

DICKENS SQUARE PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

THIRD COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETING

30 October 2018 held at Rockingham Community Centre.

Chair: Deborah McKenzie, Policy & Programme Manager (Parks)

Number of attendees: 73, with wide community representation.

Notes relating to the draft proposed single design drawings, prepared by LDA Design.

1. Change of name requested to 'Dickens Fields', being the historic name.
2. For the wall to Brockham Street, most of the wall will be removed apart from a very low section, with railings above.
3. Request to keep railings in the park to be in keeping with historic ones in the environs, to harmonise the design.
4. Maintenance and monitoring of the park will continue as at present.
5. The new playground would be roughly in the footprint of the existing park building, which will be demolished and the area re-landscaped.
6. Concern about early morning noise disturbance relating to the proposed new entrance at the Harper Road/Dickens Square corner, due to the siting of the outdoor gym.
7. If exercise classes take place, inform Parks, as these require a licence.
8. There will be multiple access points into the playground – three are proposed. The playground will be fenced, with self-closing gates.
9. Bins should be provided.
10. More details on tree removal and planting are requested. Some trees are dead and need removal, and to allow more light into the park. A 'walk round' was requested for residents to understand what was proposed for trees.
11. The timeline for implementing the project is approximately:

Analysis of third consultation – January 2019.

Final community consultation on detailed single design – c February 2019.

Planning application and planning consultation.

Procurement.

Construction starts – autumn 2019.

12. The park building and existing playground will be removed and the area re-landscaped. The building is in poor condition and there are no resources to fund repairs and alterations to the building to make it fit for modern use. A sustainable solution is needed. A much better quality play area for children of all ages will be provided, together with a range of quality equipment, including adventurous features such as a zip wire. Southwark Council's play services can also advise on other facilities in the area.

13. Concern was expressed about increased noise from people hanging around play areas at night. It was confirmed that this is not a problem in other Southwark parks, and completed projects have not resulted in this issue.
14. Concern was raised about the absence of lights in the park, which could encourage drug takers and homeless people. It was explained that when you light a space, it gives a false sense of security. Issues of reducing antisocial behaviour have been addressed in the redesign, following the Metropolitan Police's Designing Out Crime guidance, e.g. avoiding dark areas. At Burgess Park, the use was transformed by the redesign – the park is now inviting and is well used.
15. The size of vehicles entering the park during construction was questioned. It was explained that it would be necessary for some large vehicles to enter the park during construction, but it will not be like a building site.
16. Concerns about what will happen to Dickens Square Road and parking in the existing Dickens Square were raised. It was confirmed that the road will be adopted into the park. There will be vehicle access for mosque funeral vehicles and park maintenance vehicles on a reduced size road, but no parking in the park. There are currently double yellow lines on the square, so there should not be any parking, but this has not been enforced – this will change. The park cannot accommodate cars being parked in the park: other places of worship in the borough do not have their own council-provided parking spaces. There will be more shared resident/pay and display parking bays in roads surrounding the park. If more shared use bays are needed, this would be considered. Mosque representatives noted that on Fridays and especially at Ramadan, many vehicles want to park and people coming to the mosque by car may not know where to park. Deborah McKenzie noted that she had offered to meet mosque representatives and hopes to meet with trustees to discuss these parking matters. People will get accustomed to this change of use, in time, when it is explained to them.
17. Note from Highways presentation on Harper Road improvements: there will be a pedestrian crossing on Harper Road to align with an entrance into the park.