

## **Perronet House Garages Consultation Summary**

The council is currently considering a planning application for the [redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre](#) which will be determined by the council's planning committee. In order to manage the impact of the construction of the new town centre for the Elephant and Castle, a [Cabinet report](#) on the 9 May set out a variety of potential mitigation projects, including the potential to accommodate some convenience stores in the un-used garage space at the base of Perronet House adjacent to the [St George's Pharmacy](#).

An initial consultation exercise was carried out with the occupiers of Perronet House and the independent traders operating in the shopping centre to understand their views of the proposals to convert the un-used space into retail and this note summarises and provides an initial response to each of the comments raised.

### **What is being proposed?**

The garages beneath Perronet House are split into two areas north (garages numbers 1-50) and south (garage numbers 51-67). The northern area is in use with 29 garages let to residents within Perronet House and the remainder either let to residents external to Perronet House or are void awaiting repairs. The southern garages were previously partially let to the Princess Street medical practice but were closed for safety reasons. Part of this space has recently been converted into the St George's pharmacy which serves the local community.

The proposal seeks to convert 12 un-used parking spaces in the closed southern garage area into 11 retail units with an entrance to the retail space would be from the east side diagonally opposite the Bakerloo line station. The objectives of the project are:

- Provide local convenience shops for local residents
- Provide affordable space for local independent businesses
- Improve the street frontage and natural surveillance around the southern base of Perronet House to reduce anti-social behaviour and rough sleeping

### **How did we consult you on the designs?**

- We held two drop in events in the office space at 91 Perronet House on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 1830-1930 and Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 0800-0900
- We set up a project webpage so that people could download the plans easily
- We displayed the consultation boards and model at Unit 231 of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre from 14 September to 6 October
- We wrote to all of the residents in Perronet House on 18<sup>th</sup> August and 14<sup>th</sup> September to advertise the drop in events, the project webpage, and the plans displayed at Unit 231.
- We displayed the consultation boards in the lobby at Perronet House but were asked to remove these by a resident due to a perceived fire risk and so put up posters summarising the project and directing residents to the project website.
- We organised a briefing for the Elephant and Castle shopping centre independent traders on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

### **How many people commented on the consultation?**

We received 21 responses from Perronet House to the consultation, of which 16 raised concerns about the proposals, 4 supported and 1 provided neutral comments. The drop in events on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September were attended by 8 residents who had mixed views of the

proposals. The traders event on 2<sup>nd</sup> October was attended by 25 businesses of which 12 expressed an interest in applying for a unit if the project goes ahead.

### **What comments were made and how are they being addressed?**

The comments raised by the consultation and an initial response are set out below.

### **The scheme will lead to a loss of garages for parking and storage**

The key concern raised by the consultation relates to the loss of parking and storage space with 11 of the 16 objections calling for the garages to be re-used as residents parking.

The entire southern garages area is currently void with garages 51 – 67 having been closed in 2012. Part of these garages was leased to the Princess Street Medical Practice. The garages were closed at the request of the medical practice, due to the prevalence of anti-social behaviour in the garages. Part of the garages were converted into the St George's Pharmacy and the remaining 11 garages have been un-used since 2012.

The northern area (garages numbers 1-50) includes garages which let as follows.

- 29 of these occupants are Southwark Council Tenants who reside at Perronet House.
- 9 of these occupants are Southwark Council Tenants who reside in close proximity.
- 2 of these occupants are Private residents.
- Note there are 10 garages void due to leaks
- 8 people are currently on the waiting list that live at Perronet House and in the surrounding area.

A meeting will be organised internally to ascertain what scope there is to bring the 10 void garages in the northern garage area back into use as these have the potential to accommodate the 8 residents on the waiting list.

Perronet House is located in zone 1 central London in the heart of the Elephant and Castle town centre with the highest level of public transport accessibility level (PTAL) in London. The Mayor of London and Southwark Council are seeking to reduce car trips and off street parking in areas of high public transport accessibility in order to reduce congestion.

### **I am concerned about the level of anti-social behaviour on the ground floor of Perronet House right now**

A number of comments were made about existing anti-social behaviour on the ground floor of Perronet House, with rough sleeping and drug use in the northern garages. The garages team are working to replace the main garage doors as soon as possible to prevent access.

### **Is there enough footfall to sustain retail at Perronet House?**

The proposed entrance to the retail is less than 100 metres from the entrance to the Bakerloo Line station, and is located on a desire line from the tube station to the London College of Communications campus, the Castle Centre, and residential neighbourhoods to the south.

