

St Mary's Churchyard Public engagement report

June 2013

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Proposed design featuring two play areas, interactive water play and a pond in the park

Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Proposed design	Page 5
Raising awareness	Page 6
Engaging with the public - exhibitions	Page 8
Consulting with stakeholders and other groups	Page 9
Stakeholder groups specific participation	Page 9
Public engagement analysis summary	Pages 10 to 19
1. Play area	
2. Water play	
3. Trees and plants	
4. Closure of park gates	
5. Pond in the Park	
6. Landscape	
7. Park furniture	
8. Other park improvements	
Register to be kept informed	Page 20
What happens next?	Page 20
Respondents to email	Page 21
Appendices	Page 21

Introduction

St. Mary's Churchyard (for the purposes of the public engagement discussing the play equipment the area was referred to as St. Mary's Park*) is going to be redeveloped at the same time as the new Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre and One the Elephant homes and retail shops. The time frame of redevelopment is expected to be spring 2014 for construction works and to open in spring 2015 around the same time as the leisure centre.

There were three formal stakeholder consultations conducted in 2012; January, March and May with a focus on the leisure centre and public realm immediately outside the centre and into St. Mary's Churchyard. The consultation analysis for two reports are available at www.southwark.gov.uk/elephantleisure and as the third is part of a much larger report it can be provided on request. Priorities for the public realm element of the previous consultations included:

- keep the area simple/restful
- public realm as an extension to the park
- children play area
- cycling parking and seating facilities
- more tree planting and landscaping
- water features
- safety and security
- maintenance
- lighting

This campaign was not referred to as a 'consultation' because local residents had already been consulted with three times, and by using that feedback the project is now at the stage of developing the comments into a proposed design.

The project has reached the stage where funds have been secured which will enable a landscape contractor to prepare an image of what the park could look like after redevelopment. Elements to be included are pathways, play area, trees and planting, park furniture, signage, water features and decisions on whether to close existing entrances to avoid desire lines (short cuts) across the park towards the leisure centre, new and existing homes, bus stops, the Tube and main line station.

This was a four week stakeholder engagement which began on Monday 13 May and closed on Friday 7 June.

The primary focus of this engagement was to find out from residents, users and stakeholders the type of play equipment they would prefer to see in the two proposed play areas.

Historic information about the nearby area of St. Mary's Churchyard

Known previously as Newington (Newington Butts and Newington Causeway are two of the principal roads of the area), in the medieval period it was part of rural Surrey, in the manor of Walworth. This is listed in the Domesday Book as belonging to the Archbishop of Canterbury; the income from its rents and tithes supplied the monks at Christ Church Canterbury with their clothing, and a 'church' is mentioned. The parish was called St Mary, Newington, which church occupied the site of the leisure centre, next to the Tabernacle, and was first recorded by name in 1222.

St Mary's Church was rebuilt in 1720 and completely replaced in 1790, to a design of Francis Hurlbatt. Within another hundred years this too was to be demolished, with its replacement on Kennington Park Road ready in 1876. It was destroyed in 1940 by enemy action. The remains of the tower and an arch were incorporated into its replacement of 1958. The open space at the leisure centre is still known as St Mary's Churchyard, and the narrow pedestrian walk at its south end is Churchyard Row.

* The council has not changed the name of the location and has no intention of doing so. However, to ensure that as many people recognised the scope of the public discussion (park furniture, playground equipment, public space, fountains etc) the council thought the use of the word park in publicity materials was a better description.

Proposed design

The main aim of the project is to improve the immediate parkland adjacent the new leisure centre, 'One The Elephant' and the associated public realm. The new park is to match the scale and ambition of both the new leisure centre and residential tower. As a result of the new developments the access routes to and across the park will need to be changed resulting in the need to redesign specific elements of this area including relocating the play equipment.

An outline design has been developed by BCA landscape architects taking into account the feedback from the initial consultations in 2012. This included improving the pedestrian connection between the new leisure centre entrance and the adjacent park, which would have been blocked by the existing fenced playground in the existing arrangements.

Elements included with the design are

- new pathways
- extended and improved play area for over fives and under fives
- interactive water play feature
- additional trees and planting
- new park furniture including signage
- pond in the park

Play area

The proposed design includes the relocation of the under fives play equipment within an extended and improved play area also incorporating over fives play equipment.

The design also has taken into account the current condition of some of the existing play equipment and as such retains some of this equipment in the new design.

