

PELIER PARK

SECOND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY



Introduction

Pelier Park is a small (0.28 hectares) local park with a ball court that is closed and in poor condition, a dog exercise area and ageing children's playground. Seating is limited, the footpaths are in poor condition and the entrance from Fielding Street is difficult for people with mobility disabilities to access due to a large tree in the pathway. Visitor surveys have shown that the park is not well used in comparison with other parks.

A number of surveys have been undertaken at Pelier Park such as tree, ecological, soil and visitor surveys. Recommendations from these surveys have fed into the design.

The project will aim to:

- Create a more welcoming and attractive park
- Improve access for people with mobility disabilities
- Reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour
- Enhance the parks' visual appeal to encourage wider use and increase visitor numbers
- Adjust sports facilities to reduce likelihood of disturbance to nearby residents
- Make improvements to the play area



The initial consultation was in 2019 and the summary is available to download from the www.southwark.gov.uk/pelierpark

This report is about the second consultation, which took place online between 7 September and 11 October 2020 and received 34 responses, plus 2 responses by email. The design we consulted on can be found in Appendix 1. A summary of the online consultation results can be found in Appendix 2.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we were unable to hold an event, so a virtual meeting took place on 8 October 2020. Five people attended and comments from this meeting are analysed in the conclusion section.

Local primary schools St. Paul's Church of England and John Ruskin were encouraged to get pupils engaged with selecting play items for the playground but due to pressing demands during COVID-19 were unable to respond.

Consultation Results

An analysis of the results is in the conclusion at the end of this report. All comments received are shown by theme, in appendix 2.

1. Consultees were asked what they thought about the design –

Designs are OK	51.5%
Like designs	37%
Don't like designs	11.5%

Most consultees liked or thought the designs were OK (88.5%).

2. Consultees were asked what they thought about the proposed play equipment –

Like play suggestions	43%
Play suggestions OK	40%
Don't like play suggestions	14%
Not sure	3%

Most consultees liked or thought the play suggestions were OK (83%).

Not enough play area / not enough for younger children / basket swing not suitable for younger children	21%
Play proposal good / like new early years equipment	11.5%
Use natural materials	11.5%
Replace / remove junior play equipment	11.5%
Retain roundabout	6%
Increase ground cover	6%
Graffiti proof play equipment	3%
Remove ping pong	3%
Replace / remove spinner	3%
Retain ball court	3%

Play outdated / install adventure play equipment	3%
Equipment OK	3%
Retain and refurbish existing play equipment	3%
Blend road to park	3%
Retain spinner	3%

3. The proposal includes a new ‘Social Heart’ for the park with basketball area, seating and ping pong table. Consultees were asked what they thought about this area -

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Like ‘Social Heart’ proposal	52%
Retain ball court	14.5%
OK ‘Social Heart’ proposal	6%
‘Social Heart’ proposal not suitable	6%
Natural colour scheme should be used	6%
Area only has ping pong	3%
Back rests for south-facing seats	3%
Create a place of calm rather than play	3%
Basketball area should be multi-functional	3%
Concrete seating is uncomfortable	3%
Additional seating	3%
Include a BBQ	3%
Retain the lighting	3%

4. Consultees were asked what they thought of the benches and other fixtures -

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Good bench selection	17.5%
Retain lighting	17.5%

Timber rather than concrete benches	14.5%
Additional benches	11.5%
Move picnic table	11.5%
Cycle parking is good	6%
Community-led Southwark Council Devolved Highway funding bid submitted to the council to improve the Empress Street railway arch	6%
Install traffic calming planters on Fielding Street	6%
Include bins	6%
Don't have gym equipment	6%
Benches need to be vandal-proof	3%
Locate the benches carefully	3%
Bench/fixture proposals are fine	3%
Back rests for south-facing seats	3%

5. **Consultees were asked what they thought about the proposal to remove lighting in the park -**

Park should have lighting	86%
Park shouldn't have lighting	11%
Not sure	3%

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below –

Retain lighting	75.5%
Reduce light pollution for wildlife	14.5%
Remove lighting	8.5%
Timed lighting	6%
Lighting in railway arches	6%
Dog users use park at night	3%
Sensor lighting/lock park at night	3%

