

Squire & Partners unveils plans for mothballed Stratford Sphere site

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1/6 Squire & Partners' July consultation proposals for Stratford Junction

Source: Squire & Partners

Squire & Partners is working on a mixed-use cultural and 3,700-unit residential quarter for the site once earmarked for Populous's Sphere venue in Stratford, east London

Plans put to consultation last Wednesday (15 July) on behalf of **Hallmark Property Group** would overhaul the 2.05ha site between Stratford Station and Stratford International, last used as car parking for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Squire's scheme includes three towers on the edges of the triangular shaped plot, ranging in height from 31 to 47 storeys, providing a 1,600-bedroom hotel and 2,100 shared living apartments above mixed uses on the ground floor.

A 'yard' at the heart of the development will host events and provide 1,700m² of public realm with 100 artworks and 1,850m² of food and beverage facilities in a two-storey circular pavilion building inspired by the surrounding railway architecture.

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According to the plans put out to consultation, the scheme will create two cultural venues with capacities ranging from 1,200 to 4,300 people and there will be a further 20,000m² of 'large-scale immersive experience venues and interactive spaces as well as gallery and exhibition spaces'.

Squire's scheme will introduce new pedestrian routes through the site, including a footbridge from Stratford Town Centre and step-free access through to Montfichet Road.

Olga Gomez, partner at the firm, told the AJ: 'Stratford Junction presents a rare opportunity to reimagine a complex and constrained site at the heart of one of London's fastest-evolving destinations.

'The proposals would open up the site for the first time, creating new public spaces, green infrastructure and pedestrian connections alongside performance venues, an education hub and a vibrant cultural neighbourhood featuring public art and outdoor exhibition spaces.'

Gomez continued: 'Inspired by the surrounding railway architecture and shaped through ongoing engagement with the local community, the design aims to create a distinctive new destination that is rooted in Stratford's character and future ambitions.'

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The tricky site was once set to become home to a 21,500-capacity Sphere-shaped arena designed by Populous and backed by former site owner Madison Square Garden (MSG).

MSG withdrew the application following a planning refusal by London mayor Sadiq Khan and former communities secretary Michael Gove's decision to refer the scheme to the planning inspector.

Squire & Partners is expected to submit a planning application to Newham Council this autumn.

Meanwhile food and beverage uses are planned for the site before construction begins on the long-term scheme.

