

Item: Support being provided to Southwark LGBTQ+ communities

1. Bankside Yards LGBTQ+ Community Centre

As part of the emerging development at Bankside Yards, developer Native Land (NL) is delivering a new space for a LGBTQ+ Community Centre. The Bankside Yards mixed-use development, adjacent to Blackfriars rail Bridge, comprises 8 new buildings across a range of heights of up to 50 storeys, the restoration of 14 rail arches and a public space, including a section of the Low Line. Planning S106 provisions include circa £70M off-site affordable housing contribution as well as space – two of the rail arches, comprising 5000sq ft - for a new LGBTQ+ Community Centre. (See illustrations overleaf).

The LGBTQ+ Community Centre is intended to provide a safe place to meet and socialise, promoting both cultural and wellbeing initiatives for the LGBTQ+ community. It is anticipated the space may include one or more of the following: exhibitions and performance spaces, events, workshops, retail, food and beverage. The space will be delivered to Shell & Core and let on a 25-year lease to a suitable operator. Completion date of the construction works is Q3 2023; allowing a period of time for the fit-out, it is expected that the centre would open early/ mid-2024.

The procurement of a suitable operator is a priority for the council and the process is being monitored through the council's Performance Plan. Sustainable Growth officers are working closely with NL (and its consultant Kanda Consult) and the first stage of the process (Q3 2022) is in train: a draft ITT is in place and evaluation panel members confirmed, comprising representatives from the Southwark LGBTQ Network, GLA, Southwark Council and NL.

The ITT is open to suitable LGBTQ+ organisations who can demonstrate strategic vision, resources and experience to deliver a positive, relevant and dynamic community offer at this locality. The panel will assess proposals on a range of criteria, including the benefit for the LGBTQ+ community, wider social value and a

sustainable business plan; the price evaluation will include rent offsets for the cost of the fit-out works which are expected to be circa £1M. The evaluation will be weighted 60% quality: 40% price and the assessment will be through a written proposal and interview. The selection process is programmed to conclude in mid-2023.



Fig. 1: Bankside Yards: illustration of the emerging development



Fig. 2: Bankside Yards: the arches as currently



Fig 3: Bankside Yards: the renovated arches

2. LGBTQ+ Centre at 60-62 Hopton Street

Property Services has undertaken a letting of 60-62 Hopton Street SE1 to the London LGBTQ+ Centre. Initially the Centre occupied these vacant shops on a “pop-up” basis, starting in November 2021. It was subsequently agreed to secure the Centre’s longer term future in this now well-established location by granting a five year lease.

The premises has provided a successful and well regarded base for the Centre, and a platform for partnering directly with other LGBTQ+ charities, community groups and institutions local to Southwark, including near neighbours Tate Modern and Living Bankside. The Centre reports that it welcomes more than 1,500 visitors every month and runs a large programme of events “ranging from regular programming which includes free yoga, meditation, book club, film club and sexual health screenings, to special events including an LGBTQ+ climate summit, a Queer Women’s Day and community pride meetups. These events have been attended by more than 4,000 visitors”.

Negotiation on the 5-year lease is almost concluded and it is expected to be completed this month. Officers continue to be receptive to discussions with the London LGBTQ+ Centre about their future in Hopton Street, as the development of the new Bankside Yards LGBTQ+ cultural centre takes shape.



Fig 4. Hopton Street: LGBTQ+ Centre



Fig 5. Hopton Street: the interior