

Community Liaison Group Meeting 3: 16 November 2011

Minutes



Attendance:

Abigail Malortie
Alex Hayes
Annie Lennox, Elephant Amenity Network
Anna MacDougall, Make
Andrew Haines, Grant Associates
Callum Macavoy, Autonomy Media
Celia Cronin, Victory Community
Park/Balfour Street COOP
Diana Cochrane, Pullens TRA
Felicity, local resident
Fiona Parry, Lend Lease
James Upsher, Family Mosaic Housing
Jenny Sawyer, Lend Lease
Jeremy Leach, Southwark Living
Streets/Sutherland Residents Association
Katherine McNeill, local
resident/EAN/CAAG
Matthew Rees, Southwark Council
Norma Lawrence, Wansey Street
Resident/Friends of Nursery Row Park

Richard Reynolds, Mobile Gardeners/
Perronet House
Robert Loader, local architect
Rob Deck, Lend Lease
Sanna Wennberg, Balfour Street Resident
Silvia Lazzerini, Lend Lease
Susan Hayes, Superarts school of Dance
& Musical Theatre
Anonymous, Latin American School

Steve McAdam, Soundings (Chair)
Ciron Edwards, Soundings
Georgina Chimarrides, Soundings

Apologies:

Anna-Lisa Pollock, Welsh School of
Architecture
Catherine Lindo, local resident

Agenda:

Welcome & Introductions
Tree update – Walworth Road
Cycle Bypass
Community Facilities
Closing remarks

Discussion:

Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed all attendees and asked if there were any comments on the minutes, on which there were none.

Steve McAdam, Soundings (Chair)

The Chair noted that at the request of the local community a document library containing documents relevant to the regeneration has been set up at the Consultation Hub. He also informed the attendees of the dates of forthcoming events.

Lastly, an announcement was made that the draft Elephant & Castle Supplementary Document (SPD) is available on the Southwark

Council website. Consultation events for this will be publicised by Southwark Council

Tree Update – Walworth Road

Andrew Haines (Grants) explained that an objective assessment of the trees has taken place with specialist tree consultants. Significant effort has been made to retain more of these trees but their retention does present a number of technical challenges as some of the trees are very close to the existing buildings and structures that need to be removed and the difference of surface levels around the tree root area create design challenges.

Andrew Haines, Grant Associates

Discussion followed on the following points:

The necessity for the landscape to be level everywhere was questioned. Grants stated that it is desirable to identify a level that is reasonable to design within, and that it is proving challenging to find a common level between the pavement, the tree root area, and the forecourts of the proposed shop fronts.

The quantity of trees which are considered to be valuable and are likely to be kept was queried. Grants explained that the value assessment would include consideration of contribution to the landscape and townscape views, quantum of greenness, arboricultural views about the health of the trees and ground level and access issues.

The design team are investigating the retention of the trees closest to the road.

A query was raised as to whether the ground level variations could be covered with structures to create level access. Grants stated that a full root assessment would need to be undertaken to determine if this would be possible.

The local community expressed an interest in being involved in the detailed design of this area.

Concerns were expressed that the new town centre could take business away from the existing Walworth Road high street.

Fears were expressed that Walworth Road could feel like a canyon and it was suggested that the tall buildings on this street should be set further back. Concerns were also expressed regarding the amount of daylight this road would receive.

The Chair asked if the buildings on Walworth Road were to be set back would the park be made smaller. Rob Deck explained that this would not necessarily be the case, as the secondary streets could potentially be narrowed and plots made a little smaller. However, this depends on how far back the buildings are set. There would be a loss of residential floor space however which would need to be reallocated elsewhere in the scheme.

Clarification was requested on the total area allocated to retail and if there was a minimum requirement by Southwark. There was also a question whether the loss in floor space, by setting back the buildings, could be replaced in height. Anna MacDougall explained that the minimum requirement is circa 150,000 sq ft for retail, and the large floor space for the retail units is needed to attract good quality retail shops and to accommodate servicing. Silvia Lazzerini also added that the impact on proximity of adjacent buildings on the same plot needs to be considered if the buildings are to be set back.