### **What examples of success are there for a similar size of retail arcade?**

A successful local example is Tiendas Del Sur which is located beneath the Sherston Court housing block at the Elephant and Castle. The little arcade provides a similar number of similar sized retail units for local independent businesses.

**I am concerned about the quality of the retail?**

A range of views were expressed as to what type of retail should go into space, ranging from requests for brands like Waitrose through to local operators from the shopping centre. The focus of this project is to provide space for local independent retailers, and an overarching concern from residents is around the quality of the retail. In order to ensure the quality is maintained the council is looking to appoint an operator who will be responsible for controlling the units. The operator can provide a single point of contact to residents for any concerns related to the operation of the space.

**I am concerned that people exiting the arcade at the rear will conflict with vehicles in the parking and servicing area**

Given the concerns raised during the consultation we have redesigned the layout of the scheme to remove the rear public access. A fire escape door will be installed but members of the public will not access from the rear.

**I am concerned that this will lead to more people being able to access the block**

Access to the retail space will be totally separate to the residential entrances to Perronet House above. The main entrance to the retail space will be from the eastern entrance on Elephant Square, and the proposed secondary exit to the rear will now be removed. The main entrance is not co-located with any of the residential entrances which require key access. This project should lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour as it will remove the opportunity for rough sleeping and drug use in a hidden space which had no surveillance. The 11 new businesses occupying the space will provide natural surveillance over the ground floor of the south of Perronet House. The original design for Perronet House by the architect Sir Roger Walters included retail at the ground floor for this reason.

**I am concerned that there is an over-estimation in the need for retail space at Elephant and Castle**

As part of the planning process for the New Southwark Plan, retail capacity studies have been carried out for each town centre in Southwark. The retail capacity study for the Elephant and Castle demonstrates the need for a significant uplift in retail capacity in order to prevent "leakage" of trips to other town centres across London.

**I am concerned about creation of an alleyway open 24/7 which would attract anti-social behaviour**

The retail arcade will be managed and will be only open during trading hours. The rear public access to the arcade will now be removed from the scheme.

**I am concerned that access to the toilets in the arcade could lead to anti-social behaviour**

An operator will be appointed to oversee the management of the arcade to ensure there is no anti social behaviour.

**There is no need for additional convenience as Walworth Road and East St are close by**

Walworth Road and East Street provide a fantastic range of alternative shopping options from a range of independent businesses. East Street and the heart of Walworth Road are 1km from Perronet House so this project has the potential to provide additional accessible options for local residents and workers particularly those who maybe less mobile.

### **The developer should find alternative accommodation in their own land holding**

The developers of the shopping centre also own the new development at 50 New Kent Road which includes 7 new shop units which are held for shopping centre operators. The developers do not own any other sites at the Elephant and Castle which can provide alternative accommodation before the shopping centre is demolished. The redevelopment of the shopping centre cannot be phased to enable traders to move within the site.

The 25 traders who viewed this proposal on 2 October are keen on the Perronet garages opportunities as it can be completed before the centre closes and traders can thus relocate to maintain their existing customer base at the Elephant and Castle. The operators are also keen to benefit from clustering and like the potential to replicate community of businesses in a single location at Perronet.

### **How can residents be sure of hours of operation, no cooking and late night opening?**

If the scheme progresses to a planning application, conditions on the use and hours of operation will be limited at the time of planning consent. The lease for the rental of the units will also include clauses which secure specific uses and hours of operation.

### **The garage space is unfit for retail**

The original design for Perronet House by Sir Roger Walters included retail at the ground floor and this was later switched to garages. The St. George's pharmacy demonstrates how the space can be adapted whilst retaining access to all utilities.

### **I am concerned with that replacing bricks with windows with impact on the appearance of the building**

Replacing bricks with glazing will provide an active ground floor use which animates the town centre and provides surveillance to reduce anti-social behaviour.

An interesting suggestion has been made to reference the modernist glazing design at Metro Central Heights and incorporate this into the window design which we are investigating.

### **Advertising will devalue the appearance of the building**

No commercial advertising will be attached to Perronet House. A sign for the retail space will be added as indicated by the "Elephant Arcade" lettering on the consultation proposals. This will be done carefully to respect the brutalist aesthetic of the concrete soffit above the garage space and will be subject to design approval through the planning process.

