

BROCKLEY SOCIETY

Ashby Mews gate and tarmac

A civilised but lively meeting of about 60 people took place on Thursday 19 July at Myatt Garden School

After gates appeared at the northern end of Ashby Mews in April 2018, followed by tarmac in June, Brockley Society received a large number of email, phone and face-to-face complaints expressing considerable anger. At each stage we spoke to the mews owners, or “frontagers”, who had taken these measures, explaining Brockley Society’s opposition to them, and stating that closing off a right of way and creating a gated community was totally at odds with Brockley’s vibrant and open community, developed over many decades.

We published our view on Brockley Society’s website and other social media that:

- retrospective planning application was needed for the gates
- all mews frontagers along the entire length should have been consulted
- free access for pedestrians as well as delivery and emergency vehicles needed to be maintained
- planning permission for the resurfacing was required because of Brockley Conservation Area’s Article 4 compliance

Aware of mounting anger in the community we arranged a local meeting to explain the legal and planning ramifications and to consider the next steps. The group of mews owners who had installed the gates and laid the tarmac were invited to make their points and were listened to respectfully and in full.

Representatives from Brockley Society’s planning group explained our objections on three specific aspects, regretting that the mews owners had not consulted us before proceeding. An open discussion followed where the issues were aired on both sides in a constructive way.

The clear view of the majority of participants was that closing the pedestrian access was a mistake. Some people had walked through Ashby Mews for decades – in one case for 67 years from the age of three. The meeting also heard that numerous other mews owners had not been consulted about these changes. Concern was expressed about long-standing drainage problems affecting properties in Upper Brockley Road, which could be made worse by the tarmac.

The group of owners who had made the changes stated that they were submitting a retrospective planning application for the gates. This will provide an opportunity for the public to comment or object. Speaking for the group, Sam Djavit stated: “We will leave the pedestrian gate open.”

Discussions with the planning department will proceed on whether Article 4 compliance was required for the tarmac and with the owners on how its harsh appearance could be mitigated.

This meeting ended with warm applause from all.