Pond in the park

An enclosed pond with a three metre high fountain is being proposed towards the entrance of the park which will be seen from the main road. The pond will also include planting to encourage wildlife. This feature is a component of the sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) for the One The Elephant tower through which rain water is stored and used to supply this and two smaller features (not water play facility below)

Water play facility

It is proposed that the new park will include a water play feature for children to interact. Current designs see this located near to the play area which will allow children to jump and play in the jets of water (similar to the play feature in Burgess Park).

Raising awareness

Establishing an image

The four week public engagement consisted of informing the public about the main project, so a colourful image and key was created to provide an immediate recognition. This consisted of a location 'map' showing the park in relation to the proposed play areas, water features, leisure centre and One The Elephant.

Information distribution

Revitalise1 and the image were used on all marketing materials. Posters (A3 and A4 50 of each size) and 4,000 postcards were distributed to local residents, shops in the shopping centre, businesses and nearby churches to inform of the two events and the four week campaign. This was to ensure a wider audience was reached and multiple opportunities to see the key messages were achieved.

Six external banners (3 metres x 1 metre) were fixed to the railings around the park, on the external hoarding of the back of the leisure centre, front hoarding of One The Elephant and at the subway entrance outside London College of Communication.

Database

The database captured from the initial 2010 Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre consultation and subsequently added to over the past two years was used to target visitors. The public workshops conducted in 2012 generated 52 people that had expressed an interest in the public realm aspects around the leisure centre and these too were added.

At the close of the campaign the database now has 1845 contacts. See page six for the groups of contacts on the database.

Email notification – targeting the database

Two personalised mail merged emails were sent to the database. The first was sent on Monday 13 May to introduce the campaign and web pages and second on Friday 24 May to prompt people to visit the park over the bank holiday weekend to see the six panels and complete the questionnaire online.

Web /online interaction

A series of web pages were created to introduce the public engagement and provide an online e-form for people to complete, along with a 'register to be kept informed' e-form. Also linked to the pages were the previous consultation reports from 2012, the history of St. Mary's Churchyard and nearby area dating back to 1AD, project news with estimated dates of redevelopment and frequently asked questions.

The launch email was abridged to provide content for digital interaction on the council's Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Newspaper advertisements

There were two full page advertisements placed in Southwark News with the message to direct readers to the website and attend the exhibitions and were published on 16 May and 30 May. The circulation for Southwark News is estimated in the region of 7,000 and is published on Thursday's.

Press coverage

There were three editorials; Southwark News, London SE1 online and Sports Management

- London SE1 online news – <http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/6833>
- Sports Management – <http://www.sportsmanagement.co.uk/detail1.cfm?pagetype=detail&subject=news&codeID=305480&site=SM&dom=N>

Engaging with the public – exhibitions

Two exhibitions were held during the campaign aimed to reach the widest and diverse members of the public that might have an interest in the regeneration of St. Mary's Churchyard.

- Saturday 18 May, noon to 3pm at St. Mary's Churchyard (30 attendees)
- Tuesday 21 May, 6pm to 8pm at London College of Communication (ten attendees)

Exhibition content

There were two public meetings where the six A1 panels were exhibited. These panels consisted of concept visuals, different play equipment to compare and consider examples of similar park and play styles working around the UK and text to explain the proposal. At the two exhibitions visitors were asked to review the proposed design and complete the questionnaire.

In the same week of the launch two sets of these panels were displayed on the external railings of the park, one facing Newington Butts and the other at Churchyard Row (Brook Street end). Immediately after the second event the third set of panels were fixed to the Kennington Park Road entrance of the park.

To accompany the panels were banners and A3 posters asking visitors to review the proposed design and complete the questionnaire online.

The six panels consisted of these headings

1. Existing play area and layout in relation to the leisure centre and One The Elephant
2. Proposed play area masterplan – providing key features
3. Play areas enhanced – images and explanation of proposed equipment
4. Retained or relocated play equipment
5. Water features including – pond in the park, geyser and interactive fountains
6. Interactive fountain plaza – with images of similar areas being used

Consulting with stakeholders and other groups

By combining previous data from 2010 and 2012 Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre project consultations the database now contains 1845 contacts. These are groups of people engaged across the campaign.