### **The elevation plan does not include tree will this be removed?**

No trees will be removed by the project. There is scope for additional planting adjacent to the retail space as indicated by the proposals and this will be maintained by the retail operator.

### **Parking to visit the new shops would cause congestion**

No parking spaces will be provided for visitors to the retail space and all journeys to and from the site would be made by foot or public transport: the proposal door is less than 100 metres from the entrance to the Bakerloo line station and numerous bus stops.

**I am concerned that deliveries to the shops will be made across the new cycle lane on St George's Road and about pedestrian and vehicle conflict in the servicing / parking area.**

Deliveries and servicing for the 11 shops will be extremely low with very few vehicle movements to and from the site. A crossover has been designed into the north-south cycle super highway and occasional servicing vehicles would access in the same way as the Doctors access their car park. The layout of the servicing access will be designed as part of the planning process.

**Noise is at a "ridiculous" level already and this project will make this worse**

Perronet House occupies a central location in the heart of the Elephant and Castle town centre. Concerns have been raised that the project will create noise from vehicles accessing the service yard and people visiting the retail units. The hours of operation of the retail space will be restricted through the planning process. As set out above, the amount of servicing vehicles (and their hours of operation) will be limited and will also be detailed at the planning stage. This is a relatively modest scale development which will generate any additional noise beyond the already high background noise levels in this part of the Elephant & Castle.

**The project will create smells and pollution**

No cooking will be permitted in the operation and the planning application will ensure this use is restricted. The council as landowner will also impose this restriction through the lease granted to any future operator.

**I am concerned about disturbance caused during construction of the shops**

The conversion of the garages to retail units is relatively simple in construction terms and the plans have been purposely designed to re-model the existing space without demolition existing structures or diverting utilities. The refurbishment of the pharmacy was carried out quickly and efficiently with minimum noise. Any works will be carried out in accordance with Southwark Council's hours of operation for construction activities.

**Waste is already an issue which has led to rats and this will exacerbate the problem**

The issue with rats raised through the consultation process will be discussed with housing management right away.

As well as ensuring the bin store for the scheme is well designed we will also investigate the scope to improve the operation and appearance of the existing bin store adjacent to the rear of the site on St George's Road.

**I am worried about the potential fire risk from the arcade market**

The proposal seeks to build 11 separate retail units and will not host temporary market stalls. The scheme will comply with the councils building control regulations in the same way as the St George's Pharmacy.

**Will there be more plant?**

On the initial plans, “plant” refers to the central heating boiler, meter cupboard and any IT facilities. There will be no major new infrastructure to facilitate this scheme

**I am concerned that this proposal will negative impact the value of my leasehold property and the future ability to obtain mortgages and insurance for my leasehold property above retail units**

Carl Turner architects have been appointed to develop a high quality design which should improve the quality and value of the building not detract from it. As well as ensuring the design respects the character of the modernist building, we will also seek to appoint an operator who will support and manage the performance of the traders in the arcade to ensure a high quality operation provides a valuable amenity for the residents in Perronet House. There is widespread precedent for retail beneath housing blocks across Southwark and this does not affect the impact on the ability to raise a mortgage or insurance.

**I live in Perronet House and would like to set up a business in the one of the units proposed how can I go about this?**

The council is keen to support enterprise and we are keen to help residents find opportunities across Southwark to set up new businesses. If this project goes ahead the initial priority will be for tenants displaced from the shopping centre. In the first instance we will introduce interested entrepreneurs to the councils independent business and relocation advisors Tree Shepherd who are developing a database of opportunities together with a programme of enterprise training and can help residents develop their business ideas and find a site.

**Is it possible to create a central circulation space like Tiendas del Sur rather than a corridor to integrate the social – this is a popular format with Latin American businesses.**

The design has been amended to widen the central circulation space with the rear access closed.

## **SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**

The following actions will be taken in light of the comments made during the consultation

- The rear access to the site will be removed with public access from Elephant Square only
- An operator will be appointed to manage the space to ensure the quality of the retail offer is maintained with business support for local traders. The operator will ensure the arcade is maintained to a high standard and will act as a single point of contact for any resident issues.
- The layout of the units will be amended to provide a central circulation space similar to Tiendas Del Sur
- An internal meeting with councils garages team has been organised to investigate the scope to bring void garages in northern garages area back into use and to expedite the replacement of the main garage door.

Once the design has been amended to accommodate the changes above a planning application will be prepared which will lead to formal consultation on the project.