

A group of about seven people are standing in a grassy field, looking at documents and talking. In the background, there are trees and a cloudy sky. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a site visit or a meeting.

REDBRIDGE  
DESIGN REVIEW  
PANEL

1 JUNE 2023 -  
31 MAY 2024

ANNUAL  
REPORT

IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH

Frame Projects  
Unit 15 Waterside



# INTRODUCTION

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The Redbridge Design Review Panel was set up in 2019 by Frame Projects on behalf of the London Borough of Redbridge. It has been co-chaired by Richard Lavington and Peter Bishop, and from January 2024 is co-chaired by Richard Lavington and Teresa Borsuk. The panel includes 24 professional members, selected through an open recruitment process in collaboration with Redbridge 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 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 Redbridge Design Review Panel has advised on nine schemes in the year from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024. Two of these schemes have been 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 drawings and models for a comprehensive discussion. There will often be a second pre-application review, to provide advice on more detailed design matters, before planning submission, and further reviews may take place, often for larger or more complex schemes.

Cover image: Site visit at Woodville Gardens © Frame Projects  
Image: Wilderness Street, Spark Lab © Jan Kattein Architects



# PANEL

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Authority

London Borough of Redbridge

Review Panel name

Redbridge Design Review Panel

Panel management

Frame Projects

Contact name for panel

Reema Kaur, Frame Projects

Contact email address

Reema@frame-projects.co.uk

Image: Barkingside Town Square for Redbridge Council © DKCM Architects



## REVIEW TOTALS

Number of reviews

**10**

Number of site visits

**8**

Number of first reviews

**8**

Number of follow up reviews

**2**

Formal reviews  
(chair plus four panel members)

**8**

Chair's reviews  
(chair plus one panel member)

**2**

## PANEL COMPOSITION

### PANEL MEMBERS USED THIS YEAR

No. of different panel members used

**20**

Male panel members

**60%**

Female panel members

**40%**

Diverse ethnic background  
(based on 25 diversity forms)

**22%**

### PANEL COMPOSITION

Architecture

**10**

Urban design / town planning

**8**

Landscape / public realm

**4**

Child friendly design

**4**

Heritage / conservation

**3**

Sustainability

**4**

Community engagement

**2**

Inclusive design

**1**



# PROPOSALS REVIEWED

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## APPLICANT TYPE

Private developer

8

Local authority

1

Public private partnership

0

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## STAGE OF PROPOSAL

Pre-application

9

Planning application  
submitted

0

Amendment to approved  
application

0

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## TYPE OF PROPOSAL

Mixed use

5

Leisure and associated amenities

1

Residential (1-50 units)

2

Residential (50+ units)

1

Image: Woodville Gardens site visit © Frame Projects



# EMERGING THEMES AND ISSUES

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Over the past year, a broad range of schemes has come through the Redbridge Design Review Panel, from masterplans to infill sites, and those in between. There was also a broad range of scheme types, including a public leisure facility, a hotel, a community centre, and a some mixed-use residential-led developments.

Across the spectrum of schemes, the recurring themes were as follows:

- Embedding sustainability and low carbon design
- Establishing the placemaking vision
- Delivering public benefits
- Addressing the edge of the green belt
- Connectivity to local amenities
- Community engagement and impact on neighbours
- Parking and highways strategies
- Public realm, landscaping and play space
- Biodiversity and ecology
- Site layout and servicing
- Response to heritage
- Height and massing
- Materials and architectural character
- Internal layout and liveability
- Inclusive design

It was noted that the panel's input on deliverability and site optimisation is particularly helpful to the council and applicant teams. For example, the panel has often drawn on its experience delivering schemes to suggest elements in the proposals where cost savings could be made without compromising on quality, or where project teams may encounter material supply issues and should plan alternative approaches. It has also suggested how site layouts could be made more efficient, leading to better space planning without reducing – sometimes even increasing – the number of homes that can be built.

Frame Projects and Redbridge Council have agreed that the panel should examine environmental sustainability even more intensively in the coming year. As developments involving demolition are coming under increasing scrutiny, embodied carbon is particularly important.

## **Review format**

The Formal Review format (chair plus four panel members) and Chair's Review format (chair plus one panel member) have both continued to prove useful, combining proportionate design scrutiny with focused follow-up, as required.

The Smaller Site Review format (chair plus two panel members) has not been used during this reporting period. However, the council noted that forthcoming developments are likely to be increasingly on small infill sites, which are likely to prove ideal for this review format.

## **Process**

Over the past year, some project teams in Redbridge have engaged with design review for the first time. It is very welcome that a greater range of developers and designers have been able to benefit from design advice. Case officers will continue to advise that reviews are scheduled early, so the panel can have meaningful influence and project teams have sufficient time and resource to respond to its comments. Frame Projects prioritises clear briefing material, designed to help teams prepare adequately for reviews and get the most out of the process.

Redbridge Council and Frame Projects are keen to hold an annual meeting of the panel, as there has not been an opportunity to do so since its inception in 2019. This will allow the council to remind panel members of the challenges and opportunities unique to sites in Redbridge, and to update them on the council's priorities for the coming year. It also provides an important opportunity for panel members to meet informally, building a sense of team and purpose. An annual meeting has been scheduled for November 2024.

## **Panel representation**

Almost the full panel membership was used across the year (20 of 24 panel members), covering a broad range of multidisciplinary skills and areas of expertise.

Frame Projects and Redbridge Council would like to improve the selection of panel members for gender balance, increasing it from 40% to 50% female in the coming year to ensure balance.

# FORWARD LOOK

Redbridge Council will continue to prioritise housing delivery. The panel will support the council in achieving as much density as is appropriate on each given site, helping Redbridge to meet its housing targets without compromising on placemaking ambition or quality of accommodation.

The Redbridge Local Plan will be reviewed in the coming year and the council will keep the panel updated on relevant changes. For example, as well as site allocations, the council would like to develop a borough-wide strategy for public green space and play space, particularly along the Elizabeth Line corridor.

Image: Isaac Newton Academy @ Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