The success of the proposed retail on Walworth Road was questioned as none of the retail units in other new developments in the area have been let. Rob Deck said that Lend Lease is confident the retail on Walworth Road would be successful as it is in the right location, unlike the retail beneath Printworks and Strata where there is very low footfall. He also added that Lend Lease could implement a long term strategy for the management of the retail spaces thereby ensuring their success.

Cycle Bypass

James Upsher explained the concerns related the proposed cycle connections through the site and the link to the E&C bypass. This was followed by a presentation of his alternative proposal for how the connections could be improved. James then explained that the current connections put people off cycling to central London and the proposed street plan prevents straight through routes. He also clarified that the route being suggested is not for a cycle superhighway but one that brings people to the area.

James Upsher, Strata resident

Jenny Sawyer stated that Lend Lease has similar aspirations for the cycle network as those presented by James.

There was a discussion on the character of the cycle routes through the site, questioning the number and type of cyclists that would be passing through site at speed, especially next to the new park.

The dangers of the right turn from Walworth Road into Elephant Road were expressed. It was stated that this should be discussed in conjunction with Southwark Council's proposed changes to Walworth Road and CS6 which is being extended.

Concerns were also expressed about the right turn off New Kent Road although it was felt by some that this was a reasonable link.

Community Facilities

The Chair explained that Lend Lease and the design team would like to hear what the local community envisage for community facilities.

Steve McAdam, Soundings

There was a discussion on local churches. Some residents felt that there are too many churches in the area already. But it was also pointed out that Crossway Church, which serves seven congregations and various local community groups, will need to be re-housed.

The nature of the facilities was discussed, with comments made that it should be a flexible space to cater for different activities.

The success of Pullens Yard was mentioned as were the various activities/facilities it caters for, such as a cyclist co-op, library and café which also sells products from the Pullens Yard. It was pointed out that the Pullens evolved naturally and in the same way the Heygate community facilities will need time to take shape.

It was suggested that the facilities could grow from the proposed Interim Uses.

The discussion then moved on to the character of the community facilities. It was suggested they could be a regional or national state of the art facilities which could be an attractor to the area in a building of significance. The Laban Dance Centre was cited as an example.

A pizza place that was on the site of Strata was cited as an example of a place where people came from all over London to visit.

It was then noted that very little had been said about children and young people. Susan Hayes, owner of Superarts Dance and Musical Studio stated that she would like to be involved in any proposals for new community facilities. She suggested that this new facility could be a centre for the well being of the body and include a variety of activities such as yoga, pilates, and dance, and noted the importance of experiences for children that enable them to be healthy, have experiences out of doors, and perform and learn.

The possibility of Southwark Playhouse returning to Elephant & Castle was raised. It was stated that they are happy with their premises in Southbank but are still aspiring to find a permanent home.

There was also a question on whether the arches on Elephant road would be kept. Rob Deck explained that there may be potential to open up the most southern arch to improve east / west cycle & pedestrian links, and possibly to open up the central arches to allow access to the underground and shopping centre. However, any decision over the arches or the shopping centre will require Network Rail & St Modwen input. Discussion with both parties is progressing.

It was proposed that with the number of new residents in the area, the community facilities should also include nursery and doctor's facilities.

It was stated that the community facilities should not be limited to indoor activity but activities could also be encouraged in the new park, and could include things that are not seen as typically 'urban'. An example of pony riding in other parts of South London was cited as having a really positive impact on local children.

Ideas relating to the points made above included: Community bookshop/Book Club; Bicycle Workshops providing free repairs; Community run food shop; Café with an artistic theme; Spaces for larger events and festivals; Spaces for workshops; Studios.

Meeting Close

The chair brought the meeting to a close and thanked all attendees for their contributions. He stated that the dates for the next liaison group meetings are not yet set & will be announced at a later stage.

Steve McAdam, Soundings