

Save Golden Lane Leisure Centre Campaign

Golden Lane Estate, London EC1Y

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13 April 2026

Nick Heyward

Senior Associate Architect

Faulkner Browns

Faulkner Browns Architects, Design Studio, Newcastle

By email: n.heyward@faulknerbrowns.com

cc: Simon Cribbens, Assistant Director Commissioning & Partnerships, City of London Corporation

cc: Helen Fentimen OBE JP, Chair, C&CS Committee

cc: Sue Pearson, Chair, GLERA and BGLNF

RE: Golden Lane Sports and Fitness Centre Refurbishment — Community Questions on Design Brief and Consultation

Dear Mr Heyward,

We write to you as the lead architect on the Golden Lane Sports and Fitness Centre refurbishment project on behalf of the Save Golden Lane campaign and, with their support, the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association, the recognised Tenants' Association for the Golden Lane Estate.

We watched with interest your presentation to the Community and Children's Services Committee on 28 January 2026, in which you set out the two primary design options and the factors underpinning the recommendation for Option 2C. We write now because the campaign has raised serious concerns about the design brief, the consultation process, and the community impact of the preferred option that we believe you, as the architect responsible for this project, should be aware of and should address.

Our Concerns About the Brief

The brief as presented appears to prioritise revenue optimisation over community provision. Option 2C - the preferred option - removes the multi-use sports hall and converts it to expanded

gym and studio space. This eliminates the only large flexible community sports space within the leisure centre. Multiple committee members, including ward councillors for Cripplegate, raised serious objections to this loss in the public session.

We ask you to confirm:

1. Whether the brief you were given by the City of London Corporation included any requirement to preserve the multi-use sports hall or any equivalent flexible community sports space.
2. Whether you explored any design option that preserves the sports hall while also achieving financial sustainability - and if so, why that option was not presented to the committee.
3. Whether the brief included any specific requirements relating to SEND sports provision, Exercise on Referral programmes, or older people's activities, and how those requirements have been incorporated into the design options.

Our Concerns About the Consultation

In your presentation you stated that stakeholder engagement had been undertaken with GLERA, the operator, and Neighbourhood Forums. However, when committee member Anne Corbett asked specifically whether Prior Western School, Richard Cloudesley School, COLPAI School, and Charterhouse School had been consulted, no direct confirmation was given. Richard Cloudesley is a specialist school for children and young people with physical disabilities. It is a primary user of the SEND provision at Golden Lane.

We ask you to confirm:

4. Whether Richard Cloudesley School was consulted during the stakeholder engagement process, and if not, why not.
5. Whether any of the other schools named by Anne Corbett were consulted.
6. What form the consultation with GLERA took, when it occurred, and what the outcomes were.
7. Whether the consultation record will be published in full as part of the planning application process.

Our Request

We are not writing to obstruct the refurbishment - we support it and we want the centre to reopen after the refurbishment. We are writing because the community that uses this centre deserves to have its needs properly reflected in the design brief, and because we believe that a high-quality, community-focused refurbishment is entirely compatible with financial sustainability when underpinned by good management and a realistic operator brief.

We ask you to meet with community representatives before the design is finalised, to hear directly from the people who use this centre about what they need it to be. We are available at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Rajesh Thind, Dominique Tipper and Paul Drinkwater

Campaign Co-ordinators - Save Golden Lane Leisure Centre

Golden Lane Estate, EC1

This letter is a matter of public record and will be shared with ward councillors, our MP, and published on campaign channels.