

PLANNING APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENT

Application number: PP/17/01637
Site Address: Site A (Portobello Green Arcade), Site C (Acklam Car Park) and Site D (Acklam Village), LONDON, W10 5TZ
Proposal: Mixed use development under and next to the Westway flyover to provide new arts, culture, enterprise, retail and affordable housing development, including:
Site A - refurbishment (including demolition) at for shops use Classes A1 and A3, and/or Class B1 business use; demolition of building accommodating market storage and outdoor advertising board,
Site C - erection of 4 storey building for Class A1 shops use and 13 x Class C3 dwelling houses, including change of use of private car park;
Site D - for Class A1 shops and/or Class B1 business use, and/or Class D1 non-residential institutions use; Class A4 drinking establishments and/or Class D1 non-residential institutions use, market facilities and associated new access from Acklam Road; public realm works, including demolition of existing planters and hoarding; retained use of public realm for market stalls and tables and chairs; new cycle parking; and other associated works (Major Development)

Comment received: I object to PP/17/01637, the alleged improvements to the Westway in North Kensington, for the following reasons:

*The Westway Trust is a charity, set up by RBKC supposedly to provide services to local residents in compensation for the huge damage done to their neighbourhood in the 1960s by the demolition of acres of Victorian housing, to build the monstrous Westway, the elevated A40. In fact these days the Westway Trust serves itself rather than the public. The intention here is to take over the public's remaining assets for private profit. And even then this proposal is doomed to failure.

*Among the worst features of the current application are:

*No genuinely affordable residential space is proposed. The housing fails in it's supposed bid to be "affordable." It's unlikely to be available to those on less than £40k or £50k a year. No essential workers will live there. On this other hand, this may be a blessing since the overwhelmingly toxic air in the vicinity of the development will poison residents.

*Shockingly, no attempt is made to protect residents or the public from the noxious fumes emanating from the Westway. According the official GLA figures, this length of road kills 75 people in RBKC alone, plus damaging the lungs of countless other people, particularly children. The public cannot possibly comment on the complex air quality report. However, it seems to highlight the effects

of the building works themselves rather than the ongoing cloud of highly toxic particulates raining down every day on those near the development site. While not directly involved in the current application, a private school for young children is soon to open under the Westway. This is madness.

*Further to this issue, no attempt is proposed to reduce the damage caused by the toxic air, such as planting trees and erecting green screens to at least partly protect residents in the new flats.

*Turning to the proposed commercial development, as has been obvious from the outset of the public consultations, this project is doomed to fail. Thorpe Close has always been a slightly creepy, windswept path under an elevated roadway. Apart from those scuttling along it from Ladbroke Grove station, no one uses it. Erecting a few new glass shopfronts, will not improve matters. The proposal to make the current entrance to the arcade into a sort of atrium/coffee shop/marketplace is also doomed to failure. It will be yet more glazed space without customers.

*The proposal fails to give appropriate support to the 150 year old Portobello market that brings what footfall there is to the area. The market needs its existing parking. Market storage was promised, but may not be forthcoming. The same may be said for the promised public lavatories as well as those specifically for traders.

*Then there are the former social assets on Acklam Road. Some have already been handed over to private business; unaffordable for most local people. Local residents have sought legal advice over the loss of tennis courts. Other public assets will soon be lost. This causes huge local anger, which will continue to fester thanks to the current proposals.

*Despite long consultations, it appears to have occurred to no one that we are witnessing a massive and permanent reduction in the need for bricks and mortar retail space. The Westway now intends to build more of it in an extraordinarily inappropriate place. Compounding this, expensive new construction will mean the new business spaces will incur high rents. The recent huge rise in business rates will make these spaces more expensive still - all in an area with chronically low footfall, harsh winds and toxic air. The existing arcade is stubbornly unsuccessful. The new shops be similar, as will the proposed new "Atrium." Then there's Westfield - only 1.5 km away - already huge, with a new £1 billion extension due to open this year! Westfield is just 5 stations from Ladbroke Grove on the Hammersmith & City line. The developers are fully aware that this project is doomed to fail.

*The existing services that have benefitted local people for 50 years will be sacrificed for a failing project. The most likely reason why the development is going ahead despite this is again, the toxic air off the Westway. It is believed that one day the elevated road will be demolished and the road placed in a tunnel. Then the land above it

will be ripe for development. Bankrupted property will suddenly be worth billions. Someone will make a killing and that's all there is to this entire project.

*There are multiple clear breaches of the the Local Plan policies:

CO2: The failure to foster local vitality. In fact the proposal destroys it.

CO7 The local environment. This is already very damaged. Nothing in the proposal will improve it, in fact the loss of social assets and more empty shops will make matters considerably worse.

CP8 Improve the quality of the environment. The air is deadly. No part of this proposal attempts to alleviate this situation.

C1 Mitigate damage to social, physical or environmental infrastructure. Nothing is proposed; just a series of private services and empty shops.

CK1 Social and Community uses. The proposal is to destroy all the remaining vestiges of social and community uses. Acklam Village will probably end up with a private gym and a bar and nothing whatsoever for the community.

The residents of North Kensington were betrayed in the 1960s. This proposal betrays them for a second time. Their social assets will be stolen again. This proposal will so clearly fail, it was designed to do so. In time derelict properties will be sold off to private developers. Local people will see nothing of the proceeds. This must not not be permitted. Please reject this proposal outright.

Sent by:

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Comment type:

Objection