LONDON

# Affordable homes kept at Chelsea Barracks

Dixon Jones, Squire and Partners and Kim Wilkie Associates' new masterplan for Chelsea Barracks sticks to the affordable housing pledge originally made in Richard Rogers' scrapped plans

PROJECT BLUE (GUERNSEY) LTD

**Key: Chelsea Barracks masterplan**

1. Hotel, nine storeys
2. Pimlico Square. All buildings have road and pavement access
3. Promenade garden producing fruit and vegetables tended by gardeners
4. Garrison Square. Chapel could be retained as focus for 'village square'
5. Garden Square, open to public
6. Orchard Square, residents only
7. Exclusive four-storey townhouses in a square, styled after nearby Wellington Square off King's Road
8. Apartment blocks, six storeys high with additional two-storey penthouses set back from parapet
9. Affordable housing, including ground-floor retail, medical centre, sports centre
10. Community-tended productive gardens
11. Mews houses

Developer Qatari Diar has stuck to its commitment to set aside half the Chelsea Barracks development in London for on-site affordable housing.

A new masterplan for the 5.2ha site by Dixon Jones, Squire and Partners and Kim Wilkie Associates, which replaces the original design by Richard Rogers, reserves much of its eastern end for affordable property, plus a community sports centre and a medical centre.

But the AJ understands that residents of the affordable area of the site will not have access to the underground car park, and vehicles entering from Ebury Bridge Road won't be able to drive through to the more exclusive enclaves.

Compared to Rogers' scheme for 550 apartments, half of which were affordable, the £3 billion project now has lower-density above-ground accommodation and will create up to 600 homes.

The move has been praised by Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg of Westminster City Council. He said: 'I think it's a considerable step forward, in terms of the way it fits into the urban context. Our main priority is that affordable housing is on-site and helps to make the scheme something for the whole community.'

**Above left** The 19th-century garrison chapel could be retained as a tribute to the site's past
**Above right** A view along the promenade garden

## A 'design code', yet to be finalised, will guide architects as they draw up detailed proposals

Qatari Diar is now considering further design competitions for individual buildings, but it may give some jobs directly to chosen architects.

Classical firms are already expressing their interest in the work. Francis Terry of Quinlan & Francis Terry said: 'As a piece of urbanism it is a king compared to the Rogers proposal, and has a quality of "London" that the former lacked. I would be very happy to design a building within this masterplan.'

A 'design code', yet to be finalised, will guide future architects as they draw up detailed proposals for the scheme's four-storey townhouses, which will sit next to three six-storey apartment blocks topped off with penthouses. The tallest structure in the development will be a nine-storey hotel.

Qatari Diar withdrew its planning application for Rogers' 10-storey glass and steel design in June 2009 following criticism from Prince Charles (AJ online 16.06.09). The prince branded Rogers' plans for the site opposite Christopher Wren's 17th-century Royal Hospital as 'unsympathetic' and 'unsuitable' for the area.

*Merlin Fulcher*