

Update on Clapham Common's Polygon café/former toilet block

Since a decision was taken by Lambeth's Building Control department to demolish the former toilet block on the Polygon by Clapham Common, the site had remained fenced off, with hoardings covering most of the public space.

This hoarding footprint has now be scaled back, while a decision for the future of the site is considered.

What was the original project?

The aim of the project was to restore a community toilet, with a separate facility for bus drivers, by converting the building for use as a café. The renting of the café would pay for the running of the toilets and provide an income stream for the council.

Why was the block demolished?

During work to restore the old toilet block, it was discovered that the building was more fragile than surveys had shown and the walls began to crack. Building Control decided that, due to the site being in a busy pedestrian area, it should be knocked down for safety reasons.

Why were the hoardings put up?

The hoardings on site were installed for public protection as is standard practice for construction sites. There had to be an allowance for vehicles to park, for the safe delivery, unloading and storage of building materials, while protecting the high number of pedestrians around the site.

What next?

Following representations from local businesses, ward councillors and residents, the footprint of the hoardings has now being reduced to free up more public space.

Planning officers have advised that there are three possible options for the site:

- Remove the foundation and landscape the site
- Rebuild to the previous approved design
- New building of a different design

Once these options have been explored further, the council will consult local residents and businesses on the best way forward.