Stakeholder groups

- Local businesses and communities (churches of all faiths, shops and associated networks)
- Interested parties residents (registered via the council website for ECLC in 2010 to 2013)
- Council (specific departments including regeneration, parks, public realm, community safety and support, children and youth services, cabinet members, ward councillors and community council members)
- Nearby council cabinet members, ward councillors and communications – Lambeth Council
- Tenants Residents Associations for Strata, Draper House Estate
- Southwark Cyclists group
- Parents and children via nursery schools
- Schools (junior and secondary), colleges and universities
- General Practitioners (and patients through posters)
- Priority groups – Over 60s/under 16s/ BME/ Disability
- Kings College Hospital, South London and Maudsley
- Media – newspapers and social media
- Websites – Council and Lend Lease
- Greater London Authority

Stakeholder groups specific participation

Strata the Draper House Estate – created the email content into a letter format, printed letters for residents and arranged with concierge and building manager to distribute throughout the buildings. A3 posters were also placed on notice boards across the Draper House Estate and inside the Strata apartment block.

Public engagement analysis summary

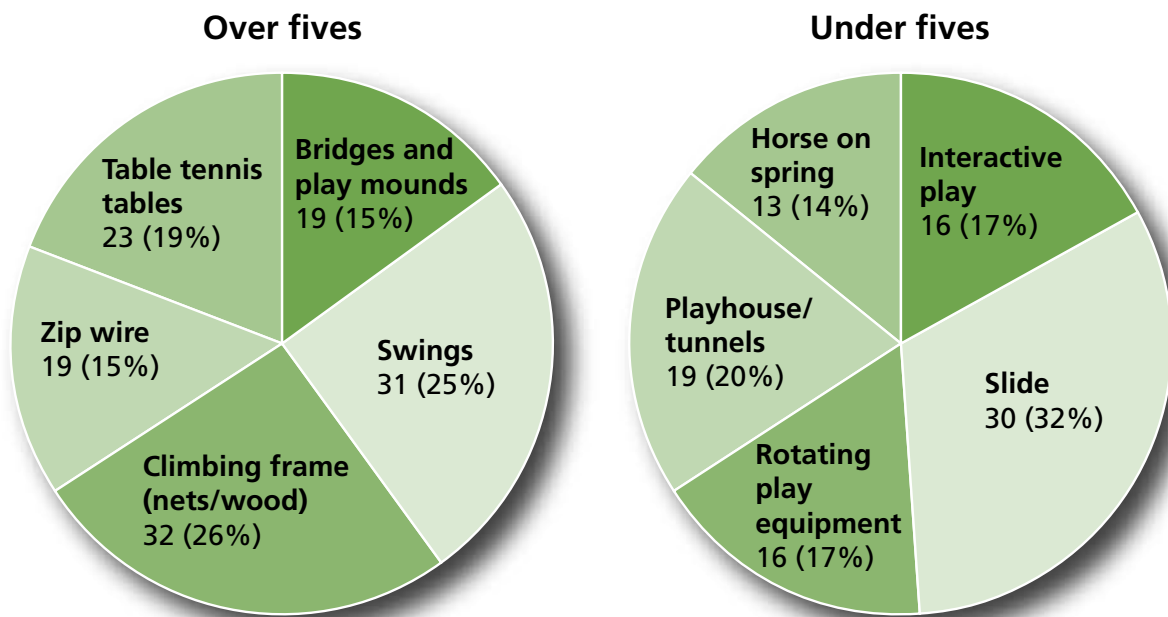
Visitors to the exhibitions could opt to complete the form at the event or take it home and complete online. The completed forms on paper were entered via online into the database.

There were eight sections to the questionnaire to encourage opinion to provide an indication as to the type of park that local residents and children will use and the comments will help to create the final design visuals expected to be submitted for planning approval in July.

Total number of responses received **53**

1. Play area

We are proposing to upgrade the play area and would like to know what play equipment would you like to keep and what additional equipment to install? (Tick all that apply)



Total number of boxes selected **124**

Total number of boxes selected **124**

Other suggestions for over fives

- Trampoline (inset into ground)
- Keep big swing that is there.
- We like the metal frame. Zip wire can be good but only a few can play at once. Bring back large spinner please.
- Large chess sets.
- Adult exercise machines. Allows gym to open into park like at Burgess Park.

- Adult play equipment.
- Sandbox.

