

The Building Exploratory

Revitalise Peckham Rye

Report on Community Engagement and Consultation
On proposals for the creation of a new play area and relocation of car park

The Building Exploratory
September 2015

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Summary

The Building Exploratory carried out a period of public consultation from July to September 2015 on Southwark Council's proposals to move the car park on Peckham Rye to "the mound" area and to create a new super play area on the site of the existing car park.

Those we engaged with were broadly supportive of the proposal with the majority approving of the plan to move the car park from the common to the more discrete location proposed. Plans for the new play area enjoyed the most support from children and parents, who greeted them with great excitement. There were qualifications from some residents, but on the whole, these focused on detail rather than the plan in its entirety.

We also spoke to residents about their use of recycling facilities in the car park a third of whom reported using the facility on an irregular basis.

A small number of emails and phone calls were received from local residents have been received by the Building Exploratory from residents unable to attend the public event. In addition 15 people completed a questionnaire published on Southwark Council's website. Some of these presented more negative responses to the proposals and some offered suggestions for the wider Revitalise Peckham Rye project.

Approach

The Building Exploratory was appointed by Southwark Council in June 2015 to engage and consult key stakeholders and local residents on the revised Revitalise Peckham Rye proposal.

Building upon the consultation undertaken during 2014, the Council had in the intervening period reviewed plans for improving play and sports facilities in the park to provide a new children's playroom, football changing rooms, a new play area and to move the car park off the common to a more discrete location.

The consultation, carried out during the three months from July to September 2015, focused primarily on the proposal to create a new state of the art play area on the current site of the car park and to relocate the car park to the area known as the "Mound".

The consultation consisted of the following:

- One to one conversations with key stakeholders; representatives of service providers and user groups including: the children's playroom manager, Southwark Allstars Football Club, the adventure playground manager, the park and café managers and the Friends of Peckham Rye Park.
- A half day event held at the children's play room on 25 July 2015
- A day long event at the Friend of Peckham Rye Park summer fete on 5 September 2015

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- An online questionnaire published on Southwark Council's website

Consultation Material

Four A0 graphic boards presenting the Council's proposals were prepared for the public event. Turkington Martin Landscape Architects created visual diagrams and layouts to enhance these. The boards consisted of:

- Plans showing the original proposal alongside the new proposal
- Text outlining the Council's response to the previous consultation
- Diagrams indicating the proposed locations of the car park and play area and outlining a possible layout for the car park
- A mood board of children using play areas and equipment

A questionnaire was designed to document responses at the public event. It invited feedback on the proposals with questions focused on the play area, car park and recycling facilities. The graphic material and the questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Online

Following the consultation events in July and September, consultation material was made available on line by Southwark Council's regeneration team.

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200557/peckham_and_nunhead_regeneration/3843/peckham_rye

A deadline of 22 September was set for responses. The responses received, twenty in total, are incorporated into this report.

Public Events

A public information and consultation event was held at the Children's Playroom on Saturday 25th July 2015 from 2-5pm.

The event was supported by Ivydale Children's Centre, who provided use of the Peckham Rye Children's Playroom and by Southwark Play who provided a bouncy castle, which attracted a great many families to the event.

The event was hosted by representatives of the project team who worked together to engage attendees, including:

- Two members of the Building Exploratory team, plus one volunteer
- Southwark Council's regeneration project lead
- Turkington Martin, landscape architects
- Faithful & Gould, project managers

In addition two play workers oversaw the use of the bouncy castle.

In advance of the event, 60 promotional posters were distributed across the park and nearby shops and cafés and emails were sent to a 130 strong

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mailing list of those who have requested to be kept informed of progress with the Revitalise Peckham Rye programme.

On Saturday 5th September 2015, the Building Exploratory took a stall at the Friends of Peckham Rye Park annual Summer Fete (11 to 5pm). The event was well attended despite the poor weather and we were able to speak to a large number of people who live locally and who use the park and common on a regular basis. Once again we received a largely positive response to the new proposals being put forward by Southwark Council.

In total we spoke in depth to 121 people and received 51 completed questionnaires. Respondents were more diverse than those spoken to on 25th July event and included a larger number of people without children.

Consultation Outcomes

Attendees at the public events included those who had received email invitations and individuals and families using the park on the day or attending the summer fete. Over the course of the two events, we spoke to 172 people and received 86 completed questionnaires.

The majority of those who completed questionnaires considered the locations proposed for the car park and play area positively. No one made a case for retaining the car park in its current location, or thought that placing children's play area on the current car park site was a bad idea. Though a small number of people questioned the need for any change.

1. Play Area Proposal

The play area proposal met with great excitement from most people we met. Many were parents with children (75%), so this is not surprising. However those responding without children also recognised the need for better opportunities for physical play at Peckham Rye.

In total 88% of those completing questionnaires supported the proposal, while the remaining 12% did not answer the question, but were either in support or did not commit. No one we spoke to at the event expressed any opposition to the new play area.

