

Friends of Burgess Park – April 2017 Response to 2017 Southwark Plan

This response covers sites close to Burgess Park which are planned for development.

Friends of Burgess Park - is a local community group with the remit to protect, promote and enhance Burgess Park. We have a committee and engage with local people through our mailing list (300 people) Facebook Group (394 people) and Twitter. We meet monthly and liaise with the council and other local community groups with an interest in the park. We also hold events in the park to promote biodiversity, heritage and engage the wider community.

Summary - Our comments on the Southwark Plan concern the impact of development around Burgess Park. Adequate consideration should be made in the Southwark Plan to protect green spaces from significant building shadows, the height of tall buildings and the impact of building too close to the boundary on biodiversity. We also would like adequate consideration given to parks and green spaces as social infrastructure and recognise as the population increases there will be significant increase in users. This will take place with the Camberwell Business Park development and the new tube stops on the Old Kent Road as well as other developments such as Aylesbury. It is essential that all of the park remains high quality usable space at all times for health and well-being benefits of local people.

Detailed Comments

Parkhouse St development/Burgess Business Park

Comments in relation to this site which the council owns and for which it is bringing forward a planning application, apply to all the developments which might take place along Parkhouse St.

Height of buildings

The 21-23 Parkhouse St development will set a precedent for more new housing in the area so high standards and quality of design are paramount. The proposed nine-storey building is taller than Camberwell Fields at Southampton Way/Edmund Street which is a corner site opposite a main park entrance and should be the highest building along the southern boundary.

The last major local development, on the corner of Wells Way and St Georges Way parallel to the church), is by comparison just 4 storeys (GF + 3) high. A nine-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.

Distance of buildings from the park

Buildings next to a park have an impact on wildlife. The area along this section of park has trees and will continue to have trees. At the moment there is considerable open space along that boundary with no buildings along it. Building must be set-back. The proposed setback/buffer zone for Parkhouse redevelopment is barely the width of potential tree canopy. This will mean lower flats will be in shade and the occupants will suffer from lack of light.

Impact on the park

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 a density of planting and currently is the highest value wildlife area in the park, see [London Wildlife Trust report produced for Southwark Council](#).

Southwark Council must take account of shadow and loss of sunlight to the park. See reports on impact of shadow modelling below.

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. 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 problems if cyclists were using the Green Link and travelling on to Wells Way, against the direction of traffic.

Will other new developments along Parkhouse St and backing onto the park also have entrance routes?

Housing and Commercial Uses

We support the New Southwark Plan to re-designate the Parkhouse Street industrial estate and the Burgess Business Park as a mixed use area including housing. The balance of residential and non-residential across both the current site and future sites in this area need careful consideration to establish demand. Understanding "what works" in terms of size, mix and configuration is critical to establish 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 streetscape 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.

What are the plans for this area which give it a sense of place and identify?

Burgess Business Park site – proposed for development

This is stepped back from the park. The design brief indicates the site should be permeable – which will have implications for cycling/walking on through Burgess Park. At the moment there are no entrances into Burgess Park along that boundary.

Any plans for routes need to consider that Parkhouse St is one-way and that FOBP are lobbying for a cycle route up through Wells Way as the preferred route to cross the park.

Sites Southampton Way/New Church Road/ corner of Burgess Park

FOBP will oppose any tall buildings on this site adjacent to the park.

FOBP would expect any building on the corner site to be contributing to the park entrance way.

FOBP would like this land to be incorporated into the park as planned for many years.

Bakerloo Sites tube station impact on Burgess Park

FOBP would welcome TfL cycle hire bikes to be located near the park/Old Kent Road. We would expect the new tube station would lead to more pedestrian and cyclist coming through the park to the tube station.

FOBP would like an orbital cycle route around the park to encourage cyclists to use high quality

routes east/west along Albany Road and St George's Way

Increased park use for leisure, as well as pedestrians and cyclists going to the tube will lead to more wear and tear. Southwark Council must investigate different ways of funding park repairs and maintenance to keep up with intensive park use.

Developing land close to a park

In FOBP response in 2016 for the Southwark Plan consultation we made the following points which are still relevant.

We do not wish to see tall buildings on all sides of parks. We consider that this diminishes natural light, creates shadows and impacts on the open aspects and view afforded into and out of a park. It also potentially creates light pollution from the building into the park. Please see the London Wildlife Trust report which also makes this point.

http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/sites/default/files/spaces-wild-london-wildlife-trust-oct2015_0.pdf

With specific regard to Burgess Park we do not wish to see tall buildings along the south boundary of the park (St George's Way/Parkhouse St). The eight-storey building "Camberwell Fields" on the corner/New Church Road should be the tallest along the western end of the park. Likewise the ten-storey on Trafalgar Avenue is in fact six storeys which is then stepped back through the top four storeys, creating a less dominant impression. We propose that these buildings set the maximum height to frame Burgess Park appropriately.

Burgess Park is a very narrow park and this means that building height has a significant impact. The northern/Albany Road side of the park will have buildings of significant height once the NHHT proposed plans for the Aylesbury estate are built.

These articles show the impact of shadow and the essential importance of sunlight on the quality of life and well-being. The impact of building shadow on public realm and parks especially need to be an important planning consideration.

"shadows even turn light into another medium of inequality — a resource that can be bought by the wealthy, eclipsed from the poor."

"San Francisco has had a "sunlight ordinance" that requires the parks commission to review any proposed building taller than 40 feet that might shadow public parks."

Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/04/in-the-shadows-of-booming-cities-a-tension-between-sunlight-and-prosperity/>

An increase in exposure to green space translated into a reduction of health problems. Green space has been linked with reduced levels of obesity in children and young people, higher levels of physical activity and a reduction in a number of long-term ill health conditions.

The proportion of green and open space is linked to self-reported levels of health and mental health for all ages and socio-economic groups through improving companionship, sense of identity and belonging.

Living in areas with green spaces is associated with significantly less income-related health inequality, weakening the effect of deprivation on health. In greener areas, mortality rates are

significantly reduced for deprived groups, compared to less green areas.

However, people from more deprived areas have less access; children in deprived areas are nine times less likely to have access to green space and places to play.

Research reported by the Kings Fund

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/improving-publics-health/access-green-and-open-spaces-and-role-leisure-services>

Please refer to this research on the effects of tall buildings and shadow in urban settings:

<https://www.londonnewsonline.co.uk/17517/concerns-tower-will-cast-shadow-greenwich-peninsula-ecology-park/>

<http://portfolio.cpl.co.uk/CIBSE/201407/modelling-tall-buildings/>

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/21/upshot/Mapping-the-Shadows-of-New-York-City.html?_r=0

We would urge Southwark to develop high standards for the importance of sunlight and minimal shadowing across all public spaces.

