

# Chalk and talk

Walworth Library and  
Southwark Heritage Centre  
Consultation Stage 2 Report

September - October 2019

# Chalk and talk engagement

## 1. What is the engagement about?

On 28 November 2018 council assembly approved the current Council Plan stating the commitment to build a new library on the Walworth Road. The new library and Southwark heritage centre will ensure that Walworth remains a destination, and provides community facilities to meet the needs locally and for the borough. On the 22 January 2019 Cabinet agreed that Council take a lease for 250 years on the ground floor of units 145-147 Walworth Road of the Elephant Park development.

A new library with integrated heritage centre brings exciting opportunities to increase access to the Southwark collections and extend the context of both the heritage and library service. The integrated facility can explore different ways of presenting information, learning and engaging and thus provide a unique resource for Southwark's diverse communities. We want to encourage a lot of new people to this unique place and re-connect with past users.

### *The vision for the Walworth Library and Southwark Heritage Centre*

- A flexible modern facility with a quality visitor experience where people feel they belong
- A welcoming, democratic community facility for all that amazes, inspires and intrigues
- An integrated library and heritage centre with relevant resources and fascinating stories about Southwark, its people and objects from the collections
- A place that reflects the uniqueness of Southwark which promotes inclusivity and opportunities for participation.

*The community engagement for the new library and heritage centre is to facilitate community input into the project development and delivery. Our aims for the engagement are to:*

- raise project awareness and input into the Walworth Library and Southwark Heritage Centre design development
- ensure that the project outcomes reflect the community's aspirations by informing and engaging with key stakeholder groups, schools and the wider community through a range of communication and engagement tools
- facilitate the two way flow of information and knowledge about the project to both internal and external stakeholders.

The engagement plan includes; Bright ideas, concept design RIBA stage 2 and detailed design stage 3.

## 2. The Chalk and talk engagement process

From mid September through till mid October Southwark Council with lead designers AOC undertook an engagement process to test concept ideas of the new Library and Heritage Centre on the Walworth Road and receive the communities input. The purpose of the chalk and talk consultation phase was to understand peoples priorities for the centre and receive responses to 3 options for layout and the external treatment to the service on the streetscape. These responses have informed the design to move into stage 3 of the design process. The following table notes the activities used to communicate the process and to gather information. Questions to help determine the name of the facility were also included in this stage of consultation.

All engagement followed the same format of priorities workshop and responses to presented options.

Activity	Location	Circulation	No. respondents
Public event promotion and web link for further info	Elephant Magazine <a href="https://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/keep-in-touch/">https://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/keep-in-touch/</a>	9000 homes/ online	N/A
Webpage update outlining consultation	<a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk/WL&amp;SHC">www.southwark.gov.uk/WL&amp;SHC</a>		
Southwark e-comms consultation promotion			
Southwark Presents Culture e-newsletter consultation promotion September		4,671	
Elephant Website news item project introduction and consultation promotion	<a href="https://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/latest-news/">https://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/latest-news/</a>		
Direct email to interested groups and organisations list		60	
Direct email to all TRA's		330	
Direct email to all Southwark schools			
Client team workshop 17.09.10	John Harvard Library	7	7
Internal stakeholder workshop 26.09.19	45-47 Walworth Road	20	16
External invited stakeholder work shop 19.09.19	45-47 Walworth Road	60 invited	12
Public chalk and talk drop in 24.09.19	45-47 Walworth Road	Open	55 approx
Online consultation questionnaire	25 September - 14 October 2019 <a href="https://consultations.southwark.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/walworth-library-and-heritage-centre-designs/">https://consultations.southwark.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/walworth-library-and-heritage-centre-designs/</a>		54
<b>Total</b>			<b>144</b>

### 3. Client team session

The client team began the process with the lead designers and project managers to document priorities and give feedback on the design options

## Summary;

- Prioritise a heritage showcase
- Study spaces are slightly more important than book numbers
- A highly visible covered porch entrance

## Priorities

### MOST IMPORTANT

- 1 Heritage showcase space as an introduction to Southwark Stories
  - 2 14 computer spaces 43 spaces for study (inc quiet spaces)
  - 3 20,000 books on display (rather than less) or is generous flow more important?
  - 4 A temporary gallery of flexible and changeable display
  - 5 A highly visible covered entrance porch
  - 6 Community Meeting room with own entrance and WC
  - 7 Individual Heritage work room & Store
  - 8 A welcoming flexible event and informal seating space
  - 9 Shop windows displaying Heritage items
  - 10 Window views through onto centre activity (views of book)
  - 11 Draft lobby entrance (rather than air curtain)  
(Camberwell Green lobby never closes)
  - 12 Facade signage (over brickwork) & window treatments
  - 13 Changing Places Space - there is one at castle leisure centre
  - 14 Changes to public realm including artist commissions
- ### LEAST IMPORTANT

## 4. External Stakeholder session

A number of local groups, organisations, museums and culture providers were invited to attend a facilitated discussion on the new library and heritage centre which was attended by 12 representatives. A presentation was given on the project and its development to this point prior to a priorities workshop.

