

Revitalise Peckham Rye

**Report on Public Consultation and Engagement Event
Saturday 9 July 2016**



Summary

A public engagement event was held on Saturday 9 July 2016 at the Peckham Rye Adventure Centre, Peckham Rye Park, to present Stage 3 designs for Southwark Council's Revitalise Peckham Rye initiative. The designs by Turkington Martin and Curl la Tourelle Head provide for 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 and staff from the Building Exploratory were present to speak to those attending. In total conversations with 75 adults were held and 35 questionnaires were completed on the day. A further two questionnaires were received subsequently along and a number of phone conversations and email exchanges have taken place.

A wide range of families with children of different ages participated in the consultation and people without children came specifically to view the more developed designs for the new leisure facilities.

Feedback on the design was positive and a range of perspectives of park users were documented. There were requests for greater clarification of intention in some areas and suggestions for additions or changes in others. The response received is outlined in detail below.

Proposed Play Area

The designs for the new facilities were generally well received and widely commended for their thoughtful and inclusive approach.

"I like the use of such a good location for playground - replacing the car park."

"Looks amazing – a great development for the park"

"Love it, great new space for children without retracting from the Rye, good use of space and catering to the huge young population."

"Looks exciting! Children need these spaces."

The proposed play area was considered by most to be varied and well thought out. Those responding particularly liked:

- The three zone approach, with its combination of different areas.
- That varying needs appeared to have been thoughtfully accounted for, with activities for all ages
- The natural look of the overall design and the play equipment.

People responded well to the types of equipment and play opportunities being put forward by the design team and referred specifically to the inclusion of sand and water play:

“Water play is crucial.”

“Excellent! Especially the sand and water area. My son loves it!”

Some felt that the images of the play area on display were a little sparse in terms of equipment and could do with a little more to meet the potential demand:

“The play area needs more climbing equipment for younger children, bars, things to climb on. Diggers are fun but they break easily.”

The main queries were around execution of the works and the speed of delivery. Questions about the programme and quality of the work were asked along with requests that lessons learnt from the small play area on the common were remembered. The following statements sum up the feedback in this area:

- Great in principle so long as there are no compromises in quality.
- Build seems very slow, can it go faster than 2018? I hope the project does not take long to build and is done by the right time of the year.
- Avoid the issues of the “play area” by one o’clock club – *“it is not a success. Make sure the water feature is designed correctly as the existing one does not work.”*

A few additional comments and concerns about issues such as maintenance of the play area once complete and requests for the inclusion of specific features and facilities in the play area were received.

- A significant number of people expressed a *“need for more toilets/changing facilities by the new play area”*, citing the small number available in the café and the poor standard of those by the park office.
- What effect will wet weather have on the sandy play area, how it will work in winter?
- *“What are the maintenance requirements of the sand and water play areas? Won’t it be expensive to run them?”*
- Please ensure that the boundaries of the play area are dog proof.

Proposed Changing Rooms

Those present at the event agreed that the changing rooms were in a sensible location and “much needed” by the local community. There were comments on access and the use of the new facilities, specifically that they were affordable and available to everyone. There were a some specific responses to the design of the accommodation being provided.

“It helps benefit those in sport and helps accommodate them in the park, which is important for young people.”

There was an enthusiasm to see the new changing rooms well used and to make sure that they were easy to book and affordable to all community sports groups in the area:

“Include all sports teams – don’t put any of the off!”

- “It’s not apparent that any user groups, other than footballers have been considered.”
- Permanent storage space for other users of Peckham Rye Park such as the weekly Parkrun group was suggested: *“Parkrun – they have around 200 runners each week.”*

There were a few questions about the extent of facilities being provided, which were largely concerned with the space available and washing areas:

- Make sure teams have enough room and good access
- *“Four showers doesn’t seem enough if 44+ people have been playing football.”*
- Make sure that there are designated toilets next to it.

A number of respondents addressed the design of the proposed changing rooms and had requests and suggestions about how they looked:

“Great! It will look far better than the existing pre-fabs!”

- I like the shape of the building, but think it could be more colourful.
- Could children take part in the designs and add their own personal stamp on it? For example murals, landscaping?
- *“Not too many big buildings please, keep it green.”*

Very few people we spoke to raised concerns about the impact of the changing rooms on the adventure playground, despite the fact that it is part of the bigger scheme which includes the proposed children’s playroom.

“Good to have more facilities to cater for more people as long as it doesn’t take over too much from the adventure playground.”

