDC
- Chandos Park Estate outline / phase 1A 21-0150-REMOPDC
- Old Oak Lane Towpath Ramp 20-0115-FULOPDC
- HS2 Victoria Road Crossover Box 21-0084-HS2OPDC
- Bashley Road Refinery Site 20-0037-FUMOPDC
21-0077-REMOPDC

Anonymous survey responses were collected from the applicants (planning agent and lead architects), panel members who attended the reviews, and local authority representatives (planning officers) who were leading on the schemes. Surveys took the format of yes / no questions with options to provide further specific feedback. Participants were sent an e-mail inviting them to take part in the survey and given two weeks to provide feedback, with one follow-up reminder.

Image: Canal © Mattr Media Ltd

APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ten applicants were contacted twice to complete the feedback questionnaire.

One out of ten applicants responded to the following questions:

1. Did you find that the review sessions were conducted in a constructive manner?
2. Were you clear about the information you needed to provide prior to the review?
3. Did you consider that the advice from the panel helped to improve the proposal?
4. Did you feel that the panel reports accurately captured review discussions?
5. Did you think that the panel's advice assisted with officer and council discussions?
6. Would you recommend using the Place Shaping Panel?
7. Any other comments?

APPLICANT FEEDBACK

Of the four applicants who were sent the survey, only one submitted a response. The respondent commented that they were clear about the information that they needed to provide prior to the review. They also thought that the review sessions were conducted in a constructive manner, and that the panel reports accurately captured review discussions. The applicant felt that the panel offered good, reasonable, and constructive comments which helped to improve the final scheme. They would recommend using the Place Review Group.

LOCAL AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Four local planning authority representatives were contacted twice to complete the feedback questionnaire. One out of four local authority representatives responded to the following questions:

1. Were you clear about the information you needed to provide and your role in the review process?
2. Did you find the panel's comments during the review clear and constructive?
3. Did you find the review session and report clear and useful?
4. Did you find the panel's advice helped support negotiations on design quality?
5. Did you incorporate the panel's comments into a delegated planning report or reported to committee?
6. Did you feel that the planning committee gave weight to the design review advice during decision making?
7. Any other comments?

LOCAL AUTHORITY FEEDBACK

The one local authority officer who responded to the questionnaire felt that they were clear about their role in the review process. The officer found the panel's comments during the review were clear and constructive, and that the report helped in supporting negotiations on design quality. The respondent also felt the Planning Committee gave weight to the panel's advice during the decision making process.

Image: Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation © Mattr Media



PANEL QUESTIONNAIRE

Twenty panel members were contacted twice to complete the feedback questionnaire.

1. Did you feel that the level of information provided prior to the review session was appropriate?
2. Did you consider the site visits a benefit to the review session?
3. Did you consider the information presented at the review to be sufficient to enable a thorough review?
4. Did you consider planning officer written and verbal briefings provided clarity on design and policy issues?
5. Did you feel that panel reports accurately captured review discussions?
6. Did you feel that you could contribute your advice fully?
7. Any other comments?

PANEL FEEDBACK

Most respondents agreed that they felt that the level of information provided prior to the review was sufficient. However, one panel member felt that the applicant's briefing pack lacked detailed information. The panel considered that the site visits were beneficial and, in place of in-person review meetings, the majority of the panel considered that the virtual site visits were also clear and efficient.

Two thirds of the panel members who responded felt that the information shown at the review was sufficient to enable a thorough discussion. However, two panel members felt that the information was limited, and that the applicant team could have provided further context. One panel member thought a longer allotted time for the discussion would be useful to allow all the key issues to be fully interrogated.

EMERGING ISSUES AND NEXT STEPS

In response to comments that submissions from applicant teams often lacked certain information, particularly on sustainability, Frame Projects has updated the scheme deception template to prompt the applicant team to provide more and better advance information for the panel. Frame staff will also ensure they ask applicants to revise the information they have provided if it proves insufficient, before issuing agenda packs to panel members.

Frame Projects recognises the importance of ensuring a gender-balanced and inclusive panel at each review meeting, and will aim to involve the full range of panel members in reviews during the course of 2022.

Image: Grand Union Canal © Old Oak and Park Royal Development

