

FOBP - Basketball Court additional comments June 2022

21/AP/3625

FOBP continues to object to the basketball court for the reasons set out in the comments January 2022. FOBP new comments:

1. Views from the lake bridge and impact on Metropolitan Open Land

It is no longer possible to see the way ahead or understand the park layout. The sports fencing effectively shuts down the park open views. The basketball fencing adds to this significantly by blocking the route and views.

The mock-up photos produced by FOBP show the impact on the park; no assessment appears to have been in the application of visual impact for park users. The intention of the bridge across the lake was to provide long views across the park and this to the south is now blocked by high fencing. Visually the fencing divides up and sections the park. It is not conducive to way-finding or travelling across the park. It is no longer possible to see the way ahead or understand the park layout.

The fencing and mounds have a seriously negative impact on the openness and sense of safety for park users.

2. Impact on the BBQ area and users and BBQ impact on sports players

The FOBP objected to the sports centre extension of the astro due to impact on the BBQ area and the further encroachment onto this space reduces the space for the BBQ users and the high numbers of people who have congregated in this area to BBQ and hold social gatherings. The high density housing and high number of flats in the area mean that many people do not have access to a garden or a space which allows BBQs. The BBQ activity is extremely popular and people BBQ across the park. The BBQ space will become overcrowded with no spill over space.

3. Community access

The basketball court will be accessed from the sports centre, what will the community access be? Previously the MUGA in the park and those on estates are free public access. There was an expectation that when the BMX track was built and the MUGA removed that a free access space would be provided elsewhere in the park and/or immediate area. However, MUGAs on the Aylesbury are also to be removed as part of the rebuild.

4. Consultation

FOBP does not consider that the consultation on the basketball proposal has been adequately undertaken:

- It has been tacked onto the sports centre as an afterthought as if the sports centre consultation was sufficient
- No apparent consideration of the massive impact on the BBQ area and lake views.

- The map used on the formal planning notices shows the basketball court without the approved sports centre. This has led to confusion; people not being clear about where it is and the implications. This can be demonstrated by the significant increase in objections once FOBP provided some visuals. Although this is a small application, in terms of Southwark's own statement of community involvement and developers charter it seems to fall far short of the type of consultation the council could be modelling. FOBP did write and raise this issue with the planning officer who referred to people accessing the actual planning documentation. More accurate information, providing easily accessible information for the public would be a better approach.

There has been one consultation meeting on Zoom about the basketball and FOBP have exchanged emails with the project officer on the details. But it has never felt as if the council was interested in anything except putting the basketball court on this site. No other options seem to have been considered.

The priority aim for Burgess Park should be as a green open space, free public access. Green space is not empty space; it has a purpose for health and wellbeing, wildlife and important for mediating the effect of climate change and increasing/retaining biodiversity.