

Friends of Burgess Park planning response Burgess Park West

September 2016

The FOBP are very concerned about the design and layout of the section of QW7 as well as an additional quietway as yet unnumbered which are planned to go through Burgess Park West.

We note that the cycle use of QW1 has, according to the Southwark Cyclists' count on 3 August 2016, shown a 2-fold increase in peak time cycling since improvements were carried out. There were over 500 cyclists per hour during the morning peak on Lynton Rd, 728 per hour towards central London on Willow Walk and during the evening rush there were 400 cyclists per hour eastbound on Willow Walk (<http://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/5479-2/>).

Q7 is expected to attract similar numbers of existing and new cyclists. We do not feel that the proposal takes into account this level of use nor addresses the safety and comfort of other park and path users whether they are trying to share the path or cross it where park paths intersect.

Currently, there is the wide area of New Church Road plus its pavements which allow pedestrians and cyclists to use this space in comfort. This road will be removed in the new proposal. The replacement path is going to be 4m wide. This would conform with TFL's cycle design guidelines which propose that cyclists need 2m for each lane to pass each other (<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lcds-chapter4-cyclelanesandtracks.pdf>). However, this does not make any space allowance for pedestrians, for example, groups going to local schools or people with pushchairs and small children.

The BPW proposal will bring more cyclists into the park and force them to share a narrower space than is currently available. This will cause problems for commuter cyclists who will be expecting better provision. QW7 will cut across areas used for games, walking and relaxation and is very likely to cause conflict.

The Friends of Burgess Park support commuter cycle routes around the perimeter of the park — the Burgess Park Orbital — and the improvement of the commuter cycle lanes on the roads which already run through the park, e.g. Wells Way. Cycle routes near roads will be much better lit at night. Many cyclists will feel uncomfortable cycling across the park at night even with extra lighting. FOBP do not support lighting in the park which will disrupt the wildlife areas.

We do not feel that this aspect of the Burgess Park West proposal has been carefully thought through with a realistic sense of the numbers of cyclists involved nor with due care for the park environment. We suggest that the design and layout of the cycle routes should be reviewed to provide a safer and adequate cycling provision for the future.

November 2016

Friends of Burgess Park (FOBP) note that in the London Cycling Design Standards, Chap 4. TFL cycle lanes and tracks design, it is pointed out that:

“In most off-road scenarios, pedestrians are as likely to be enjoying their surroundings as walking purposefully, so movement is not the principal consideration. Parks and other urban green spaces serve multiple functions, only some of which are about movement. ...

“Where peak cycle flows are growing, better cycle infrastructure on-highway may well be a more sustainable approach than encouraging more cyclists to use a busy route through a park.

“Comparison between shared and separated provision needs to have regard to site conditions, the respective flows of users, how those flows vary over time, cycle speeds and ensuring the comfort and safety of all users. This relates particularly to people with visual impairments, children and older people, all of whom may feel intimidated by sharing space with cyclists.

“Cyclists are not best served by routes that shift them from one type of provision to another where different priorities apply, and dedicated space is preferable for pedestrians

“Cities with good quality, joined-up cycling networks do not generally rely on footways shared between pedestrians and cyclists in inner urban areas.

“They [shared paths] also represent a low level of service for cyclists.”

However, the design plan for Burgess Park West is proposing that two cycle routes be incorporated into the western side of the park and that cyclists share these tracks with pedestrians.

According to the Burgess Park West DAS | Assessment and Context document accompanying the proposal, *“the Current best practice design guidance for cycle routes has been analysed and the Quietway cycle route path widths represent a balanced assessment of cycling and pedestrian demands”*.

However, according to cycle counts by Friends of Burgess Park (undertaken in Oct/Nov 2016), it is the central path along the line of the old canal which currently takes the largest number of cyclists (already 250/hr and slightly more pedestrians). Yet this route is not being modified. Instead there seems to be a description of improving connections for cyclists with Portland Street on cycle route 23 - which is an on-road route and not in the park.

The layout of the quietways appears to bring Wells Way cyclists (route 23) off the road into the park and along a route which FOBP have found from their travel counts is largely used by pedestrians. This route will now be designated QW 8 and the flow will first cross the cyclists and pedestrians travelling predominantly east (morning) on QW 7 and then cross the previously mentioned heavily-used route running west (morning). The planners do not seem to have done some basic study of peak hour movements.

The conflict that cyclists and pedestrians are already suffering has been noted in previous consultations, and it will only be exacerbated by this proposal. This is not a sustainable design, since the improvement of cycling routes are designed to increase the numbers of commuter cyclists.

A study in the eastern part of the park by Living Streets, “the charity for everyday walking”, noted that the long straight routes in Burgess Park were encouraging cyclists to speed and that commuter cyclist routes should be on-road. The Burgess Park West proposal is for more long straight routes - so the lessons learned elsewhere in the park are being ignored. The Surrey Canal in Burgess Park is already notorious for the hazardous conditions which have been created for pedestrians whilst trying to provide a quiet route for cyclists.

This layout needs to be rethought, and the Friends of Burgess Park proposal for an orbital route around the park considered instead.