## Priorities

### MOST IMPORTANT

1. Heritage showcase space for Southwark Stories
2. 14 computer spaces & 43 spaces for study
3. Draft lobby entrance
4. A highly visible covered entrance porch
5. A temporary gallery of flexible and changeable heritage display
6. Individual Heritage workroom and store
7. Changes to public realm including artist commissions
8. Education community meeting room with own entrance & WC

9. Shop windows display of heritage items
10. Facade signage and window treatments
11. Window views through onto centre activity
12. 20,000 books on display
13. Quiet study room
14. A welcoming flexible event and informal seating space

#### LEAST IMPORTANT

#### Talking points;

- Who is going to make the service happen?
- Draft lobby really important
- Keep Heritage away from windows and waste pipes
- Is a community room really needed?

#### Further notes;

1. Who is going to make all this happen? Adequate staffing by professionals Programming to make things happen love the archive - remember to play support life learning - new skills - route into career invigilation of precious items processing space when changing exhibitions procedures around this to ensure correct collections care Isolation space to stop pests, mould, etc if introducing new material
2. Heritage Showspace Is permanent space really needed - concretion - opportunity for community led show space responsive history community research and curation - bottom up social history
3. study spaces great to see the collection from the study space (mezzanine) - accidental way into the museum inclusion of film and sound is good - consider inclusion of subtitles and headphones
4. Draft Lobby Absolute priority for environmental control Try revolving doors? push the lobby out into the street
5. Porch where is the front door? eye catcher required the facade needs to be civic consider visitor lockers on entry Must be better than John Harvard environmentally very important
6. temporary gallery people telling the stories how do other collections contribute, loan etc. How easy can it be to refresh the space / access cabinets rigging and equipment to allow change over
7. workroom environmental control of workroom/storage space to ensure collection care needs timetabling access and use - tricky - extra meeting room required for deliveries and holding bay flexible space that needs to work hard
8. public realm keep the collection alive flexible lights and rigging for artists
9. Community room We are getting one down the road, not helpful for lots of competition education room required! space for school groups Potential to Use old library - ensure a practical and positive relationship

10. heritage shop windows better to be flexible rather than limiting learning journey - tell the story of designing the space BS 4971 exhibition & display of archival & library material putting original material in windows is not necessarily possible

11. facade signage work with artists to invite people in

## 5. Internal Stakeholder session

Officers across Southwark from the internal stakeholder group participating in design discussions and priorities workshop.

### Priorities

#### MOST IMPORTANT

1. Computer access and study desks
2. Books on Display
3. A temporary changing heritage display gallery
4. A heritage showcase space for 'Southwark stories'
5. Highly visible civic front door entrance
6. Draft prevention entrance lobby - to protect from the weather
7. Facade signage and window treatments to make the centre stand out
8. window views through to library
9. External public realm with artist commissions
10. Informal seating and flexible event space
11. flexible open education / meeting room
12. Heritage project workspace for activities and workshops
13. shop window display of heritage collection

#### LEAST IMPORTANT

### Talking points;

- Flexible working throughout the space is more important than a separate heritage workspace
- A draft lobby and a highly visible civic front door is a priority
- Can the heritage collection be located away from the public toilets?

### Further notes;

1. People just come in and sit - use the PC, laptop + plug in - make sure you design for their needs and ASB
2. How do we accommodate volunteers? Can we have a sensory area as part of the children library?
3. How do we accommodate volunteers?
6. This should be extended outside
7. Banner really effective - show changing events and activities - could this be a digital update

9. In my experience there are always a pair of lions outside USA libraries - Elmer has be a great selfie spot (and helped during consultation) An elephant and castle? an 3d open book?

10. This should be the borough's sitting room

11. This space should never be empty - and flexibly adding to library or event space

12. Perhaps the wrong name, but a needed doing 'other space' to allow the flexibility in the main space and programme - time to rehang. Make it connected with the staff rooms. How do we accommodate volunteers?

