

Dear Mr Gill,

Spitalfields Community Group wishes to comment on the British Land “street art and murals” in Fleur de Lis Passage, E1.

Spitalfields Community Group was formed in September 2011 with the aim of promoting and protecting the quality of life of people living and working in the ward of Spitalfields and Banglatown, within which Fleur-de-Lis Passage is located. We have over 200 members and are growing. An important focus of our activity is our unique historic built environment; we engage vigorously in planning and conservation matters in order to represent effectively our members’ and wider community’s interests.

Members have expressed outrage at the appearance of Fleur-de -Lis Passage following the art project carried out by British Land. Fleur-de- Lis Passage is within the Elder Street Conservation Area, very close to the Listed Buildings on Elder St and Folgate St, and directly adjacent to the Listed cobbled surface of Fleur-de- Lis Street. The historic site is considered aesthetically a wholly inappropriate location for a graffiti-based mural, with serious potential for damage to the fragile brickwork on which it has been directly painted. There is alarm as to how this mural could be correctly removed whilst conserving the historic fabric of brickwork and pointing. British Land claim there is an anti-graffiti layer beneath the mural; this has been deemed an unacceptable coating to apply to a historic building by Historic England and so is clearly incorrect procedure.

There is widespread concern that British Land proceeded with this project without appropriate consultation. Spitalfields Community Group was not consulted; we are a local stakeholder and as such are duly consulted on similar matters. As far as we are aware, all local reaction to the graffiti has been negative. The concept of using graffiti-based art to discourage graffiti is clearly nonsense, as it has merely triggered an outbreak of further unwelcome and unattractive graffiti which debases our environment.

We are also shocked that British Land proceeded without consulting the City of London or Tower Hamlets in their respective roles as owner of the site and responsible planning authority. It is clear due process has not been followed in the conception and execution of this project. We remain concerned about their future intentions with this site and others in their care. We need to know how restoration of Fleur-de-Lis Passage will be undertaken to mitigate and minimise damage so far caused, and that they will start to observe correct procedure in their handling of these historic and delicate sites. British Land propose commissioning further work, “*respecting and hoarding heritage brickwork*”, when this is precisely what has not been done on Fleur-de-Lis Passage.

For and on behalf of the Spitalfields Community Group