Other suggestions for under fives

- Swings
- The kids just love to rotate
- Play cars

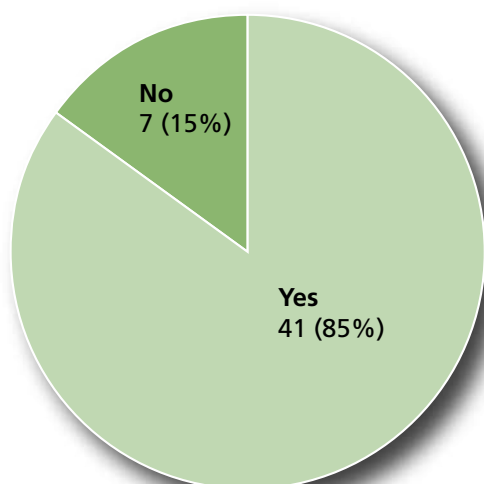
Comments

- Plenty of swings for small children, it's the only play equipment very young children (up to about 18ms) can use.
- Keep it tidy/clean. Replace equipment when it breaks down. Play area is boring, especially under fives area. Swing chains are too short, even for small children. Sand pit would be good. Replace tree in play area, is too exposed in summer. Too many orange bumps, although keeping a few would be ok fun. The large springy things are fun (one broken and removed now), as was the large spinney thing that was removed. Hopefully traffic from the leisure centre will be 'eyes on the street' and stop the vandalism. I'd like the play area to be seen as an extension to the leisure centre, not 'stuck on its own' as I get a sense of being, somewhat unpleasantly, 'watched' and exposed when in that playground. We do like the metal climbing frame, it is challenging. And the children love the spinning equipment, although not quite so many are necessary. Swings are always good value; our children never seem to tire of them (with long chains). See Archbishop's Park for a good playground (bad swings though, see Ufford St. Park for great swings).
- The climbing frame could be bigger.
- The climbing frame needs to have a large capacity and be like a 'hamster cage' to entertain as many children as possible.
- The swing has always been heavily used – more would be great. The orange mounds and large stones also act as 'markers' and effect positively where people sit and use the park. Please do NOT dilute these as they give the park a real visual identity. I do not like the new play equipment that is being proposed – it seems 'municipal' and not in keeping with the existing scheme (especially the wooden mound and the reflective discs). There is a great trampoline which is highly used by under fives in the Canterbury Estate. The addition of table tennis will attract older people and parents – this is good.

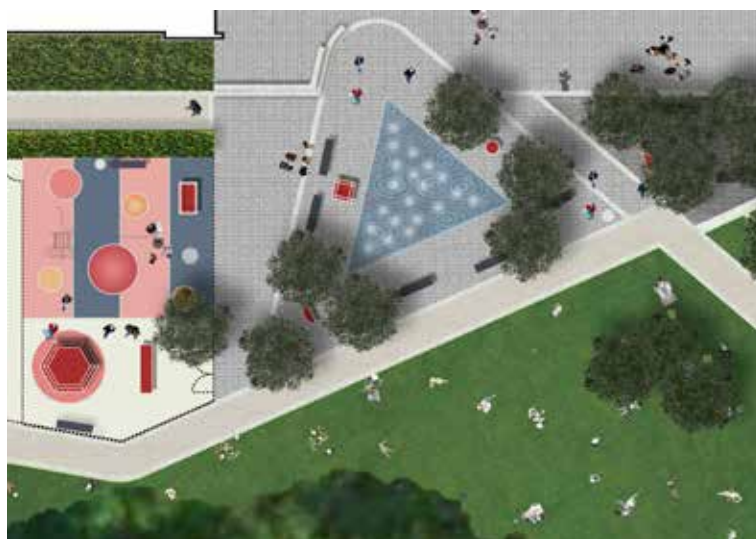
2. Water play

A water play area for children to interact with is being proposed near to the play area. Children will be able to jump and play in the jets of water (similar to the use in Burgess Park).

Do you like this idea?



Total number of responses **48**



Proposed design shows under fives area and interactive water play.

Comments

- I like the ideas to have water fountains and a pond, but I would like assurances of the safety provisions you will put in place, especially for children.
- Water play is fine on day one but will present an unaffordable maintenance burden to LBS in perpetuity and in the current revenue climate this is not sustainable long term and should be rejected by LBS. There are other, lower maintenance ways to achieve water play without the ubiquitous and frankly unimaginative ground jets.
- Water features are very important, especially the jets for kids to play in.

3. Trees and plants

We are proposing to provide additional planting in the park including trees and shrubs.

Do you like this idea?

