



Dickens Square Park

Summary of consultation

June 2019

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.0 Southwark Council is seeking to implement landscape improvements to Dickens Square Park and neighbouring spaces.
- 1.1 The project area comprises Dickens Square Park, Butterfly Walk and Dickens Square Road.
- 1.2 A site plan is included at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The project aims to deliver the following outcomes:
- A more welcoming, attractive and accessible park
 - Improved visibility around the park, allowing passive surveillance from nearby streets / residences and reducing opportunities for anti - social activity.
 - New entrances and pathways.
 - New furniture, play and sports equipment
 - A coherent well – designed park of high quality that meets the needs of residents.
- 1.4 Public consultation on the project took place from July 2017 to May 2019 and included a review of the 2010 master plan developed for these spaces.
- 1.5 The 2010 master plan is included at Appendix 2.
- 1.6 Previous consultations undertaken as part of the master planning exercise in 2010 suggested the following design aspirations for the park and adjacent sites:
- ❖ Enhance the visual appeal of Dickens Square Park, creating clear views into the park from surrounding streets, by relocating the fenced adventure playground away from the southern entrance on Harper Road.
 - ❖ Significantly improve accessibility by providing new entrances, installing a network of footpaths and removing unnecessary perimeter fencing.
 - ❖ Increase green space and link two of the borough's local sites for nature conservation, through landscape alterations to Dickens Square Road.
 - ❖ Improve recreational facilities within the park, including the introduction of a new playground, seating areas and outdoor exercise (trim trail) equipment.
 - ❖ Reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by improving visibility and encouraging increased use of these spaces by local families.

2 Stakeholders

- 2.0 The council has identified a wide range of stakeholders with whom ongoing engagement is required throughout the life of the project.
- 2.1 This includes but is not limited to the following:
- Local residents
 - Newington ward councilors
 - Friends of Harper Road Triangle
 - Rockingham Estate Play Association
 - Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre (Mosque)
 - Bengali Women's Group
 - Trinity Newington Resident' Association
 - Rockingham Tenants' and Residents' Association
 - Lawson Tenants' and Residents' Association
 - Globe Academy (secondary school)
 - Harper Road businesses
 - NHS Falmouth Road Group Practice
 - Soutwark Regeneration team North
 - Veolia Environmental Services
 - Highways team
 - Soutwark Public Health Team

3 Consultation

- 3.1 Four open public consultation meetings were held along with three stages of online consultation on the council's consultation hub.
- 3.2 Focus group meetings were held with external agencies with an interest in the spaces and internal council departments.
- 3.3 Feedback from consultation has shaped the development of a new design.

First Consultation- July 2017

- 3.4 Project Launch Meeting and Workshop Review of 2010 Master Plan – July 2017
- 3.5 Invitations to attend an introductory community meeting were circulated to the consultees list via email.
- 3.6 26 people attended the meeting. Participants included representatives from the Friends of Harper Road Triangle, Trinity Newington Residents, Rockingham residents, Harper Road business owners and ward councillors.
- 3.7 The meeting agenda included
- Presentations
 - Background of Dickens Sq. Project
 - Highways - cycle way and healthy streets plans
 - Q & A
 - Small group workshop
- 3.8 Participants were divided into groups and asked to review, discuss and comment on the 2010 master plan for Dickens Square Park.
- 3.9 Each group was given a feedback sheet to complete listing what they liked and disliked about the proposal and to identify their top 3 priorities for Dickens Square Park.

Feedback on 2010 Master Plan

3.10 Dislikes

- Relocation of REPA adventure playground. This idea attracted the strongest responses. Comments highlighted the proximity of new location to Merrick Square residences, disturbance from noise and anti social behaviour and the loss of trees and open green space at the new location.
- Closure and Greening of Dickens Square Road. Concern expressed about the impact on parking particularly for visitors

to the Mosque. Vehicle access to the rear is required for funerals.

- Recycling Bins. No provision is shown for the community recycling bins to be housed within the park. Feedback from two groups indicated they should be.
- Lack of change to Butterfly Walk. Safety issues have not been addressed.
- Paving at the Harper Road entrance not clear what the red tile design achieves.

3.11 Likes

- More open and better views into the park
- Trim trail and outdoor gym ideas
- The induction of seating, new pathways.