## 6. Chalk and talk public drop in session

Everyone was invited to attend a drop in session and talk with the lead designers and Southwark officers about the project. Display boards showed the project background and design options for discussion. The questionnaire that formed part of the online questionnaire was filled in by approximately half the visitors.

### A new destination on Walworth Road

22 / 28 (79%) Respondents said it was important for the new centre to be highly visible and accessible on the high street

*Which of the proposed strategies shown makes the most inspiring library entrance?*

IDEA 1; A banner that shows the full extent of the WL&SHC frontage

IDEA 2; A sign works as an eyecatcher, visible from the north and the west

IDEA 3; A portico announcing the entrance as a termination of the covered colonnade

**Idea 1              9 out of 28**

Idea 2              6 out of 28

Idea 3              8 out of 28

*How should the centre be named?*

A Personality                                      8 out of 28

Discovery & learning                            8 out of 28

**Its Function and location                      10 out of 28**

The Collection it holds                        4 out of 28

### Options on Internal Arrangement

21 / 28 (75%) Respondents thought a mezzanine would be beneficial

*What should be the mix of library and heritage space?*

Heritage spaces spread throughout the library	6 out of 28
<b>A defined library with distinct heritage centre</b>	<b>10 out of 28</b>
An active event space with spaces adjacent	9 out of 28

*What should be the first view upon entry?*

a changing temporary heritage gallery	6 out of 28
public library facilities	8 out of 28
<b>an active stairpace event space</b>	<b>10 out of 28</b>

*Which mezzanine do you prefer?*

<b>A square deck with childrens library below</b>	<b>12 out of 28</b>
A long deck overlooking the library	8 out of 28
A linear pier	5 out of 28

## 5. Chalk and talk online consultation

The online questionnaire asked questions on design, naming, priorities and some statistical information, the responses are summarised below. The questionnaire was open from 25 September till 14 October 2019 and 54 responses were received.

91% local residents

The majority 30 of which 25-44 years old

15% of which were disabled

### A new destination on Walworth Road

*Which of the proposed strategies shown makes the most inspiring library entrance?*

IDEA 1; A banner that shows the full extent of the WL&SHC frontage

IDEA 2; A sign works as an eyecatcher, visible from the north and the west

IDEA 3; A portico announcing the entrance as a termination of the covered colonnade

Idea 1	16 out of 54
Idea 2	14 out of 54
<b>Idea 3</b>	<b>21 out of 54</b>

*How should the centre be named?*

A Personality	10 out of 54
Discovery & learning	11 out of 54
<b>It's Function and location</b>	<b>28 out of 54</b>
The Collection it holds	3 out of 54



## Options on Internal Arrangement

*What should be the mix of library and heritage space?*

Heritage spaces spread throughout the library	9 out of 54
<b>A defined library with distinct heritage centre</b>	<b>29 out of 54</b>
An active event space with spaces adjacent	14 out of 54

*What should be the first view upon entry?*

a changing temporary heritage gallery	14 out of 54
<b>public library facilities</b>	<b>20 out of 54</b>
an active stairplace event space	17 out of 54

*Which mezzanine do you prefer?*

A square deck with childrens library below	8 out of 54
A long deck overlooking the library	13 out of 54
<b>A linear pier</b>	<b>28 out of 54</b>

## Respondent's priorities

MOST IMPORTANT	
1. Books on display	
2. 14 computer spaces & 43 spaces for study	
3. A highly visible covered entrance porch	
4. Community meeting room	
5. Facade signage and window treatments	
6. Individual Heritage workroom and store	
7. Draft lobby entrance	
8. A welcoming flexible event and informal seating space	
9. A temporary gallery of flexible and changeable heritage display	

10. Window views through onto centre activity

11. Heritage showcase space for Southwark Stories

12. Shop windows display of heritage items

13. Changes to public realm including artist commissions

### Comparison of Priorities across all consultation events

WORKSHOPS		DIGITAL		ANALOGUE	
RANK		RANK		RANK	
1	computer access and study desks	1	books on display	1	books on display
2	<a href="#">showcase southwark story</a>	2	computer access and study desks	2	computer access and study desks
3	temporary heritage gallery	3	<a href="#">community meeting room</a>	3	<a href="#">informal seating event space</a>
4	<a href="#">highly visible civic front door</a>	4	Heritage project workspace	4	<a href="#">showcase southwark story</a>
5	books on display	5	draft prevention lobby	5	Heritage project workspace
6	draft prevention lobby	6	temporary heritage gallery	6	draft prevention lobby
7	Heritage project workspace	7	<a href="#">highly visible civic front door</a>	7	temporary heritage gallery
7	<a href="#">community meeting room</a>	8	façade sign	8	<a href="#">community meeting room</a>

