

Natasha's suggested points to consider when giving online feedback on JLAC options.

N.B: My long suggested answer to question 10 uses points from all the architects who have sent us comments to date. Please don't think you have to use any or all of these: they are suggestions for those who are a bit short on time and / or those who would like some pointers! The numbers below relate to the numbered questions on the JLAC online questionnaire. [A = Answer.]

4. When you imagine an Arts Centre for the future, what do you see? What kind of experiences, services and opportunities would you like to see?

A: I think the original JLAC plans in the 2016 bid to the Arts Council for a renovated Jacksons Lane with better space for cabaret, circus and arts – and **without** a library – is a great plan.

5. When you imagine a Library for the future, what do you see? What kind of experiences, services and opportunities would you like to see?

A: When I imagine a library for the future I see the existing library continuing for another 50 years or longer with improved facilities. Judith Walker said on 24 June in a meeting with FOHL that the IT and wi-fi in the existing Highgate Library is going to be improved very soon and that there are no planned budget cuts to library services, which is very good news. I imagine the existing library staying where it is with more and better use of the meeting rooms and possibly the basement too, for example, hot-desking in office hours would be good. I would like a gardening club to be started as the garden is such a great asset and Capital Growth have already said they would come and do gardening for free.

6. What do you see as the positive opportunities for co-locating a Library and an Arts centre on the same site?

A: I see absolutely none. I think both JLAC and library users would lose out because the options mean that JLAC would lose 20% or more of its existing space to the library and the library would lose about 48% of its space if you pursue options 3 or 4 and lose its existing wonderful building and gardens. I see no benefits to either group.

7 ...and what do you see as the principle risks/concerns?

A: The principle risks are that: (1) even with the £7M that Adam Garfunkel (Trustee, JLAC) spoke about on 22 June which he says will become available with the sale of the existing Highgate Library and a relocated library, this will not be enough to make the changes that are needed including adequate soundproofing for the library and (2) that JLAC will lose too much space to make relocation viable and (3) that none of the architectural designs are feasible because it is Grade 2 listed building and you can't have the design options you want and (4) public opposition to the relocated library will cause so much reputational damage to JLAC that it would be far too risky to pursue it. Reputational damage in the Arts world is very important and if your local community are against the relocation, it is almost certain that the Arts Council will take that into account when considering any revised application to the

2016 bid with the revised plan to relocate a library, especially as this revised proposal is substantially different to what the Arts Council has given £2.26M in-principle funding for.

8. *Can you think of any examples/precedents of libraries and arts organisations being in the same location that you think we should look at - or any other interesting examples?*

A: The examples of co-location given by Judith Walker all refer to buildings that are **purpose built** for libraries and Arts together. I know of no other successful colocation where a library has been based in a (currently run-down) Grade 2 listed Wesleyan Church building.

9. *This is an architectural feasibility study, but let us know what other issues you think need to be considered (we've thought of many! - but it's helpful to make sure we haven't missed anything).*

A: You have not considered health and safety and fire exits, the high air pollution on the corner of JLAC, adequate toilets, adequate sound-proofing, a separate children's and adult library, more free meeting rooms like we have currently in the existing library, a separation of the library and the arts centre so those who don't want to walk through a noisy and busy area to get to the library don't have to, etc. **MOST OF ALL YOU HAVE NOT CONSIDERED OVERWHELMING LOCAL OPPOSITION TO THE RELOCATION OF THE LIBRARY BY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND LIBRARY USERS.**

10. *Do you have any feedback on the design options?*

A: Options 3 and 4 are not feasible for the following reasons:

