

To Southwark Council,

I would like to state my support for the modifications to the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan, recommended by the planning inspector Mr Alan Woolnough, concerning the future provision of business accommodation for artistic and creative enterprises in the Peckham area and the protection of the creative workshops located in the railway arches in Belenheim Court, known as the Arches Studios.

I support the following modifications as laid out in the Table of Potential Main Modifications Required By The Inspector, October 2013:

Policy 6 - Business Space, Ref: MM5, MM6 and MM7

Policy 35 - Land Use, Ref: MM27

PNAAP 6 - Peckham Rye Station, Ref: M38

I also fully support the words of the inspector, explaining his reasoning behind these changes, as detailed in the Inspector's Post Hearing Notes. This includes the following sections:

Policy 6 – Business Space, Ref: 8, 9 & 10

Proposal PNAAP 6 – Peckham Rye Station, Ref: 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 & 57

I have maintained a studio space within the Arches Studios in Blenheim Court for two and a half years. As a relative newcomer to the studios, I have been greatly impressed by the true sense of community I have discovered. Whilst establishing my business I have received endless support from my neighbours on both a practical and emotional level, discovering true friendship and sense of belonging.

This artistic community has been developing for over twenty years, growing organically out of the wider community that surrounds it. Such communities cannot be manufactured. Nor can they be transplanted without losing the vital connection to the local community that created them in the first place. The idea that such a valuable local asset could be lost to make way for a few extra shop frontages is unthinkable.

I would like to draw particular attention to the inspector's words in his notes to council ref:56 in which he alludes to the affordable nature of the accommodation in Blenheim Court. He points out that upgraded premises "*would be beyond the reach of small creative and artistic businesses.*" Affordability is key to encouraging innovative economic growth, with both start up and existing businesses reliant on affordable workspaces.

Another key aspect encouraging the growth of the creative economy is the mix of business accommodation Peckham offers, including light industrial spaces close to the centre of town. The AAP in its current form seems to threaten this mix, placing too much emphasis on the expansion of retail space. The retention of Blenheim Court for class B1 use will go some way to maintaining a balanced economy.

As well as the Arches Studios, other creative enterprises currently operate within the wider Peckham Rye Station development site. These include the Sunday Painter gallery and studios and the Sassoon Gallery. If it is the intention to fully align proposal site PNAAP 6 with the support for the creative sector stated in Policy 2, I believe these creative enterprises should also receive some level of protection. Support for the continued use of premises by creative and artistic enterprises across the whole of the development site should thus be added.

An amendment to this effect has been recommended for proposal site PNAAP 4, supporting the continued use of the Bussey Building by creative and artistic enterprises. The Bussey Building has become an important focus of arts and entertainment in Peckham and its continuation in this role is vital to the growth of Peckham as a creative centre. I thus support amendment MM37 and the inspector's notes to the council 50 and 51.

I would also like to state my support for the proposed modification to remove the multi-story car park from the AAP to allow time for consideration of proposals to retain the current structure.

Bold Tendencies and Franks Café that operate from the site have been a huge success, drawing large numbers of people to the area. The proposal to turn the car park into a permanent art centre is very exciting and could secure Peckham's reputation as a cultural

centre into the future. This proposal should be given serious consideration in future by Southwark Council.

The provision of a cinema in Peckham is highly desirable and receives widespread support from the local community. The complete redevelopment of the car park site would seem to threaten this. Retaining the existing facility seems the safest option.

I thus support the amendment MM34 and other related deletions and amendments to the AAP concerning proposal site PNAAP 2 and the inspector's notes to the council 40 to 46.

I urge Southwark Council to accept the above amendments to the AAP.

Geoffrey Lang

Arch 226 Blenheim Court  
Blenheim Grove  
Peckham  
London SE15 4QL