9	façade sign	9	informal seating event space	9	façade sign
9	views into library	10	showcase southwark story	10	external public realm & art
11	external public realm & art	11	views into library	11	heritage shop window display
12	heritage shop window display	12	heritage shop window display	12	views into library
13	informal seating event space	13	external public realm & art	13	highly visible civic front door

## Engagement Summary

1. Most people thought that a portico feature created the most inspiring entrance to the library on Walworth road in comparison to a sign eyecatcher or signage banner.
2. The significant majority of people felt that the centre should be named in reference to its use and location rather than a personality, learning journey or the collection.
3. The significant majority of people felt that there should be a defined library with a distinct heritage centre, rather than an interspersed solution or a priority around performance and events.
4. Most people thought that the first look coming into the centre should be focussed on the library offer. Slightly less people supported a focus on events, less people wanted a changing heritage feature.
5. The significant majority of people supported a 'pier' type mezzanine over the square or linear mezzanines.

## How has the design responded to Public consultation?

In most instances views are spread. Solutions are not clear cut, and more than one solution can be successful.

The priorities workshops were useful to discuss emerging themes, but their spread of views cannot confirm absolute priorities – only raise issues

We have taken note of the top 5 core priorities and the next 4 ambitions

### Core

- Books on display

- Computer access and study desks
- Heritage project workspace
- Draft prevention lobby
- Temporary heritage gallery

### *Ambitions*

- Community meeting room
- Highly visible civic front door
- Showcase Southwark Story
- Informal seating and event space

Whilst all priorities are key to the emerging brief, these core priorities and priority ambitions are more important to more people. Where difficult decisions need to be made in the project decision makers should be mindful of these top priorities.

- Books and study space are a greater priority than heritage display
- Temporary exhibition space is a greater priority than making a showcase Southwark story
- A heritage workspace is a greater priority than a community meeting
- A draft lobby is a greater priority than making a highly visible civic front door

The design has evolved significantly throughout the workshop process and the engagement period. The design team has aimed to best align the scheme with feedback through workshops and engagement, and through information gained in correspondence.

A mezzanine is proposed, along with a stair place event space. A flexible meeting space is provided for varied use as an extension of library activities. A heritage meeting room is also provided offering an overflow space for staff BOH activities when required.

Engaging in diverse conversation has allowed the client and design team to see the need for flexibility, and the design has become more flexible in its conception to help cope with future change. Other than the position of the mezzanine and stair-place much in the public parts are potentially adaptable by moving demountable furniture.

### **In response to the key engagement findings;**

*Most people thought that a portico feature created the most inspiring entrance to the library on Walworth road in comparison to a sign eyecatcher or signage banner.*

Further investigation has been undertaken into a portico feature in front of a newly formed external lobby extension. Banner and eyecatcher options will be developed in tandem. This design element will continue to be discussed and developed before an ultimate decision on the approach.

*The significant majority of people felt that the centre should be named in reference to its use and location rather than a personality, learning or the collection.*

Based on this preference Southwark will develop a preferred naming strategy.

*The significant majority of people felt that there should be a defined library with a distinct heritage centre, rather than an interspersed solution or a priority around performance and events.*

After testing many options the proposal is to have a defined library over ground and first floor. There is a distinct heritage space to the rear of the ground floor.

*Most people thought that the first look coming into the centre should be focussed on the library offer. Slightly less people supported a focus on events, less people wanted a changing heritage feature.*

The library offer is highly visible on approach through the various windows. The library is generally to the front of the building. Upon entry there are library choices to both the left and right, or upstairs, with heritage spaces straight ahead to the rear. The event space is to one side; accessible yet removed.

*The significant majority of people supported a 'pier' type mezzanine over the square or linear mezzanines.*

The pier and square mezzanine have both been developed throughout stage 2. The pier initially preferred for its narrow low impact soffit, but with concern over its dividing impact within the double height volume. The square mezzanine responded to this latter concern, but raised the risk of a wider soffit. Consideration of use with the client team raised better disabled access and more open circulation with the square mezzanine and a lower risk of potential antisocial behaviour. These factors supported the square mezzanine design being proposed for stage 3.

All the raw consultation data and this report will be shared as part of the design process to help understand the communities needs and make this new facility a success.