

FOBP response on Camberwell West 6 June 2016

FOBP are very pleased to see the next phase of revitalisation coming forward for the Burgess Park West scheme.

The council has already undertaken significant consultation on the masterplan as well as the earlier consultation on the current scheme which took place in 2015 which provides a wealth of feedback to draw upon.

Overall there is significant support for the proposed plans which increase wildlife areas of the park, revitalise and soften Rust Square, extending the greenness of the park towards Camberwell Road. The overall aim to incorporate additional land into the park is supported as well as the removal of New Church Road which should improve safety at that entranceway into the park.

FOBP held a meeting with the Parks team and LDA on Thursday 2 June to look in detail at several features of the scheme. These are the aspects of the design which FOBP believe need further consideration to achieve a better outcome.

Play area

The naturalistic designs are welcomed and the plan to reuse timber from park trees.

Design and location:

The size and scale of the playground is significant and a major change to that end of the park. We would welcome a further workshop with local residents and children to help shape the playground. In any other park an addition of this nature would be significant and warrant consultation in its own right. We think there would be some merit to consider the size and type of play equipment in relation to age of children, location at the rear of the houses and gain more information about parents' views on fencing.

The masterplan currently identifies the adventure playground as a play site but this is not open access. This playground will be the main playground for residents at this end of the park. Whilst it is helpful to locate play areas for younger children close to housing it also needs to be balanced against the location beside the road, air quality and the likelihood that a major cycle route will run next to it.

Several people voiced concerns about the potential for the playground being used after hours by teenagers and adults, whose noise disturbs people whose gardens back onto that part of the park. This might also mean damage to the play equipment. Would the play area be locked at night?

Entranceway planting

We welcome the proposals for tiered planting ensuring it is low level alongside the fencing.

Safety and presentation:

On the design two pathways merge at the secondary entrance way which with cyclists means that there must be adequate width of pathway and entranceway.

We already know from entrances elsewhere in the park that people do not feel safe with bushes and trees on each side of the pathway. The entrance ways must be wide, welcoming with good visibility.

The experience of the main entrances shows that people enjoy the planting with flowers which mark the entranceways. We would like to see some style of planting similar to the main entrance ways – perhaps on one side or with a central swale?

Cycle route

Friends of Burgess Park support the use of safe routes for commuter cyclists on roads rather than through the park which brings them into conflict with other park users. The provision of improved cycling infrastructure on Wells Way is our preferred option. When cyclists use the park this must be with consideration for pedestrians and this must be the basis on which Quietways routes go through parks.

The choice of the cycle route as shown in the plan is not explained. The LDA designers did not believe that they had any choice in the matter although the traffic department of Southwark Council maintained previously that the layout was not their choice and was left entirely up to the park designers. Why is there this confusion? If the park must encompass the cycling route why not route it around the outside of the park rather than through the middle creating numerous hazards and segmenting the park?

The current information on the route and design does not provide sufficient level of detail for FOBP to comment in detail. We would recommend that the cycle quietway design toolkit being prepared by LDA be consulted on with other park friends groups.

Our other concerns are:

- The entranceway and path intersection designs indicating through the design for cyclists to slow down
- The width of the pathway
- The proposals for slowing down cyclists are currently untried or tested

Based on the experience elsewhere in the park cyclists are able to go onto all pathways we do not believe it is reasonable to introduce an alternative standard in the west of the park. This would be a significant change, would require wide consultation and policing/enforcement if implemented.

We believe that the pathways and park design need to be on the basis that cyclists will use all pathways as is the current situation. What is the current cycle usage of the New Church Road route?

Many cyclists go along the route of the road – so in the new design there will be more cyclists on the pathways. The new design does not allow cyclists the option to join Wells Way before the lights but at the St George's Way junction. What does this junction look like for pedestrians and cyclists?

We do not want some pathways to become no go areas for pedestrians as is the case with SCW.

Nature area

We do not support the additional proposed pathway into the park from Parkhouse St from the new development. Whilst this is not part of the current design we believe it will be (i) detrimental to the wildlife of the nature area, (ii) create an additional entrance where one does not currently exist, (iii) create a safety issue. We would prefer to see how the nature area is used once there are through pathways which would be used by dog-walkers and joggers and should encourage others to explore this area.

Tree removal

Can you confirm the number of trees, number for removal and reason and replacements, including indicative type of trees. We recommend that this information is made clearly available as the scheme proceeds.

Trees will be left along the wall that is the boundary with Addington Sq. to give the residents privacy- they do not in fact do that. They are planted close together so have become "lollipop trees" with bare trunks up to 15-20 feet. All they do is cast unwanted shade into the gardens. A shorter, thicker planting such as a tall pyracantha or cypress hedge would fulfill the purpose much better.