

FOBP object to the planning application

1. Openness and green space will be lost

The 2015 Masterplan review states some of the fundamental principles governing the design of the park. Page 11 notes the following:

“What did the community want? And what has been achieved” - ‘a fragmented park must become more coherent / new signage and coherence / opened views’. The council responded by designing open views across what had been a fragmented and dislocated park.

These new proposals fail to take into account that the ‘green expanse’ was designed to facilitate BBQ users by creating a picnic area large enough to allow room for people to take a turn at the BBQs and have space for eating food. The area proposed for the MUGA is currently the very popular and oversubscribed BBQ area. Large groups come to celebrate, spreading out onto the picnic area which is part of the facility. Losing this space has the potential to push large groups into a narrow area, blocking access off from north – south for other users during the day. Has the impact on these users been included in the equality impact assessment.

We disagree with the conclusion of the planning report and consider that the further extension of the sports facilities will harm Metropolitan Open Land.

The proposed MUGA **completely blocks the view** from the north side of the lake, **removing the sense of space, openness and connectivity** between park areas. This is important for feelings of safety and understanding the layout and negotiating the space. The peaceful character of the lakeside area will now be dominated by black fencing and sports lighting, ruining the natural, soft landscape around the lake.

If the MUGA is inserted into this area it will **form a bottleneck** between the new planned, enlarged astroturf areas and the large mound. This will reduce visibility and make a narrow walking corridor which raises safety concerns. While these new sports facilities are shoe-horned in, the park functionality is left with an awkward space without character or purpose.

The park will **lose green space used for picnics and family celebrations**. This is one of the areas with intense use. Where does Southwark propose creating a new picnic / family play area? This is a popular and accessible facility open to all that would be lost.

2. Not open access

The MUGA will cause another large area of park to be behind fences creating more areas of exclusion for park users. Informal use of green space for activity is as important as organised sport. Whilst additional biodiversity improvements are proposed there also needs to be a reduction in hard surfacing in the park to compensate.

The sports activity will be charged for and is not free. It is interesting that **some supporters for the new MUGA think it will be an open access facility for local youth** to use as they want. Perhaps consultation has not stressed clearly enough that the facility will only be accessible through the council's booking system.

Concerns have also been raised about **BBQ smoke and impact on health of players**, but the new MUGA will now actually be closer to the BBQs so more smoke nuisance is likely. There is a suggestion in the planning documents that the basket ball court would need to be covered. There seems to be confusion about whether this is for interior or exterior use. The planners report also mentions the potential need for further accessible toilets nearer the court, as the sports centre is some distance. Where would these be sited? That the MUGA is designed for the disabled further

raises the question of why it is positioned so far from the sports centre when surely it should be nearest to the changing facilities.

There isn't room in Burgess Park to contain every type of sports facility if it is to provide genuine parkland and unfortunately, the green credentials of Burgess Park are being eroded. Its value to physical and mental health as well as biodiversity in this busy urban area must be protected.

Mitigation

An assessment of the impact on the BBQ area, functionality and circulation space to navigate the space between the fencing and the hill should be a planning condition.

A wider review of MUGAS in and around Burgess Park across parks and housing land etc is needed to understand demand and supply for this facilities and ensuring in good repair etc.

A reduction in hard surfacing in the park to compensate.