Yes 48 – 100% No 0

Total number of responses **48**

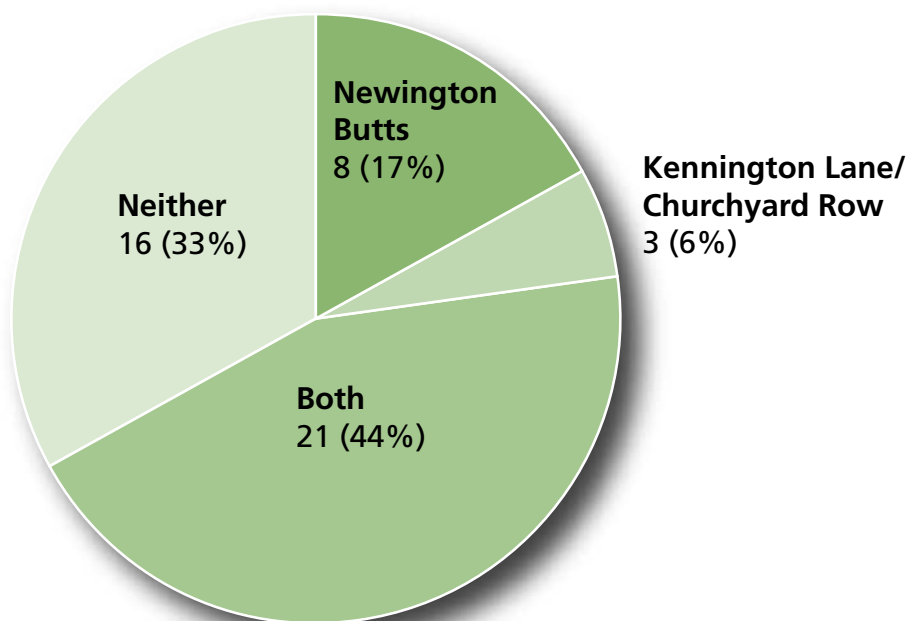
Comments

- Do not plant decorative tick-boxing trees: bunches of bamboos, “bio diverse” clusters of trees that won’t survive. Think big: plant canopy generating trees to compliment those already there. Fruit or nut bearing trees. Please show signs of comprehension that this is the 21st century and the science is now pretty established on very important pressures re climate. The previous park made all the same-old-same-old very expensive and very stupid mistakes -though the wide wood-y borders are good. Don’t do it again!
- Hedging or big prickly bushes in the borders that small birds can nest in safe from crows/magpies etc.
- Protect trees from dogs who are encouraged to use them for scratching.
- I like the idea of more planting and shrubs but I’d like to see the trees cleared in the middle of the park so that there is a large open area that gets enough sun to go and sunbathe in.
- Plant and maintain additional flowers, trees, shrubs and plant life. These will obviously need to be well maintained. I think trying to attract wildlife is a great idea. The park should be an enjoyable place to escape from busy lives in the city. Creating a pleasant green space is the key to this.
- More areas of ‘wild’ planting to encourage bees and wildlife.
- Planting new plants is an excellent idea, but they must not create any hidden areas which might encourage criminal activity.
- Please do not cut down any more mature trees.
- More trees and flowerbeds - to be made a family destination for picnics etc.,
- Species related to churchyard, Ash and Yew and use trees to signify entrances.
- Keep as much grass as possible, and as little paved or concreted over. Thanks, we love this park
- Plant more trees than there is on the plan.
- The main issue in the park now is that you can really hear the traffic on two sides. The planting along the longer side (Newington Butts/South side) needs to be built up with taller and thicker bushes so that you can’t see or hear the traffic from within the park and it becomes a more peaceful public space.

- Keep the mature trees for shade and maybe an artist sculpture for shade.
- Maybe have some shielding from the road - visual, and some of the noise - perhaps a low hedge. - Some more wildlife habitat - maybe nesting boxes in the trees, and something to attract them more often - maybe some feeders. Flowers specifically for bees and butterflies - as from the company that did this for the Olympic Park.
- Charming design. But why take up more of the green space. This is a poorly drained area and soak up land is needed.
- Replace the London Plane that was down under cavat. Suggest with London Plane's – NOT pine.
- The first bed next to the bus stops needs to be high planting to create colour and height – a buffer from noise and to hide the softer area behind.

4. Closure of park gates

Along the western side of the park there are two entrances. We are proposing to close one of these entrances to avoid desire lines (pathways made by users as a short cut to reach a



destination). Which entrance would you like to see closed?