Proposed Children’s Playroom

Only a few respondents commented on the design of the children’s playroom, beyond a general acknowledgement that it was a positive improvement to the facilities currently provided. There were concerns expressed about the impact on the adventure playground, however these were largely to do with a wider concern about the future of the service and not the principle of co-location, though. There were also comments on the loss of sightlines to the “MUGA” from the adventure playground building.

“It will be lovely to have something purpose built”

“Good use of space”

“In theory excellent, great as something for under 5’s”

General feedback on the playroom design was as follows:

- *“I like the openness.”*
- *Good to get indoor space*
- *The outside space in the existing play area is well used is there enough in the new plan?*
- *“It looks great, keep up the communication.”*

A number of those responding reflected on the proximity of the children’s playroom and the adventure playground:

“You shouldn’t put under 5s next to a park where older kids swear and skate park as the older boys in the skate park smoke.”

“Make sure the pre-school area is closed or kept separate from adventure. Perhaps some play equipment for young children on the garden area of the new playroom, so little ones are kept separate?”

“To have a under 5’s building on the same premises as an over 8’s adventure playground (8-15) does not seem practical.”

One comment post the event suggested that a stay and play in the proposed location would not attract the current stay and play audience, however this is at odds with previous consultation with users of the current playroom. If there are concerns about the location, further consultation with this group could be undertaken.

Impact on the Adventure Playground



The people we spoke to during the consultation event clearly adored the adventure playground and were concerned about its future as a service. With respect to co-location with the children's playroom the main concern was to ensure that the adventure playground was not over run by younger children, and that older children still feel it was their space. Many of those we spoke to considered there to be few public facilities in the area for older children.

"The adventure playground is an important part of the community."

"I am very pleased that we can keep the existing adventure playground."

On the day of the public event, the weather was good and the adventure playground was packed for the duration. Notably it seemed to be occupied by families with children of all ages, including many under fives and their siblings. There were few teenagers or unaccompanied children over eight, though they may come more often during the week after school. People commented on the irony of holding an event discussing new facilities at a time when the future of a treasured facility and its staff team was uncertain. Though this included a number of parents who were concerned at what they had "heard" or were under the impression was going to happen. The majority of these respondents were relieved that the adventure playground was not currently under threat of closure.

There were some concerns expressed about the proximity of the playroom and the adventure play centre and the mix of younger and older children that

implied. However there was much less concern about the loss of space from the adventure playground than was anticipated or encountered during previous consultation events.

“My main concern is what will happen to the existing adventure playground. When will we be told? What about provision for older children who are under served even with the adventure playground and who will be even more so if it closes.”

“Please protect the adventure playground. My entire family use it regularly, it’s a great place to come, and I trust the staff to look out for my children.”

“I really think it’s all a bad idea as I think the old kids should have a good place like the adventure and shouldn’t have to worry about other baby’s screaming. I live so far away but I come down here every week just so my older boys have somewhere safe/fun.”

Views to the MUGA

Being able to observe the football pitch from the adventure playground was raised as being of importance by a number of those we talked with. The position of the new children’s playroom results in the loss of sightlines of the MUGA from the adventure playground building.

“The location of the proposed building will block the view of the MUGA from the adventure playground building meaning staff will not be able to monitor behaviour/safety issues. In my view this is a serious health & safety concern.”

“I’m glad the adventure playground, and the log and ditch are staying. My kids are older now, but I always thought the existing toddler playground (swings) could use with an upgrade too.”



Other

A number of general issues were raised by individuals about the impact of the Revitalise Peckham Rye project and the opportunities it presented to the local area. There was a lack of engagement with the design team's suggestion that the River Peck might become a focus for community engagement at previous consultation events, but this came up as an area of interest for some:

"It would be amazing to use the River Peck and turn that into a water play area – it's a natural resource so use it!"

The loss of the prisoner of war hut which houses the currently children's playroom was also raised by a few.

"The POW hut may not be fit for it's current use, but it is a historic building and shouldn't be simply demolished without due consideration."

"What is going to be put on the POW cabin site as a reminder of what was there?"

Finally there were pleas about the Rye's existing play areas, some arguing for their retention:

"I don't understand why the climbing frame and bars by the 1 o'clock club are going. It cost a lot of money to put in, why spend more money ripping this out?"

Summary of key points

The following key points emerged during the public engagement event on 9th July 2016 and should be taken into consideration during next stage of design:

- Design is thoughtful and inclusive
- There is a good variety of play and facilities for all ages
- The changing rooms are much needed, and not controversial
- Sightlines from adventure play building to the MUGA need to be considered
- Consider the mix of older and younger children
- There are concerns about the adequate provision of toilets and baby changing facilities