



## **Friends of Burgess Park**

### **Discussion paper for Burgess Park Board**

**12 March 2014**

## **Passmore Edwards library and the public baths and wash-house**

Over the last sixty years Burgess Park has developed around this Grade II listed building. Today much of the building is unused and in a poor state of repair, making no connection with, or contribution to, the park. However, there is great potential for development of the building as a distinctive asset which would make a unique contribution to Burgess Park and to this area of Southwark.

**Friends of Burgess Park wish to work with Southwark Council to take forward a development plan for the Passmore Edwards library and wash-house.** A FOBP meeting on 1 April will seek to identify a group of people willing to take further action to help develop the future use of the building. Representatives from Southwark Council and other organisations are welcome.

### **Long term vision**

An integrated approach across the built and the natural environment would make the most of the location within a park.

An annual calendar of activities in the park contributes to building and maintaining the profile of the park in a London and national context. However, there is no one venue where this programme could be developed and expanded to include such as conferences, exhibition, presentations, events, catering, literature, performance etc. Given the 'outdoor' context of a park, an indoor space would be very useful to provide cover in difficult weather and extend the events calendar to year round.

FOBP would like to work with Southwark Council and the local community to develop some alternative ideas, feasibility studies and if necessary legal and financial structures to provide a long-term viable future for the building as part of Burgess Park. In February Southwark Council approved the FOBP [community asset listing](#).

The Open House event in 2013 and the development of the community asset application indicated that there is local interest in the building.

### **Medium term building strategy**

Burgess Park has seen a massive increase in visitor numbers since its refurbishment in 2012. It plays a key role in uniting and serving communities from a wide area, touching four separate postal districts, with around 70,000 people living within one mile. The time has come to develop a policy for the building, incorporating it fully into the life of the park. The library building is well placed to contribute to evolving needs, due to its size, location, and heritage.

Alongside specific plans for the building Burgess Park needs a building strategy to complete its development plan – a holistic approach to add a functional architectural layer to the park landscape. Chumleigh Gardens has a vital role to play but by its nature, the rooms are limiting. Burgess Park has other buildings which need inclusion in a strategic approach. Plus the development of other building nearby also need to be considered: Cumming Museum and Walworth Town Hall, Wickway community centre, community facilities and development plans for the Aylesbury area.

### **Interim proposals for 2014**

- Utilise the empty library for park related events including:
  - The Elephant and the Nun festival
  - FOBP free film event
  - Other pop-up events
  - Filming venue via Southwark's film office
- Identify funding to undertake:
  - Building survey
  - Investigate alternative uses
  - Produce outline business plan

The current occupants of the building will need some reassurance as to future intentions. FOBP have met with the church and boxing club and informed them of the community asset listing.