"The location is really good – close to the café and nice open spaces."

"Accessible to a wide age group. Love the fact that the existing play area/playroom will be re-landscaped."

We asked people about the age of children the play area should be aimed at, what type of play equipment it should contain, how it should look and feel and for examples of existing playgrounds elsewhere that the design team could refer to. The following responses were obtained in each case:

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Age groups

Respondents felt that the play area should cater for children aged zero to 12 years of age, and that there should be some delineation of areas for each age group, specifically those for the under fours.

- 0-4 years, 74%
- 5-9 years, 78%
- 10-12 years, 52%

The majority of those responding thought play equipment should be aimed primarily at the five to nine year old age group. On the whole people thought that the 10 to 12 year olds were well catered for at the adventure playground.

Play equipment

Families told us that they would like to see a mix of traditional and new styles of play equipment that challenged children physically and encouraged controlled risk taking. Many also requested tactile play opportunities, specifically sand and water. Ideas put forward were:

- Traditional equipment including: swings, slides, climbing frames, roundabouts, see saws and balancing equipment
- New play features such as water and sand play
- Please provide drinking water
- Please provide seats for adults

Look and feel

We asked people to comment on how they would like the play area to look and feel. We received a clear message that they would like the design to make the most of the existing environment of the park and common, which is held in high regard. Comments received included the following:

“We love the whole park. It should enhance what is already there.”

*“Green, integral, making the most of naturally occurring resources
Mix of traditional and landscaping, wood and metal.”*

“Exciting, but sympathetic to the look and feel of the park. Natural, lots of wood and use of natural elements.”

“Welcoming, multi-cultural, more shade.”

“Exciting, colourful, but blend in – wood.”

“Natural, wood, willow.”

“Screen the playground from the common.”

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“Desserts and forests.”

“It should make you feel happy and comfortable, safe. Lots of grass and soft floors.”

Exemplary play areas

The following is a list of the play areas that respondents have visited and considered to be exemplary. Goose Green was that most frequently mentioned by those we spoke to.

Brockwell Park, for sand and water play
Myatt's Fields
Burgess Park
Diana Memorial Park
Ruskin Park and playground
Dulwich Park
Archbishop Park, Lambeth

2. Cark Park Proposal

Use and Location

Everyone we spoke was in favour of moving the car park from its current prominent location on the common to the more discrete area, which the Council proposes. We asked people about how often they use the car park and whether they had any safety concerns that should be taken into account by the designers.

With regards to use, findings around travel and the use of car park facilities corresponded to those of the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2014 with those using the children's playroom and adventure playground.

- More than three quarters, (78%) of those we spoke to had walked to the park and said that this was their most usual method of travel.
- One third (37%) reported to sometimes use their cars to travel to the park and used the car park when doing so, though many told us that they also parked in Strakers Road.
- No one we spoke to reported any problems in finding a parking space

Safety Concerns: café, playground, car park

We were surprised by how few people raised concerns about safety in relation to the car park on the edge of the park. Those that did told us the following:

Cars

“I don't like having to walk through between the park office and the café with my toddler”

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“Car park too near café at present. Not great for small kids.”

Dogs

“Currently I don't like the dog access to the playground near café.”

“A lot of dogs are off their leads.”

Lighting

“Would need to have decent lighting.”

3. Recycling Facilities

Though not initially part of this phase of consultation, early conversations with the project team raised questions about the presence of recycling bins in the car park and we added an assessment of the use and the value that local residents place on the facility to the questionnaire.

Exactly one third 33% of respondents at the public event told us that they used the recycling bins, but only half of them on a regular basis, i.e. more than twice a year.

Respondents who use the recycling facility find it useful for recycling items that cannot be recycled through their door step service, such as clothes, shoes and electrical goods and on those occasions where their home recycling overflows. Christmas was the key time of use for additional mixed recycling and disposal of Christmas trees.

Many of the key stakeholders we spoke to, who are based at Peckham Rye including: children's playroom staff, park warden, café staff and park staff were particularly concerned that the recycling was being used for fly-tipping:

“The recycling area is regularly used by people to dump rubbish. I believe this is because it is in a secluded location. If there is still to be a recycling area in the park, it should be overseen or supervised to prevent fly-tipping.”

Some other voices

At the time of writing, we had received five emails from local residents who were unable to attend the public events, but who wished to comment on the proposal. They had received an email informing them of the consultation, but had not seen the revised proposals. They have subsequently been sent the link to the material on the Council's website and been invited to comment on the proposals as presented. We received a phone call from a further resident who did not think there was a need for any change to be made to the park and common and that they should remain as they are.

One recurring comment was about the WW2 prisoner of war hut, stressing its historic importance and questioning whether it had to be knocked down.

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Chair of the Friends of Peckham Rye Park has recently sent us the following list of issues that they would like to raise:

Is the relocated car park big enough? (We have been re-assured that there are only three spaces less than the existing car park.)

There must be some landscaping at the end of the playground to screen it from the open common.

