

Mike Wyeld - Fri 20/08/2021 15:55

Dear Westminster Council Planning and Pimlico Neighbourhood Forum,

We generally agree with the plan for the area. But would like to make a couple of observations, that we would like included in the plan if possible. These would just be things to consider, and we know that many, if not all, of our neighbours are in agreement with these observations.

We live (we own our property) in Block Z on Peabody Avenue SW1V. We are adjacent to the play area and basketball court that runs between Peabody Avenue and Turpentine Lane SW1V. We support the changing of the lamp posts to 1870s look and feel, all of them should be made this way, including those that light the play area and basketball court.

We checked, and when the buildings were built in 2012, as nice as they are, no noise or light pollution studies were done by the Peabody Trust (as it was then) or the builders Hayworth Tomkins. The basketball court and play area are bounded on 4 sides by 4-6 story buildings with no sonic amelioration. The sound reverberates, adding a significant amount of reverb and delay to the noise in the space. So, we carried out our own noise and reverberation tests on the sound coming from both (we do sound in our work, and studied sound engineering at university). While a normal basketball bounce runs at about 80db, spoken conversation level, when you add the reverb time, the bounce goes up to 100db. When playing basketball, there are 20 bounces a minute, when there is more than one game, there can be 5 or 6 balls, sound is aggressive, so these all mix together, regularly reaching high levels of noise. If it was a bar this loud, we could request it make changes. Most residential buildings in the UK have signs that say "no ball games" for precisely this reason. Add shouting, trash talk, crying and screaming children and you can see why the neighbours along Turpentine Lane and in the Peabody Buildings do not use their outside spaces and have had to invest in various methods to protect themselves from noise and light of the court and play area. People have been found dealing drugs in the court and play area late at night, and is a congregation area for young people smoking weed and drinking late into the night in the summer. We believe the play area needs to have a fence around it and some rules. And the Basketball court needs to be removed (there are plenty of courts around here to play basketball) OR it can be moved. We could create an environmental area with trees and grass where the basket ball court are and extend it to some of the unused parking spaces in Turpentine Lane.

In addition, during such construction, electrical points could be placed along Turpentine Lane for electric vehicles.

While the basketball courts and play areas in the rest of Pimlico are managed well by Westminster Council, locked at decent hours, with sufficient gates and so forth, the Peabody-run court and play area in Peabody Avenue is not managed well by Peabody. They never lock the gates, despite saying they will, and we have seen drug dealers and during lock down gym owners use the court late into the night, often running paid for sessions. Peabody are uninterested in this. It is the tenants and lease holders of Peabody Avenue who are paying for the upkeep of the court and play area, but it is mostly used by NON Peabody residents. It needs to be managed like the rest of Westminster.

So first, if possible do something about the basketball court, move it. This is because of the noise, anti social behaviour and light pollution (unlike the 1870s style lights, the lights at the basketball court face DIRECTLY UP), and because of Peabody's mismanagement of the space.

Second, there is a great deal of light pollution from the outdoor hallways of the Churchill Gardens Estate. Would it be possible for the lights to be dimmer, pointed down and not out, and possibly made as sensor lights so they turn on when you enter the outdoor hallways? That would make the street look much nicer and not like a dystopian science fiction film. A local set designer told me he based a horror film on the flickering lights from a Churchill Gardens Building.

So, those are our thoughts.

Thanks and Regards

Mike Wyeld and Chopin Gard