

8th June 2022

FAO Patrick Marfleet



Ref Planning Application 202/2019/P

Camden Highline Land between Kentish Town Road and Royal College Street including Camden Gardens and 223 Royal College Street and Camden Road Railway Station Camden Road NW1 9LS

General : As a resident of Ivor Street I have seen many changes in the use of the railway 'Arches' from garages, an antique furniture showroom, beds and mattress companies and business units. I believe that as residents we have generally found the mix of uses acceptable and non-disruptive in creating a good balance to the area. However and unfortunately in recent times most of the enclosed arched premises remain vacant (probably due to high rents business rates, inflexibility of lease arrangements and under previous use Class B.1. Camden Gardens has a chequered history of unsocial behaviour with some landscaping and improvements made from time to time including a strange collection of metal clad planter bins and signage.

Although there are some small businesses in Royal College Street and into Camden Road, It is important to emphasise that the area is primarily residential with families and children, and becoming more so as new large flatted developments have been and are under construction in Bonny Street. Train services to and from Camden Road 'overland' station have improved with some 16 trains per hour and is a busy line for commuters and visitors. A frequent service of freight trains also uses this line. Footfall towards central Camden Town is mainly along Camden Road with a secondary pedestrian route through to Camden Street and Gardens via Bonny Street towards Camden Road Station.

Ivor Street is part of a quiet enclave of residential streets now in effect landlocked with one way in and out following the limiting of vehicular access through the Tunnel to and from Bonny Street. The tight arrangement of streets within this enclave make it difficult for the movement of large vehicles. Bonny Street is now a dead end cul-de-sac with limited parking and turning provision.

The area is located on the periphery of the Cumulative Impact Zone and thus assumed not designated for events, entertainment and hospitality use. Several previous Applications for nightclub and bar use with alcohol licences and for late opening hours were fought and quashed.

The Application : this appears to major on the development of a 'Highline' garden space over the arches and facing Camden Road Station Platforms with access from Camden Gardens to the West and to Royal College at the East. Proposals for installing a stair and lift adjacent to the railway arched structure together with a 'kiosk' arch and communal seating area are shown in Camden Gardens.

Although it is understood that the concept of this has been ongoing for some time including a substantial PR exercises to gain support on the basis of an ecological garden for the community and for an alternative pedestrianised route of interest, I believe that presentations have been misleading since in reality the proposals are, and by the need for funding a Commercial

Enterprise. The business plan for generating this is ambitious and in monetary and use projection is flawed and I believe unrealistic. To include a range of event and seating spaces within a re-claimed disused track area is now not really an ecological garden or a through route to somewhere just a destination to create revenue and of no real benefit to the community.

Of course the idea is an interesting one but in reality it is not a 'Highline' in the spirit of The HL in New York now primarily used by visitors in a linear form or the Coulon Vert in Paris running again in linear form as a pedestrian and exercise route from central Paris and into the suburbs. And, is an area approx 100-150m long with widths of between 6 to 10m really a 'Highline'? A pedestrianised and landscaped asset actually going somewhere? Even projected future phases do not connect through to N1C/Kings Cross as an alternative to using the existing canal route.

No specific proposals are made for uses of the arches (understood to not actually be part of the Application at this stage) except for ideas within Camden Gardens for a retail/beverage offer and primary access arrangement for stairs and lift up to the 'Highline' A secondary access point within No223 Royal College Street is indicated also with a few kiosks. Evidently as proposals develop particularly for the arched areas, under the new use Class E more flexibility can be made for a range of Office use, Retail, Food, Indoor sports and Fitness and other Services, but should include for the exception of use for entertainment and licenced premises (Sua Generis)

Revenue creating uses indicated are for events, some retail, food and 'filming'. The latter, and as experienced, arrives with large entourages of vehicles, lighting gantries and equipment, parked up for days taking up residential parking bays and creating general disruption. The layout of the local streets are certainly not suitable for such set ups. If filming were carried out at an upper level, particularly at night, the effect on immediate residential properties could be very intrusive.

Any proposals and in particular an upper level event space do ask many questions that would need to be resolved and conditioned – Heights of parapets, viewing platforms, Hours of Use, policing and security, Health and Safety, Toilet provision, Impact of noise in terms of visitor numbers, loud music, overlooking and generation of Traffic.

Regeneration of the use of the arches is welcomed but an upper level 'events' space albeit it dressed up to be a garden space and screened from its proximity to the Station platforms and to the rear of properties in Ivor Street, I believe would create a difficult space to manage and keep secure from a projected growth of visitors, ongoing graffiti issues and unsociable behaviour. Loud music either as part of the Events space or in portable form at 'Highline level or within Camden Gardens is not welcomed. As proposals move forward it is inevitable that alcohol licences and late hour use will be applied for for both the event space and for other arched spaces.

I object to the proposals as they currently stand.

Nick Scarfe [REDACTED]

