

Sent: 03 July 2014 15:02
To: Planning
Subject: Application Ref: 2014/4059/P- [REDACTED]

Address:
Rear of Christchurch Hill and Grove Place London
NW3 1JP

Proposed Work:
Alterations to rear garden area including erection of pergola, installation of traversing wall and safety surfacing, external lighting, and erection of metal gates to Christchurch Hill entrance.

My name:
Martha Richler

Leaseholder.

Comments:

I'm so delighted the Council has agreed to improve the area behind our building at Christchurch Hill and Grove Place. It is very dated and such a waste, given the wonderful location, and the number of people who would enjoy this space if it were less harsh. The truth is, I wish we could lift all of the concrete, and turn it into a beautiful grove of simple lawn, paths and trees - much as Hampstead Heath looks. I am a little jealous of the beautiful landscaping around the estates on Well Walk and further down Christchurch Hill on the corner of Well Walk. I am sorry that the plans - which I instigated with letters to you when I moved in, with suggestions and drawings for a transformation of the concreted area - are going to be so limited to the interests of the children. I do appreciate a play area is important, but can we also include the older residents, who would so appreciate wooden benches and a peaceful place to sit and read and rest?

I am a little worried that the plans are too focussed on children's play areas and don't really include those older residents and the working people in the building who would love to sit and have a peaceful time. I think I am also concerned that without mature trees, there is too much harsh sun out in the concreted area and no shelter from the sun and the rain. The softening effect of large, mature trees would absolutely transform the area. With the Church next-door and its trees, it would add a classic and majestic style to the building. I am so worried the children's play area will look tacky - I have seen some very beautiful Council playgrounds, for instance, in Victoria Park, where beautiful wood and rope are used. The natural materials are so handsome and age beautifully. I am hoping there won't be large plastic and multi-coloured objects that will look tacky.

I think in general there needs to be a balance struck between landscaping and softening and a greener effect, and safe places for children to play. The gates are a fantastic idea, as I have tutored children in the area behind the building and worried about leaving them alone for even a

minute. Gates would be just super, and prevent teenagers from hanging out late at night, and littering, and of course, will keep us all safe.

I love the roses that have matured and are in the raised beds. Can we preserve them?

I hope we can encourage residents to be tidy with their toys. Maybe there could be a large square pen for the toys to be kept at night. It does look kind of like a slum at the moment, a sort of inner-city scene that you wouldn't expect in Hampstead. I'm sure that every single resident would love a softening and the hard 1970s concrete and ugly functional railings really do look so dated, and there is a danger that if a few raised beds, a pagoda, and so on are simply plastered on top, it will look like one of those public spaces between office buildings, and not really a parkland, as it ought to be.

Can we be sure the lighting will be classic London lampposts, and not harsh Estate lights - that would be just awful, as our bedrooms face the rear.

Also, in time, this renovation will look dated, whereas the landscaping of the Heath never dates - it is forever classic and elegant, and will grow more beautiful with time.

I just wish we could have soft areas of grass and trees, and not have such a sea of ugly concrete. I would help in any way I can - man-hours, design, contributions - anything! I really do feel so passionately about this.

Best wishes

Martha Richler