

Revitalise Peckham Rye Public Engagement Event, 7 May 2016

Summary

A public engagement event was held on Saturday 7 May 2016 at the Children's Playroom, Peckham Rye Common, to present concept designs for Southwark Council's Revitalise Peckham Rye initiative. The designs by Turkington Martin and Curl la Tourelle Head provide a new play area, new changing rooms, a new children's playroom and landscaping works. The event ran from 12 noon to 5pm and successfully engaged a diverse range of park users.

Members of the design team, Southwark Council's project manager and staff from the Building Exploratory were present to speak to those attending. In total conversations with 71 people were held and 36 questionnaires were completed on the day. A further three questionnaires were received subsequently and a number of phone conversations have taken place.

Feedback on concept design was largely positive and some useful perspectives of park users were documented as follows:

Overall proposal

The concept designs for the new facilities were well received overall and commended for their thoughtful approach:

"A sensible reorganisation." "Excellent idea, good low impact please."

"An excellent idea. Very well thought out and welcome development for a much-loved park."

"It seems that every care has been taken to accommodate all needs. I like the concept design a lot."

Play space

The majority of those with children were excited by the extent of the new play area and thought it long overdue. Some of those without children were concerned about the size of the play area and the interruption of views across the Common towards the new facility.

Parents were unequivocally excited about the new facility identifying the following positive benefits:

- Accommodation of play for all ages
- Proximity to the cafe and the provision of seating for parents
- Variety of types of play being offered.
- Design is respectful of its setting on the edge of the common.

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“Great idea! Good play space for all ages at Peckham Rye is needed.”
“It’s great to see a proposal offering play for all age groups”

“Seems good, well considered and respectful of sightlines and trees and users.”

“Superb. Long overdue. Great that it’s close to the café.”

The key elements people would like to see developed in the next design build upon this positive feedback:

“Overall good, essential that older kids play is also considered.”

“I really like the concept design. Ensure that any water play feature is constructed fit for purpose.”

“Differentiate play provision across the park, and consider the relationship with the adventure playground”

Older park users and those without children were in the minority on the day, however a number of those present expressed concerns about the size of the playground and the view of it across the Common from the north west. There was also a request for people without children to be considered.

“It should just occupy the car park area and not extend into the common. It must be screened/designed so that it does not visually intrude on the view across the common.”

“It’s too large. It should stay within the footprint of the existing car park and not build onto green site. It should be screened – the existing boundary hedge is a good start – it should also be locked at night.”

“We are already losing part of the common to the new car park and the old car park site is huge. Please do not extend the site unnecessarily.”

“It seems more inclusive and less isolated from the café. Please ensure that non-family users of the area are considered, especially around the café.

Changing rooms

The changing room evoked very little controversy. Most people agreed that it was an essential provision, urgently needed, and that the proposed location with its proximity to the football pitches was perfect.

“I think it’s a great idea as most people playing sport seem to change by their cars.”

“Much, much more sensible location. Make sure there are bins by the

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changing rooms. Make sure the whole project has a holistic approach. I will absolutely use the facilities once built.”

A few raised issues about the view across the park and the loss of space in the adventure playground:

“Much needed, but make sure they are big enough, but well designed and not large in bulk. They should be integrated into landscape and not dominate the area.”

“Please consider views from the park, which currently doesn’t have buildings overlooking it.”

“Don’t lose any high usage area i.e. adventure play area.”

One park user urged the team to consider the existing café building when developing the design for the new changing rooms and children’s playroom.

“It would be great if the building shared the qualities of the park café – creating a family of buildings within the park.”

Playroom

In the main respondents considered the proposed location of the playroom to be good and most appreciated the proximity to the adventure playground. As with the changing rooms, concern was expressed about how much of the adventure playground space would be needed for the playroom and its outside play area. People were genuinely pleased to learn that the existing small play area between the lake and the adventure playground would remain.

Of the proposed location, people commented:

“It makes good sense. I use it daily.”

“Fine location. Please less Tarmac for outside play.”

“Great, we’ll use it when our kids are older.”

“Please retain the existing playground by the pond. It’s really well used and has good balance of sun and shade.”

The loss of space from the adventure playground was the main concern expressed by respondents who urged the design team to minimise the space taken for the new buildings. One suggested switching the two proposed facilities around in order to maximise views of the park:

“The design should not take up too much space from the adventure playground. There should be no overall loss of public open space.”

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“Should make use of existing views over the park and allow lots of light into the building. Could the playroom/changing room positions be swapped to allow more light into playroom and views across the park? Low level windows, fun design features.”

One person expressed disappointment at hearing that the existing children’s playroom would be demolished: *“Please retain the old POW building.”* a significant feature of the history of the park and should, in my view be retained.”

Adventure Playground

Many respondents expressed concern about the future of the adventure playground and repeated rumours they had heard about its closure. There was a frequently expressed request to consider the role of the adventure playground both with respect to the use of its open space and its role in the Revitalise Peckham Rye initiative.

“I’ve heard rumours that the adventure playground it’s shutting. I really hope that’s not going to happen. It’s such a great resource.”

“Just don’t loose the adventure or Terry! I am very relieved as there have been many rumours about losing large parts of the adventure and that doesn’t seem to be the case!”

“It seems that every effort will be made to keep as much of the adventure playground as possible and definitely the sports cage, which is very important to me.”

A more active consideration of the adventure playground in the initiative was suggested by several respondents who suggested clarifying the types of play offered at Peckham Rye in order to create a positive relationship between the new play area and the adventure playground and ensure that the latter is not undermined:

“I would like to see the adventure playground viewed as a positive.”

“We use the adventure playground a lot. Please ensure that it stays and is consulted/supported in all decisions.”

Other

A number of general issues were raised by individuals including:

- Poor toilet provision near the new play area
- Need to consider vehicle access near the play area
- Disability access across the initiative

Summary of key points

The following key points emerged during the public engagement event on 7 May 2016 and should be taken into consideration during next stage of design:

- Variety of play and facilities for all ages
- Size of play area and views to it across the common
- Presentation of play opportunities across the park
- Changing and playroom design to enhance location
- Extent of adventure play ground site used