

## **Old Kent Road green link proposal**

Present: FOBP/Glengall Wharf Garden (GWG) members.

Guests: Sarah Parsons, Colin Wilson – Southwark Council, Paul Barrett – Landscape Design Fabric.

Representatives from: Barclay Homes, and the Civic Centre development scheme.

Friends of Parks representatives: Peckham Rye, Brimington, Butterfly Conservation/London Beekeepers/LNPC.

Apologies: Friends of Belair Park and Friends of the Earth

### **Presentation:**

Sarah Parsons outlined the overall vision to have a green link from Kennington to Southwark Park/River Thames. As well as the green link the Old Kent Road (OKR) redevelopment includes new parks: gas holder site (Livesay Park), Frensham St depot and others. (It would be helpful to get the sizes of these prospective park spaces.)

Paul Barrett outlined the proposals for the Surrey Canal linear park which will run through various developments in the OKR10 area (boundaries: Glengall Road, Latona Road and OKR). The plan is to coordinate the communal landscaping space. Land will come together across 4 developments.

A key part of the ambition for this section of the OKR is to enable a pedestrian/cycle through route which includes green spaces, hard spaces for events and play spaces as well as frontages for retail outlets.

No north/south vehicle routes will cross the green link which runs east/west, although there may be vehicle access required for servicing the buildings.

Along the route, the look and feel, planting and materials should ensure a coherent space with a water theme (e.g. swales, water features etc) reflecting the Surrey Canal heritage. The route will shadow the canal route, although it does not run along the exact route.

Green roofs and green spaces on the tops of buildings or on building terraces would increase the overall green offer.

This green link will be the front entrance to the new properties, which will include housing as well as the business and work spaces which currently exist and which will come.

Southwark Council propose that the green link will have a management trust responsible for maintenance etc along the length of the site (paid for by landowners). Idverde, which currently maintains Burgess Park, could also maintain the linear park.

### **Discussion points:**

- There was support for the overall ambition for new green space but there was concern about the genuine greenness of the “linear park”. Is it a park or largely paved urban open space? One architect suggested that the “linear park” was simply a link to Burgess Park – the implication being that the linear park wasn’t a real park and did not need to provide parklike facilities. FOBP pointed out that the projected numbers of people who would move into the new developments needed to be provided with park space and that Burgess Park could not be seen as limitless commodity.

- The time frame of the scheme is not clear. Will it take 5-10 years to be in place?
  - FOBP asked for more realistic maps of the area to indicate actual development over time.
  - Constraints on the width and the ability for greening on Bianca Road were noted. How easy would it be to provide a wildlife network in this area? Subsequently, it was discovered that there is also a very narrow link route next to Space Studios which will be even narrower than Bianca Road.
- 
- The route from the linear park to Burgess Park needs clear design regarding alignment, paths and the GWG entrance.
- 
- FOBP were very concerned that the linear park could just turn into a transport link. The impact of commuter cyclists and the need to reduce speed and encourage the sharing of space via design in order to avoid conflict between pedestrians/children and cyclists was discussed. There are various Quietway routes which will lead to the linear park (QW8 and 9). This would bring large numbers of cyclists to the area.
- 
- In the Malt Street planning documents it was noted that “the alignment [of the linear park] passes through the Site and it is proposed to create an east-west dedicated cycle route [which includes the pinch points mentioned above]” – see 5.14.2 Cycle connections, p.105. Elsewhere in planning documents and mentioned at the meeting, Latona Road was identified as the route for commuter cyclists.
- 
- It was pointed out that the Surrey Canal Walk running into Peckham has become a no-go area for pedestrians at rush hours, when commuter cyclists take over and there have been problems with commuter cyclists elsewhere in Burgess Park.
- 
- Currently the design has too much hard landscaping. The park should have a more unstructured, fluid approach to the design to create a relaxing green experience. The new Elephant Park was cited. Another possible model would be the new Nine Elms linear park which has defined substantial ecological areas along its length.
- 
- The park needs to be viewed as a whole so that the suggested cinemas, cafes, fountains spread along such a relatively short route do not overwhelm the space. Sunny spots should be maximised for areas of relaxation. There are two major largely paved squares in the Cantium and Malt Street proposals which are missing the opportunity to add substantial green infrastructure.

- From the planning documents it is clear that most of the developers are making space available at ground level for communal open space (Cantium, Malt St, Nye's Wharf, 49-53 Glengall Wharf). However, it is not clear that the Civic Centre Development is making a meaningful offering to the public realm. What benefit is it providing?
- Revenue funding for events was queried. This would be overseen by Barclay Homes who will own the central section (an example was given of Woodberry Down).
- FOBP are very concerned about the number and height of the buildings which would overshadow the park.

In the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan Framework (version Dec 2017) it was proposed that there would be a Tier 1 (over 30 storeys) building on OKR at Peckham Park Road and possibly another north of the Surrey Canal Park where "commensurate open space can be provided". However, there now seem to be plans for four or five tier 1 buildings. Then there are a number in the 20s and teens. Also in the OKRAAC it states "Taller buildings will be expected to create an open, permeable and highly articulated skyline which avoid the coalescence of buildings ...". Please see photo attached.

- The height of buildings proposed, up to 44-48 storeys, will have a major impact on wind, sun and shade. This means that planting and location for events/play/sitting etc need careful siting. Southwark Council representatives agreed that they would share their study. (See comments below from Glengall Residents Association on shadow extent.\*)
- A continuous green corridor will be needed for wildlife.
- There is also a need for toilets and signage.
- It was suggested that some spaces should be left for future development by new residents, eg food growing, contribution to design of spaces, play areas etc, planting.
- Other park facilities such a MUGA or tennis courts should be included in the design.
- FOBP are also concerned about the effect of the towers on the views from the park, particularly because we are aware that the height of buildings in the Burgess Business Park is not being allowed to encroach visually on the park.

\* Glengall Residents Association noted in their comments re Malt Street that: "When the shadow evidence is projected onto the Malt St proposal, it shows that the morning shadows of Block B4 tower will reach the lake in Burgess Park, crossing Glengall Rd [conservation area], Trafalgar Avenue [conservation area], and the Cobourg Primary School enroute, and will last for 2-3 hours each morning from autumn through to spring. The 40-storey+ tall buildings in other current proposals will have a cumulative and interactive effect."

Please see attached the current view from the lake in Burgess Park and a Cantium mockup of the proposed high-rise developments which will obscure the skyline and the views.

Pictures below.