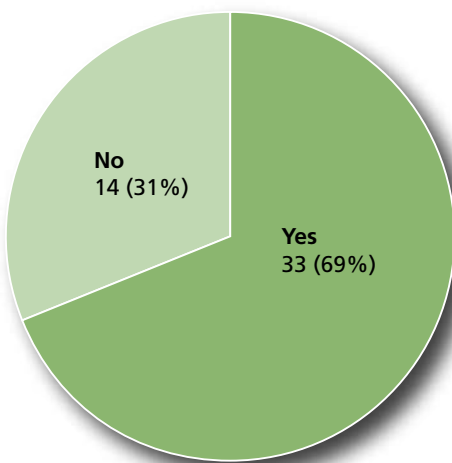
Total number of responses **48**

Comments

- Until you have experienced a problem then you can provide the solution!
- The long side of the park that runs along Newington Butts needs more planting so you can't see the traffic from the park.
- Keep both entrances from Churchyard Row open. Keep main churchyard gate in place and make more of local history.
- Absolutely not! People walking through the park keeps it active and alive on dull days (and secure). I always make a point of walking through it – do not stop this.

5. Pond in the Park

An enclosed pond with a three metre high fountain is being proposed towards the entrance of the park which will be seen from the main road. The pond will also include planting to encourage wildlife.



Do you like this idea?

Total number of responses **48**



Proposed design showing pond in the park from Newington Butts entrance.

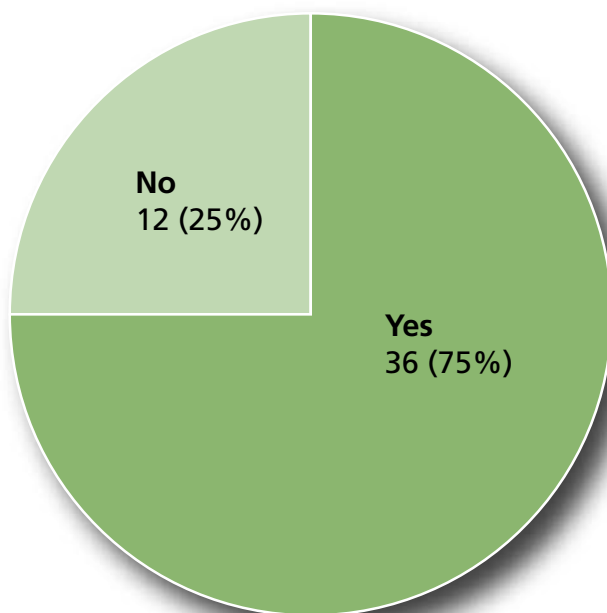
Comments

- Pond is a good idea but will probably be jumped in by drunk people (who also sleep in the park overnight/play in the children's playground especially in summer).
- I like the pond idea but it will get trashed too easily unfortunately.
- Pond in the park? Maintenance headache in perpetuity, not sustainable, LBS should reject this idea. I always think designers suggest water bodies when they have run out of other ideas for interactive or wildlife features. Come on designers; put your thinking hats on!
- Can we have ducks? Remove three beds at front and put back grass. Add fence at front near road.
- Don't want the pond in the park, we need grass area instead.
- The seating area (next to the fountain) is very unresolved and missing from all of the plans – I want to sit in the park – not here – make it 'green'!

6. Landscape

In the centre of the park there are a group of rounded stones. We are proposing to remove the stones and return the area to grass.

Do you like this idea?



Total number of responses **48**

Comments

- Or small elephant statues hidden or dotted around the park, in the planting etc - but a nice sophisticated/lifelike design not a tacky cartoon looking elephant. Something like the large elephant head at Waterloo underground station, but on a smaller scale.
- As long as the stone in the centre go, I'm quite happy with all the proposals.
- The rounded stones are well used.
- Need something to replace the stones - except grass.
- Get rid of junk, including unnecessary lamp posts etc., integrate furniture, bins, lighting, signs.
- The landscape proposal seems very triangular and 'bitty' – it could be much simpler. The SUDS lake I like in principle, but this area should be more grass – we were promised 'MORE GREEN' if the children's playground was reconfigured. The whole area around the new residential tower and leisure centre seems too hard – we have acres of hard landscape around the Strata – we want more green!!
- I do want a 'significant increase in green' as listed, but I don't see it on your plans – I don't want overdesigned hard landscaping – this is a community park that is very well used. We want more green and more activities; table tennis and zip wires are not 'design'.
- The stones give the park its identity.