3.12 Priorities

- Safety and security. Reduce anti social behaviour. Open up dark hidden areas especially along Butterfly Walk.
- Preserve and enhance ecology, green space. Keep mature trees and wooded areas.
- Improve entrance and boundary along Falmouth Road
- Maximise space
- Integrate with highways improvement on Harper Road to improve pedestrian safety such as ensuring crossing points match with entrances.
- More pathways
- Better grounds maintenance
- Further feedback was received in the form of email submissions from the Trinity Newington Residents Association and Friends of Harper Road Triangle.
- Meeting with Trustees and Imam from Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre July 2017. A meeting was held with representatives from Harper Road Mosque to discuss the par project and highways improvements.

- In relation to park proposals, retaining vehicle access for funerals was highlighted as essential.
- The Centre was extended in 2015 and now has additional rooms to the rear that are used for pre-burial preparation.
- Parking availability around the centre particularly between 12:45 – 1:45pm on Fridays is also a key priority.
- Would like to see to the section of Butterfly Walk at the back of the centre cleared and landscaped to deter anti social activities.

Summary of July 2017 Consultations

- ❖ Relocating the outdoor adventure play equipment to north of the REPA building is not supported by respondents.
- ❖ In the seven years since the master plan was produced the neighbourhood has change significantly.
- ❖ The extension of the Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre with new vehicle access means that closure of Dickens Square Road to vehicles must be reconsidered.
- ❖ Reducing anti-social behaviour remains a priority however there is desire to see more attention paid to Butterfly Walk and improvements to the park boundary with Harper Road and Falmouth Road.
- ❖ Nature conservation and the retention of mature trees is considered important to the retaining the character of the park.
- ❖ Co-ordinating with highway development and ensuring a 'joined up' approach
- ❖ Whilst many of the priorities for the park remain the same, feedback suggests new solutions will need to be identified.

Second Consultation- Nov 2017-Jan 2018

- 3.13 The second community consultation meeting and workshop took place on 27 November 2017, from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm.
- 3.14 Invitations to attend a community meeting were circulated to the consultee list via email. Publicity was arranged at the Rockingham Community Centre.
- 3.15 Twenty people attended the meeting.
- 3.16 Participants included representation from a wide section of the community.
- 3.17 The meeting agenda included: background of the project, a design presentation by LDA Design (with questions and answers) and group workshops.
- 3.18 Participants were divided into three groups and asked to complete a feedback form relating to major principles for the redesign of the park.
- 3.19 Online consultation on Southwark Council's website took place from 20 December 2017 to 7 January 2018.

Summary of key points from second consultation

3.20 Dickens Square and parking

- Reduce road to the minimum, for funeral vehicles to access the mosque's rear extension. Possibly use grass-crete for the surface.
- Liaise with mosque to promote the use of public transport and encourage visitors to park in parking bays in nearby streets.
- Grass over remainder of space, to create a larger green area, to improve the appearance of the park, for the whole community to use.

3.21 Park building - occupied by Rockingham Estate Play Association (REPA)

- Demolish the building, which is unattractive, to improve security, increase green space and open up the park.
- Queries about status and operation of REPA with limited community use.
- Transfer existing services provided by REPA to an existing venue locally. Better to have one building, fully utilised and properly funded, than two buildings that are under-used.

3.22 Playground

- No need for supervised play. Have a playground with ordinary railings and a gate that is open and available for use throughout the day.
- Possibly provide just a toddlers' play area only, as other parks in vicinity and area have play areas.
- Provide an enclosed toddlers' park.
- Play equipment to be concentrated, not scattered, to make parental/carer supervision easier.
- Mixed opinion on preferred location of play areas.

3.23 Butterfly Walk

- Differing views about possible extension.
- Support for very careful, limited, clearance, informed by specialist advice, and sensitive, ongoing maintenance. Not to be 'tidied up' too much.
- Support for retaining the area, for local fauna. Wildlife needs protection and should not be disturbed.
- More appropriate planting, including flowers, to attract bees.
- Concerns about antisocial behavior, which makes residents avoid the area.

- The wall to Brockham Street is a major problem: the area behind it is used extensively as a public toilet. Only solution is to remove the wall entirely and install railings: part removal of the wall would not solve the problem.
- Make the Butterfly Walk a special feature of the park. Provide an information board, to explain what it is.

3.24 Entrances and footpaths. Fencing to Harper Road and Falmouth Road.

- Desire for wider entrances that are not hidden, with no blind spots. Want good visibility to improve safety and views into and out of the park. Want to encourage visitors into the park and discourage anti-social behavior, which is a general matter of concern.
- Integrate with highways improvement on Harper Road to improve pedestrian safety such as ensuring crossing points match with entrances.
- Support for the five entrances in the sketch design options: one to Brockham Street and two each on Harper Road and Falmouth Road.
- Slight preference to widening the pavement on Falmouth Road and moving back the park boundary. This would solve the problem with a narrow pavement and mature street trees growing on it, impeding access.
- Information boards on Harper Road and Falmouth Road entrances.

