



Leaseholders' and Residents' Association

London City Island and Goodluck Hope Leaseholders' and Residents' Association

Orchard Place Update Meeting Minutes

28 November 2025

Attendees

Ashley Lumsden (RA Chair)
Harry Small (RA Secretary)
Peter Marshall (RA Planning Lead)
Mel Henson (RA Committee Member)
Richard
Sally
Bruno
Laurence Prax (Online)
Georgina Allen (Online)

The meeting was held in the GLH Workhouse and started at 8.00pm.

These meeting minutes have been drafted by the Chair and are not legal advice. Individual residents and leaseholders are responsible for taking their own advice and making their own decisions on the issues raised. These minutes are presented without seeking approval of all those present at the meeting.

1. Current Position & Planning Status

- The Orchard Wharf planning permission was approved at the Tower Hamlets Strategic Planning Committee.
- Before a formal 'Decision Notice' will be issued by the council a legal agreement with the developer (sometimes called a Section 106 agreement) will have to be resolved and the London Mayor's planners at the GLA must also confirm their position.

- Once the ‘Decision Notice’ is issued by the council there is then a six-week window for anyone to launch Judicial Review (JR) action.
- The Residents’ Association (RA) has reviewed the question of JR. Its view is that there is no reasonable prospect that JR would be an effective way to meet the objections that were submitted in the RA’s name and in any event the risks of being unsuccessful would be too great. Instead the RA is pursuing three ideas:
 - **Firstly**, to assess changes that will be needed to the plans to meet Building Safety Act ‘Gateway 2’ requirements and any follow-up amendments needed to the planning permission that has been granted.
 - **Secondly**, to assess any other changes that may be requested by the developer to the planning permission.
 - **Thirdly**, to work with the developer and their builders to mitigate the negative impact of the build process once that gets underway including with regular meetings for residents to raise concerns.
- Nonetheless, the RA cannot and in any event does not want to prevent any other residents or leaseholders exploring their own legal action, such as that being considered by Richard.

2. Grounds for Judicial Review Being Considered By Richard

- Richard talked through two routes to consider, policy non-compliance and required processes not being followed.
- On policy non-compliance Richard has looked at compliance with Tower Hamlets local policies, London-wide policies in the London Plan and compliance with national policies. He considers that non-compliance with national policies could be the best approach for JR challenge. In particular he said the Building Safety Act ‘Gateway 1’ requirements were not met. Richard recalled his experience of working at the Health and Safety Executive on the development and implementation of the Building Safety Act.
- On process failures, Richard says that he and 35 other residents did not receive letters inviting them to comment on the planning application during the consultation period. He also notes that non-resident leaseholders are not required to be written to about the planning consultation which he sees as another failure of process. Richard agreed to share details of a development in Canary Wharf where he said there were allegations of inadequate consultation.

- At present there are no new planning arguments identified that would have been raised by Richard or others had they been properly invited to respond to the planning consultation. They will need to find objections that haven't already been raised with the Council and considered as part of the Council's technical assessment of the planning application that was given approval. This will need to be explored further and presented as part of any JR activity.
- Richard identified other non-legal issues that he says may also be brought to bear on a legal challenge such as the possible negative impact on inward investment from China as a result of the grant of this planning permission. He noted that Goodluck Hope was part-funded by Chinese development finance.

3. Legal Process & Resources

- Richard reported that he had explained the outline of the circumstances to a paralegal at respected legal firm Kingsley Napley. No legal advice has been given by them and they have not indicated the likely chances of success in any potential JR action.
- Kingsley Napley wrote on 12 November 2025 setting out their terms for working on the case. They suggest at least £50,000 will be needed and that to provide initial legal advice will require £6,500 + VAT on account. They also suggested that Richard and the 20-25 people who he has told them support the JR action he proposes should all come together and manage their work as a group.
- Richard reports that since that correspondence, Kingsley Napley have stepped back from involvement in the case after a dispute between them and Richard over managing their work to meet the crowd-funding requirements. It may be possible to bring them back on board at a later date.
- As an alternative to legal advice from solicitors, a direct-access barrister may be appropriate. Richard plans to meet one shortly. He gave one name to the meeting, Philip Galway-Cooper of 5 St Andrew's Hill Chambers who specialise in property law and subsequently a further name: Christopher Young KC of No 5 Chambers who specialises in planning law. Until exploratory meetings are held it is not possible to assess the feasibility nor suitability of this approach nor the cost entailed.

- Separate from the cost of legal advice there are also court fees (which may amount to around £1,000) and the costs of obtaining expert evidence, much of which will be needed at the start of any JR action.
- Richard also has a report that is critical of the Orchard Wharf proposals written by local resident Martine De Maeseneer who is a Professor in the area of architecture and design. He undertook to share the report, which he considers may assist his proposed JR action.

4. Crowdfunding & Risk Assessment

- Richard has set up a crowd funding page on the “GoFundMe.com” platform with an initial target of £2,000. He wants to identify other co-signatories on the crowd-funding. Richard drew attention to the protections that the platform provides gives to donors for 12 months from making a donation:

Donations to Individuals. If you donate to a fundraiser for an individual on GoFundMe.com, you are protected against misuse of your funds based on the stated purpose in the fundraiser or failure to deliver funds to the Beneficiary. If you file a claim under this Policy because you believe any misuse has occurred, GoFundMe will investigate and review its compliance with this Policy. Upon such investigation, if GoFundMe determines in its sole and absolute discretion that any such misuse has occurred, you may receive a refund of the amount you donated.
[<https://www.gofundme.com/en-gb/c/safety/gofundme-guarantee>]

- There are risks to taking any JR action which will likely fall on those who support the JR crowd-fund. In particular if JR action is unsuccessful, there is a chance that it will leave the funders to bear the costs of the other side on top of the contribution that they had made to the cost of bringing the claim in the first place.
- There is also the question of whether success in any JR grounds will lead to any actual change at Orchard Wharf. If deficiencies are found in consultation or policy assessment, these might be quickly remedied by the council by carrying out further consultation or policy work and then reconfirming the decision to approve the planning application. This means that potential JR action may lead only to delay and not to defeating development on the Orchard Wharf site.

5. Next Steps

For Richard's JR proposals:

- Consolidate supporters to create a core team and multiple signatories.
- Promote the crowd-funding campaign to secure a sum of around £10,000 (being initial legal advice fees and court fees).
- Progress potential direct-access barrister engagement and reassess whether Kingsley Napley or other solicitors should be used.
- Assess the chance of success based on initial review of grounds of JR action.
- Investigate insurance against the high cost-burden associated with failure of JR claim.

For the Residents' Association:

- Assess design changes made by the developer to meet Building Safety Act 'Gateway 2' requirements and any follow-up amendments needed to the planning permission that has been granted.
- To monitor for other changes that may be requested by the developer to the planning permission and engage with council consultation work.
- To maintain contact with the developer to understand their timetable for building and mitigate the negative impact of the build process once that gets underway including with regular meetings for residents.

6. Any Other Business

Ashley thanked everyone for attending this meeting and taking the time for a thorough review of activities. He noted that while there are different approaches being taken by the Residents' Association and some residents on the subject of Orchard Wharf, that there is a need to respect and support each other as we all work towards a common aim of securing suitable, high-quality development at Orchard Wharf.