7. Park furniture

What type of seating would you prefer to use?



Total number of responses **47**

Other suggestions

Both types of seating – seven responses

- It's not just about dumping seats, randomly and with a tick. Think about soft/hard enclosure for instance: a quiet area?
- Stones look fun but little play value unless placed closer together.
- Polished concrete seating
- Concrete ledges for BMX and skaters use – ledges or ramps.
- Landscape elements that can be used as seats. See York Square Chelsea and Sloane Square.
- Traditional benches are better for older people.
- A mixture of both, but hoping that the wooden plinths will not attract skater-boarders.

8. What other improvements do you believe we could make to the park/ comments?

Comments received relevant to questions asked have been captured in previous sections. These comments relate to other observations of potential park improvements.

- Outdoor gym/exercise equipment so leisure centre connects into park – three comments
- More bins and more rubbish collections (especially in summer).
- Work on lighting to make the park secure at night.
- Reserve a space for a wooden coffee shop?
- Improve the arrangements for cyclists and pedestrians to not conflict on Churchyard row with a wider step back area by the crossing, fewer railings and a clearer pedestrian path parallel to Churchyard Row.
- Better maintenance, there has been lots of planting but often it gets trampled or not maintained properly. Big issue with dog dirt on grass and owners letting dogs off leads when small children are around.
- Keep or put in new skate boarding ramps and blocks.
- Dog gym equipment.
- Plenty of cycle parking (Sheffield racks)
- Maybe have some sort of canopy to shelter under when it rains, and maybe a van that offers refreshments.

- This sport (BMX) is fast becoming a hub of London for meeting for extreme sports and would be missed if removed - why not improve?
- Renew the pavements.
- Water fountain providing drinking water Cycle throughout to E&C Shopping Centre.
- Make sure there is a budget for maintaining equipment, grass, flowers etc., to a high standard.
- Nice ideas, but who will be responsible to check the area is cared for and not end up 'scrappy'?
- Add some elements that could be used for skateboarding.
- Raise awareness of it by integrating it within a widely accessible map of Elephant and Castle's green public places - e.g. pedestrian maps on the pavement, walking guides, online.
- Host more events here, as you do already for Elephant and the Nun festival.
- Really seriously ensure there is a higher standard of horticultural care to it than the last five years. Despite a celebrity landscape architect being employed to design it (Martha Schwartz) maintenance here has been very poor.
- Please can we have notices asking cyclists to dismount when passing through the park. Cycling should be prohibited on the footpaths. It is dangerous enough for an adult to have a bike come silently from behind on a narrow path but it is particularly dangerous for small children to have bikes on the paths, given that children can suddenly change direction without notice!
- I have looked at your boards and think that the work will transform Elephant and Castle into a very desirable area.



Register to be kept informed

There is a registration form which will remain open for the entire duration of the St. Mary's Churchyard project. By registering you will be kept informed by email of the project developments.

Any comments provided via this eform will be read by the project team; however the comments will not influence the outcome of the project designs at this stage, but may still contribute in the longer term.

To register to be kept informed please visit **www.southwark.gov.uk/stmaryschurchyard**

What happens next?

The project is targeting the submission of a planning application in the summer 2013. Due to the size of the required joint construction compound for the leisure centre and residential development it will not be possible to undertake the park works in 2014. Therefore it is proposed to undertake the playground improvements first so that they are complete in time for the planned opening of the new leisure centre in spring 2015.

The web page has been updated since the stakeholder engagement closed and will continue to be as key dates and activities of the project developments are announced.

2013	
May to June	Public engagement of new park design
July	Analysis of engagement feedback
July	Submission to Planning of final design
Autumn	Expected Planning Approval
Winter	Construction work on the play area begins

2014	
Spring	Construction work on the play area continues
Summer	New play area opens
Autumn	Redevelopment work begins on remaining park sections

If you have provided the council with your email address then you receive an update via an enewsletter as the projects develop.

Respondents by email

There were five respondents that provided email contributions to the public engagement from local residents; these are named below in order of date received and are available to download from the website.

1. 13 May, Jennifer Carrigan
2. 18 May, Michael Hunt
3. 21 May, Diana Cochrane
4. 24 May, Catherine Coker
5. 26 May, Phil Heaton

Appendices

- Six design panels
- Five email responses