

Appendix 2

Barbican Strategy Group – Barbican Association proposal

Outline for Barbican Umbrella Group

The Barbican is an entity, a brand. When people ask me where I live, I say the Barbican, not the Barbican Residential Estate. When people come to the theatre here, they come to the Barbican, not the Barbican Arts Centre. Of course, the architecture is a vital contributor to the place, but there is more than that. There is a vibrancy which results from the people who inhabit this space both as residents, as students and as visitors.

We are facing massive change in the way the City of London positions itself in the world. The reliance on business as the major driver of the City has proved to be a fatal weakness, and whilst we can be sure that people will return to the Barbican, it is not clear that the City's business community will ever return to "the good old days". Now is the time to refocus the City on the Arts, Education and the creative industries and the Barbican is the centre of this refocussing. Together with visitors and City workers residents are the guardians of this place.

The Barbican is a Masterpiece, a gem, a world-famous example of 20th Century architecture in the heart of the City of London (CoL).

The purpose of this paper is to emphasise to the CoL that their gem is worth looking after as a whole. The way it has been managed over the past decades has focused on specific aspects and not the integrated entity. The problem derives directly from the responsibility for the estate being split across many different organisations and departments. The CoL has

- 6 committees,
- 14 sub-committees and
- one consultative committee

all with separate, compartmentalised interests in the goings on in the Barbican Estate with financing of various aspects coming from several sources within the CoL.

Let us be in no doubt that the physical fabric of the wider estate is in decline. We refer to the Barbican & Golden Lane Area Strategy published by the CoL in August 2015 and reproduce the following

Summary of key findings:

10 INCONSISTENCY IN CONDITION AND UPKEEP OF HARD SPACES WITHIN THE ESTATES

Great care from residents and cultural institutions is evident in both the Barbican and Golden Lane estates. However, some of the hard spaces within are in poor condition. This is the case in both Golden Lane and, to a lesser extent, the Barbican estate. Engagement responses, notably those from residents, cited that some spaces within each estate are considered poorly maintained or in need of repair. It was felt that this is out of keeping with each

estate's listing and of detriment to their heritage value, particularly in the case of Golden Lane. Within the Barbican estate, locations highlighted included Defoe Place, Lauderdale Place and Frobisher Court.

Today, little has changed.

- the same concerns are apparent in the residential community. In September 2019 a resolution was passed by the RCC on maintenance of public realm but still no funds have been released for adequate maintenance of the estate.
- There are leaks in the roof of the Barbican Centre
- The lakes, which are an important feature of the overall architectural design, have been in a sorry state for some years. Some recent improvements were made to brick and tile embankments which was most welcome but the fountains have been out of commission for over a year due to repeated leaks into the pump systems. The Barbican Centre, in whose remit the lakes fall, admits that it has insufficient money and resources to anything other than patch-up. Failure to carry out proper maintenance over the years means that Barbican residents who contribute to the upkeep of the lakes will now being forced to contribute to the major works needed.
- The exhibition halls cannot be used on account of their leaking roofs
- The CLSG has also suffered from issues of inadequate maintenance.

Though similar problems have been encountered in the residential blocks. Most of these have been or are being addressed as the CoL has been able to reclaim the costs through the residents' service charge.

Notwithstanding the above, and having just reached its 50th anniversary, it is still a marvellous place in which people wish to live and to visit. It cannot stand another decade of neglect.

This is why we have suggested a new approach to management of the estate with the setting up of a Barbican Estate Strategic Authority (BESA) to take an holistic view and marshal the resources to resolve the current difficulties and take the Barbican forward for the next 50 years.

Scope for this 'umbrella' organisation would need to be defined in consultation with all stakeholders. Residents envisage the following:

- Custodian of the Grand Strategy for the Barbican
- Champion of conservation and listed status
- Reduction in Carbon emissions across the estate
- Securing and allocating funds necessary to keep the estate world-class and fit for purpose
- Preserving the mix of residential, cultural and educational uses
- Maintenance of the fabric.
- Security across the estate
- Management of public realm
- Control of the general public.

We believe that all stakeholders working under the umbrella of the BESA would develop a full understanding of what is required for the Barbican to resolve its current

problems and to prevent any new ones that emerge from being ignored. We in the Barbican Association would look forward to helping in this endeavour. We have many residents whose skill set is well matched to the needs of the umbrella organisation and who are keen to contribute.