6. Consultees were asked what they thought about the nature area -

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Like/love nature area proposal	52%
Nature area will need to be maintained	14.5%
Whole park should be for nature	6%
Large area of hard standing dedicated to ping pong, concerned that it will be underused and a missed opportunity	6%
Long grass not being good for allergies	3%
Suggested hedgerow isn't native	3%
Nature needs to be accessible	3%
Nature interpretation should be installed	3%
Don't fell trees	3%
Retain lighting	3%
Picnic table should be re-located to the nature area	3%

7. The project includes increasing the number of trees and variety of species, but includes felling some trees to achieve this. Consultees were asked their thoughts about this

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Park should have more varied trees	37.5%
Trees should not be felled	26%
More tree variety but retain some of the trees proposed for felling	11.5%
Only unhealthy trees should be felled	8.5%
Suggestions for tree species	8.5%
Plant established trees	8.5%
Add tree labels	8.5%
Fell unhealthy trees but don't plant more	3%

Pollard large trees and only fell unhealthy ones	3%
Don't spread tree planting across the park but create more defined tree areas	3%
Plant new trees away from existing trees	3%
Maintain the trees	3%
Fell trees on rotation	3%
Fell less trees	3%
Lack of information on the ground conditions	3%
Re-use cut timber	3%

8. Consultees were asked their thoughts about the planting of new shrubs and flowers -

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Planting proposal is good	52%
Planting suggestions such as permaculture perennials, lavender, evergreens, plant climbers, low level planting along Fielding Street and attractive fragrance species	6%
Planting will need to be maintained	6%
Avoid long grass due to allergies	3%
Improve the planting proposal such as having more interesting winter/spring plants	3%
Label plants	3%
Need more information about the park's environmental conditions	3%

9. Consultees were asked if they had any further comments about the project -

Common themes in the answers are shown in the table and responded to below -

Design looks great etc. / Looking forward to the improvements going ahead	21%
Include improvements to Empress Street railway arch and install traffic calming planters on Fielding Street	8.5%
Park will need to be maintained	8.5%
Install dog bins	8.5%
Retain dog area	6%
Include suitable play for under 10s	6%
Retain toddler swing	6%
Retain more of the grassy mounds	6%
Listen to what people want	3%
Use natural materials	3%
Create green oasis	3%
When and how long will it take?	3%
Hope that the result is the same or better than the design	3%
Increase scope of the project beyond the boundary of the park	3%
Install water fountain	3%
Involve local gardening groups	3%
Needs to be more emphasis on bringing wildlife into the park	3%
Retain ball court	3%
Retain lighting	3%
Park should be enhanced for birds, hope the works doesn't disturb the birds	3%
Concerns about the conflict between park users and the 'social heart' area	3%
Move picnic table	3%
Trees shouldn't be felled	3%
Dog mess is an issue	3%

Conclusions

Social Heart

Pelier Park is a small park, which needs to provide for a lot of different interests. Facilities for children

are clearly a priority for local people, but with larger parks like Burgess Park and Kennington Park nearby and public ball courts nearby in Faraday Gardens and along John Ruskin Street, the ability for this

small space to accommodate a full sized ball court is questionable, and the closeness to the new residential block increases the risk of disturbance to the residents. The limited space needs to be shared and retain an open feel.

Over half of consultees liked the 'social heart', which will include a small multi-functional area for basketball and ping pong, and potentially other equipment for ball games in the future. Ball play equipment is angled away from the paths to reduce conflict with users. The open lawn area will be made bigger and flatter, making it more suitable for informal football.

Two respondents mentioned that there was outdoor gym equipment in other parks nearby. To ensure we don't clutter the park, this has been removed from the design.

It was asked whether BBQs would be possible, however the council has a policy of no BBQs across our parks, except in the designated area at Burgess Park (currently closed due to COVID).

Playground

A new climbing frame for younger children will be included and the updated design has added a slide like the current equipment.

A few consultees requested keeping swings suitable for toddlers with cradle seats. The existing toddler swings cannot be retained as they are outside the new fenced area. Instead of a basket swing, new toddler swings will be installed.

If funding became available, flat swings for older children could be added, the larger climbing frame could also be replaced in a later phase.

We want to keep equipment where possible, as it's better for the environment. The spinners will be retained as they are still in good working order, the roundabout will be refurbished and installed in a new location to make way for the playground path.

Natural materials were suggested, and will be used where possible and there will be a range of equipment for all age groups including toddlers.

