

Response from Carnegie Community Trust to Greenwich Leisure Ltd / Lambeth Pre-Planning Exhibition for the Carnegie Library Building on 21st and 22nd June 2016 at St Saviour's Church.

Trustees of the Carnegie Community Trust (CCT) visited the exhibition on several occasions over the two day opening period. Trustees engaged in conversation with many local people, Lambeth councillors, Lambeth officers and GLL staff. CCT has submitted a formal Expression of Interest for Asset Transfer of the building and is developing a Business Plan. Our observations are:

1. Designed in 1900 as a single-purpose library, Carnegie must now be adapted for its new life as a multi-purpose building divided into more flexible spaces that continue the legacy of Andrew Carnegie as a centre for learning and education for the community and generate the income needed to fund the building. GLL have produced draft plans which adapt the basement to become a gym, and make small changes to the ground floor. For the building to succeed as a Community Hub meeting a wide and innovative range of community needs including a library and generating income, the whole building must be assessed and re-planned carefully in a single planning project. Piecemeal, disjointed attempts at putting in new uses will fail to meet the overall needs of the building, and indeed as will be seen, will cut across vital spaces and services. Carnegie is a symbol of community pride which will remain primarily a public resource, with a library service and other community uses at its heart.
2. Carnegie Community Trust, funded by Lambeth Council undertook an extensive community consultation on the future uses of the building in 2014. It is widely known that this consultation rejected the inclusion of a gym in future uses of the building, and strongly supported a Community Hub, with a continuing library and social, educational, employment, arts and cultural activity. A strong commitment was made and communicated by the Trust with support from Lambeth Council to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for grant funding over £1 million to develop and improve the building as a heritage asset with innovative spaces for the community. Extensive and exciting plans for the whole building have already been developed by Butler Hegarty Architects and paid for by Lambeth. CCT will continue this HLF application as soon as we have agreement to the Asset Transfer. Any changes made now to the building should take into account this longer term vision for the future and indeed should seek to begin the transformation towards that vision.
3. A very important opportunity was lost in the lead up to this exhibition, by GLL and Lambeth not engaging with CCT to look at the Butler Hegarty Plans or consult us and the community collaboratively about the purposes and plans for the whole building. Despite repeated, recorded requests by CCT, neither GLL nor Lambeth Council asked to see the BHA plans when preparing for the exhibition. We are mystified by a conflicting and hurried proposal to develop one part of the building in isolation, and would urge the Council and GLL to engage with us as soon as possible to enable a sensible and truly responsive discussion.
4. It was clear that members of the community visiting the exhibition were confused about the community spaces shown as potentially available on the ground floor. It is evident to all that the main room, gallery and former children's library cannot all be used as library in the future, but the plans gave no indication of this, in fact, the contrary. Thus the community felt that they were not seeing a full picture and many left at least as confused as they had arrived. If the main hall is to be used for income-

generating events any use of that room for library purposes must be easily and quickly moveable.

5. The spaces shown as 'flexible community space' were not explained. A major concern for CCT is to establish clearly for business planning purposes what space will be available for rental, to provide reliable income for a community owner of the building following asset transfer.
6. There is a pressing demand from the community to reopen the building as soon as possible, for new uses and community uses which have currently been dispossessed. As it is likely to take many months for GLL to achieve planning permission and if approved, to carry out the building work to convert the basement to a gym, it is critical to the confidence of the community that interim plans are made for use of the ground floor and first floor. Indeed, upon Asset Transfer CCT would operate the building under interim arrangements whilst the HLF bid proceeds and as plans are developed. Plans made now must cater for interim use of the building as a Community Hub from the earliest possible opportunity and for as much as three years.
7. A further example of disconnect is the total absence, indeed removal, of any kitchen provision. For income generating purposes a functioning kitchen is essential. This part of the GLL plan that was on view is unworkable. The proposed ground floor toilet must be reviewed and relocated. While it is essential, it cannot replace the kitchen. No community building can operate without fully serviceable kitchen facilities and it is worrying that no thought seems to have been given to this. Longer term plans will relocate the kitchen to a larger space as part of a community café, but for interim planning as above the kitchen must remain in its present location.
8. The proposed location of toilets on the ground floor is unsuitable for either short or longer term purposes and must be considered more carefully with an understanding of the proposed uses and numbers of people.
9. There is no suggestion in GLL's exhibition that they have taken into account the physical state of the whole building. CCT currently awaits the report of a recent condition survey including accumulated repair and maintenance requirements and we would welcome an opportunity to discuss these, some of which are urgent.
10. There are considerable circulation and accessibility issues for the building, including the poor condition of the lift and the lack of circulation when certain rooms are in use. The Butler Hegarty plans address these and their proposals impact on the whole building. In our view it would be irresponsible not to review these.

We strongly advise that GLL's plans are revisited as a matter of urgency before any party proceeds with the planning process. As potential owner of Carnegie Library following Asset Transfer, we look forward to an invitation to discuss comprehensive planning for the future of this building.

As these plans were offered at the exhibition we would not be able to support them at formal planning consultation stage.

Carnegie Community Trust CIO

11th July 2016