3.25 Exercise equipment

- Support for gym equipment and a trim trail. Both are beneficial for fitness, informal surveillance and would encourage more use of the park.
- Groups of equipment should be along the Harper Road side, to facilitate 'drop in' access.

- Request for a zipline and inclines for mini hill runs.

Third Consultation- Oct-Dec 2018

3.26 The third community consultation meeting took place on 30 October 2018.

3.27 Invitations to attend were circulated to the consultee list via email, post, and banners were displayed in the neighborhood. The meeting was arranged at the Rockingham Community Centre.

3.28 Seventy three people attended the meeting. Participants included representation from a wide section of the community.

3.29 The meeting agenda included: background of the project, a design presentation by LDA Design (with questions and answers) and Highways presentation on Harper Road improvements.

3.30 **Online consultation on Southwark Council's website took place from 29 October 2018 to 9 December 2018.**

3.31 Seventeen responses were received.

3.32 A meeting with the Metropolitan Police Designing Out Crime team took place on 18 October 2018.

3.33 A site meeting with representatives of the mosque (Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre) took place on 4 December 2018 to discuss vehicle access requirements.

Summary of key points from third Consultation

3.34 **Location of the under fives' play area**

- Proposed location and layout supported.

3.35 **Location of the older children's play area**

- Proposed location and layout supported.

- Preference for natural play equipment

3.36 Location of the trim trail and outdoor gym

- Mixed opinions, but proposed locations generally supported.

3.37 Entrances and footpaths

- Strong support for proposed entrances and footpaths.
- Some preference for heritage railings and natural looking paths.
- Provide information boards.

3.38 Dickens Square area

- Reduce road to the minimum, for funeral vehicles to access the mosque's rear extension.
- Liaise with mosque to promote the use of public transport and encourage visitors to park in parking bays in nearby streets.

3.39 Ecology/Biodiversity

- Protect existing species (bats, woodpeckers) and encourage more diversity through planting of native, flowering and fruiting trees and shrubs.
- Install bird and bat boxes.
- Provide interpretation boards.

3.40 Trees

- Request for more detail on the extent of tree removal required. A site meeting/ visualization day will be organized to clearly show tree removal and planting plans.
- General support to open up the site through selective tree removal.

3.41 Other

- Name of the Park to be reconsidered to reflect historic name: Dickens Fields.
- Relocation of recycling bins to be reviewed again.

Fourth Consultation- Mar-Apr 2019

3.42 The fourth community consultation meeting took place on 28 March 2019.

3.43 Invitations to attend were circulated to the consultee list via email, and notices were displayed in the neighborhood.

3.44 An estimated fifty people attended the meeting.

3.45 Participants included representation from a wide section of the community.

3.46 The meeting included a site tour led by LDA Design followed by a questions and answers session at the Rockingham Community Centre. There was a short Highways presentation on Harper Road improvements.

3.47 Online consultation on Southwark Council's website took place from 29 March to 28 April 2019.

3.48 Eleven responses were received.

Summary of key points from fourth consultation

3.49 Play area

Proposed location and layout broadly supported (one response objecting).

3.50 Outdoor gym

- Some concerns regarding the proximity to the mosque. Alternative location will be considered.
- Some suggestions on preferred equipment.

3.51 Entrances and footpaths

- Preference for a greener Dickens Square entrance.
- Request for a meeting with the mosque committee to discuss detailed layout and control of vehicle access.
- Preference for tarmac for pathways.

3.52 Ecology/Biodiversity

- Protect existing species (bats, woodpeckers), and encourage bees and butterflies.
- SUDS, wet areas and rain gardens options will be explored.

3.53 Trees

General agreement on the extent of tree removal proposed.

3.54 Other

Deter anti social behaviour and rough sleeping through landforms (avoiding hiding places) and furniture design

- 3.55 **There were several meetings with the Parks operations team, who will be in charge of the upkeep and day to day activities in the park, and the planning, tree and ecology officers for expert perspectives on the design.**

Appendices

1. Dickens Square Park Site Plan.
2. Consultation presentation (July 2017)
3. LDA Design Consultation presentation (November 2017)
4. LDA Design consultation boards (October 2018)
5. LDA Design *Dickens Square Park: Consultation Boards (March 2019)*.

Note: See separate documents for appendices.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 The detailed design is being developed by LDA Design, informed by the preferences expressed in the fourth community consultation on the design elements.
- 4.2 Full planning application to be submitted in August 2019