The play equipment must be sympathetic to the MOL on which it is situated.

The playground should be fenced and locked at night.

The re-cycling 'depot' should be removed. There is an ongoing problem with fly-tipping and the entrance to a tier one park is not a suitable location.

A child-free area adjoined to the cafe?

Conclusions and Recommendations

The responses received from key stakeholders and local residents have been considered and we have reached the following conclusions and subsequent recommendations.

(i). Conclusions

Car Park and Recycling

- Most people consulted supported the relocation of the car park on Peckham Rye to the more discreet location proposed.
- Concerns about safety were expressed only by a few of those consulted and focused on pedestrian routes to the café and play area
- No one at the public event reported having any difficulty finding a parking space in the current car park. (Though the Friends group are concerned about the reduction in spaces.)
- The recycling facility in the car park is used only by a third of those consulted at specific times of the year and for items that cannot be recycled through their domestic collection.

New Play Area

- Nearly everyone spoken to was excited at the prospect of a new play area and considered the proposed location to be good.
- There was a desire to see good quality equipment offering children a range of physical challenges
- People expressed delight at the special environment of the park and common and a desire to see the play area reflect its uniqueness.
- Safety concerns surrounding the play area were expressed by only a few, however dogs and the proximity of cars were a concern for some.

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- Respondents agreed that the play area should cater for diverse ages and reflect cultural interests.

Other

- There is some concern at the proposed demolition of the WW2 prisoner of war hut.

(ii). Recommendations

Car Park and Recycling

- Consider the visual impact of the car park by landscaping.
- Consider how routes from the car park to the café and playground can be made safe for pedestrians, especially those with small children, and ensure that the car park is adequately light.
- Reducing the number of spaces in the car park would not seem to create difficulty for the majority of park users
- Consider whether provision of recycling facilities is required in the park and whether uses to which it is put could be catered for by other means.

New Play Area

- The new play area should provide a range of challenging play opportunities, which are educational and tactile, traditional and modern. Consider whether sand and water play can feature in the design.
- The play area should look and feel as natural as possible in order to blend in with the special nature of the park and common.
- Consider the boundaries of the play area so that it does not impact on the common and discourages dogs entering and children leaving the area.
- Cater for children aged 0 to 12 with a focus on five to ten year olds.

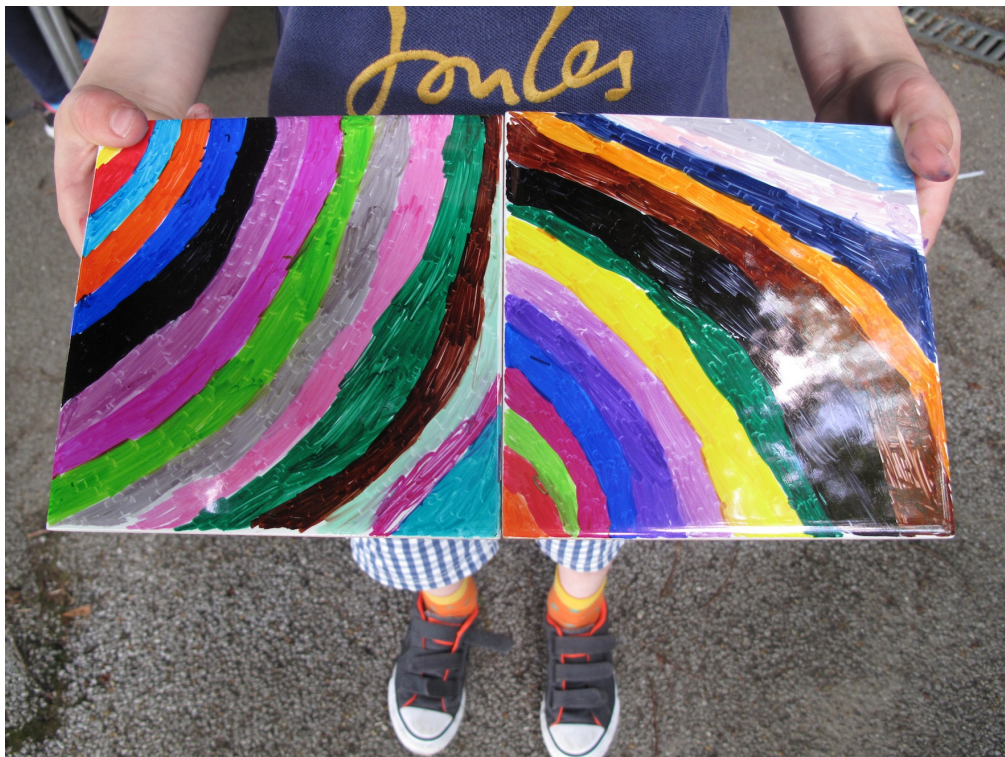
Other

- Could the heritage of the WW2 prisoner of war hut be referred to in the landscaping following its demolition.

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Appendix 3

A Selection of Images from Public Consultation Event



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