

Response to Parkhouse Street consultation to Southwark Regen February 2016

We discussed the Parkhouse St consultation at the February Friends of Burgess Park meeting so we would like to feed these comments into the consultation. We have also responded to the [New Southwark Plan consultation](#) to make general points about building height which we would like to be considered in relation to any and all developments along the south of Burgess Park.

Can you undertake early consultation with Parks, as copied in, on both the land swap and the proposed pathway into Burgess Park.

Land Swap needed by Council

Southwark Council is currently trying to purchase the land immediately next to this development site, impinging on the boundary of Burgess Park and currently used as car parking for the police garage. I hope that those responsible for these plans have looked at whether a land swap with the garage is necessary to secure that land for Burgess Park. Even if it reduces the area available for housing right now, it would be in the long-term interest of Burgess Park and the wider neighbourhood.

Height

The proposed buildings are too high and bear no relationship with the existing context of the building. Both the proposed options for the site are for 9 storey buildings (ground floor + 8 floors). Neighbouring buildings are just 2 stories. The last major local development, on the corner of Wells Way and St Georges Way, is by comparison just 4 stories (GF + 3) high.

A 9-storey building would be higher than the nearby former St George's Church, which is a listed building and an important site for views and way-finding in the area.

The proposed building is on the south side of the park, so would block light into the park, which would be detrimental to park vegetation and wildlife as well as park users. The area immediately beyond the boundary is a nature area, with high density of planting and currently is the highest value wildlife area in the park, see [London Wildlife Trust report](#) produced for Southwark Council.

If the density of Option 2 were combined with the level of housing provision of Option 1, then it would be possible to have a lower building. This would be preferable.

Green Link Pathway to Burgess Park

Any new access route into the park is welcome in principle, but this needs to be considered carefully. The adjacent area is intended as a wildlife area and will not benefit from a high throughput of people just travelling through the park. Therefore any green link should not be a desire line for commuters whether pedestrians or on bike. Also, with regards to bikes, Parkhouse Street is a one-way street, which would create problem if cyclists were using the Green Link and travelling on to Wells Way, against the direction of traffic.

Consideration should be given to the effect of the ground level design especially on the path to the park and the streetscape the effects of ground level design of the building in order to encourage walking and street life, buildings need to interact thoughtfully with what is at ground level.

Housing

We support the New Southwark Plan to re-designate the Parkhouse Street industrial estate as a mixed use area including housing. There is currently a lot of unused or underused commercial space in the area which would be much better used as housing. This development will set a precedent for more new housing in the area. So high standards and quality of design are paramount.

Commercial Uses

The balance of residential and non-residential across both the current site and future sites in this area need careful consideration to establish demand. Plus understanding "what works" in terms of size, mix and configuration to have a vital and lively commercial success. This is particularly important if this is going to be a design style for future residential/commercial mix in this area. This is something that should be investigated prior to construction as we have seen many blocks built in Southwark with commercial space underneath that never gets used. Unused commercial space is bad for the street-scape and the neighbourhood.

There is no need for retail space on Parkhouse Street as this would be to the detriment of existing shops on Southampton Way. There is no demand for a small cafe as Cool Cats Cafe on Southampton Way shut down recently.

There may be demand for studio space, from creative industries, or micro-industrial uses, but the level of demand needs to be determined at an early stage.

Perhaps an enterprise with experience in this area could take on management of the space and commit to finding tenants.

Please include Friends of Burgess Park on any further consultations for this site.