- (a) The proposed 350sq.m of the Library would take out over 20% of the 1,654sq.m Jacksons Lane floor area, meaning that this compromises the circus, cabaret and arts space that JLAC and the Arts Council want, see the 2016 bid for Arts Council funding **without** relocated library.
- (b) The plan suggests theatre audience seating for up to 190 which is a little below the 200 to 250 conventionally considered the minimum to break even. Does the proposal allow or restrict opportunity to increase audience capacity?
- (c) The proposals do not fit against Haringey town planning policies against loss of community and other Class D1 uses.
- (d) Has there been pre-application consultation with the Local Planning Authority and, if so, with what advice received?
- (e) The proposals seen to date are difficult to assess because: (a) No scale is given on the plans, (b) No existing elevations are shown, and (c) Existing plan is only of the Ground Floor of the library and existing basement/street level and first floor of library plans are not shown.
- (f) A strong feature of Jacksons Lane in terms of public presence, of streetscape and of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is how the Victorian Gothic visually rises out of the ground encompassing windows and entrances providing transparency to the interior. By comparison the early sketch makes the new ground

floor cafe frontage appear like a hoarding separating the main building and its interior from the public realm outside. Presentation as choice between options distracts from considering the benefits and disbenefits of the principle.

- (g) JLAC is a Listed Building and within the Highgate Conservation Area. All options show the single story cafe entrance to the front. The Conservation Area Appraisal specifically prohibits side and front extensions. Additionally, the church's fine elevation needs to be unobstructed as it a key elements in the streetscape of this block. I understand that Katy Marks did not consult the Conservation Officer prior to putting together the feasibility study, but if she had, she would have been aware that the chances of the Listed Building Consent for the extension are low. The Highgate Society and the Highgate CAAC have already expressed their concerns about this to Haringey's planning department.
- (h) The proposed access into JLAC is considerably inferior to that existing. Currently there is ramp access for the disabled directly up to the main foyer which is therefore not dependent on a lift access which can suffer from mechanical failure. All proposals show access through the narrow cafe area into a tiny lobby with a platform lift and a narrow set of stair up to the main foyer area. It's not exactly a grand entrance into a theatre and will struggle to cope with large numbers of people leaving and arriving before and after performances. The result will also be huge congestion at both top and bottom of the lift.
- (i) JLAC is used by a number of toddler groups as is the library. JLAC events can attract more than 20 toddlers at a time together with their pushchairs. It will be impossibly difficult to access the main foyer level with small children and once they get there, there is nowhere to stow the pushchairs. This will result in the exclusion of small children which is totally contrary to the aims of the centre
- (j) There seems to be a single means of escape stair which discharges into the cafe area. This is contrary to Building Regulations and constitutes a fire risk. If there is a fire in the kitchen area of the cafe, there is no way the building can be evacuated. I am also doubtful that the staircase is wide enough to meet the requirements of Means of Escape.
- (k) There is a terrace shown above the cafe. This will be highly unpleasant because the Archway Road outside JLAC is one of the most polluted streets in London with heavy stationary traffic most of the time. There is no indication as to how the cafe will be vented to ensure the air quality meets guidelines. There is also the problem of noise pollution.
- (l) In terms of the library, the accommodation on both options 3 and 4 is inferior to that currently in the existing library. In option 3, there are only 3 stacks of books. This does not constitute a library. In option 4, there is no space to compensate for loss of the front and rear gardens and for the basement that the current library has.
- (m) None of the options are architecturally sound or viable.
- (n) None of the options have been costed and therefore anything is technically "feasible" and "viable."

- (o) The feasibility study is not being carried out by an independent party and there is a clear conflict of interest.
- (p) Finally, the Council has failed to consider properly or at all its fiduciary duty to provide good value for money. Had it done so, it should have also commissioned and paid for a feasibility study, (costing not nearly as much as the £23,000 paid to JLAC), to explore how to improve the existing library, increase the services it offers and increase the footfall to the existing library. With minimal expenditure, the existing library could be innovated and improved; instead the Council has deliberately allowed it to become under-staffed and run-down in the past year.

These are just some pointers. I really hope that they are helpful.

Natasha Sivanandan, Co-Chair, FOHL, 25 July 2017.