Concern was raised about maintenance; the new play equipment will have a warranty and the play area is inspected and repaired by the parks team.

Benches and other fixtures

A couple of respondents mentioned that concrete seating can be uncomfortable. The benches will mainly be timber, dependent on budget concrete benches could be included, the bases would have timber tops to ensure they are comfortable. Back rests were suggested, and these will be included on some of the seats.

The location of the picnic table was questioned by some respondents. The suggested location is furthest away from houses, to minimise possible noise disturbance should it get mis-used. We have reviewed the location but anywhere else would be closer to houses. The exact location of the benches will be carefully considered during the works when in the park. The benches will be robust to minimise vandalism.

Bins were suggested, and are included in the design. There are four bins in the park, which is adequate for the size of the park and will not be reduced. Their locations have been reviewed to ensure they will be in convenient places.

Lighting

New lampposts will be installed along the paths, with LED bulbs which use less electricity, create less light pollution and reduce disturbance to wildlife. Timed or sensor lighting was suggested and considered but unfortunately is not possible as it could go off whilst people are in the park at night which would not be safe. Additionally, sensor lighting switching on and off throughout the night may disturb local residents who are close by.

New security lighting was suggested under the railway bridge, outside the park and this suggestion has been passed to our Highways team who look after that area.

Trees

There are 23 trees in the park, there was some concern raised about the number of trees proposed to be felled. We have reviewed this with a tree expert and have reduced the number of fells from eight to two. This includes keeping the large central sycamore tree; we have re-routed the path and adjusted the playground to achieve this.

The two trees being felled are located next to mounds which are being reduced to increase views, their root system could be significantly damaged during the works and it wouldn't be practical to retain them, these trees are also in poor condition and are coming towards the end of their life expectancy. 10 new trees will be planted. The new trees will be planted away from established trees and spread out to give them space to flourish. There are already some large tree canopies and some consultees wanted more light in the park. Therefore most new trees will have a maximum height of less than 15m smaller canopy spread.

Planting a mixture of species, including native varieties will benefit wildlife in the park, providing attractive, colourful flowers and helping towards increasing habitats and biodiversity. They have also been chosen for their resilience to disease and to the effects of climate change, including drought tolerant species. All trees will be maintained by our tree team. Cut timber will be saved for the large lying trunks and loggeries in the nature area, which are beneficial to insects.

Nature

Many consultees were in favour of enhancing nature, with a variety of wildlife-friendly species of plants and trees. An ecological survey has been carried out and includes recommendations for enhancing wildlife across the park. The Council's Ecology and Tree Officers have been consulted on options for drought resistant and wildlife-friendly plants, hedgerows, trees, bug hotels, the creation of a new nature area and long grass areas, which are beneficial to insects.

The hedgerow along the existing footpath from Fielding Street needs to be removed to allow for a new path. The Council's Ecology Officer has advised that this laurel hedge is not particularly great for ecology, and it will be replaced with a new hedge, which will be of a species more beneficial to wildlife.

The ecological survey report suggests that bats may be roosting or have the potential to roost in the park and recommends wildlife-friendly planting with night scented plants which would also benefit insects and birds. At least three bat and three bird

boxes can be installed. Native plants are ideal, but non-native species also benefit wildlife. Pollinator-friendly species of climbing plants will be planted along the unattractive metallic railings, which would benefit wildlife and screen the railway arches.

In an urban area, it's important that the nature area is accessible for everyone to be able to engage with and enjoy nature. In the future, we could include new nature interpretation boards and nature labels.

Proper maintenance was highlighted as being important. The new planting will be maintained by the qualified works contractor for one year and then by the experienced parks' team. If there is interest, local residents are welcome to set up gardening groups, with agreement from the council.

Dog exercise area

Although the majority of dog walkers in Southwark are responsible and clean up after their dogs, unfortunately responses highlighted that dog fouling is an issue in this park. Officers' experience has shown that dedicated dog exercise areas can be unpleasant to visit; particularly in small parks, as they become muddy and prone to fouling that is sometimes not picked up. People without dogs often feel excluded from these areas, and public green space should be for everyone to enjoy. Dog mess can be reported via <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/street-care/dog-fouling>. Responsible dog owners and their dogs are permitted in all areas of the park, except the children's playground.

Highway and railing arches improvements

The arches are outside the park and owned by Network Rail. The Council are responsible for the throughway.

Two respondents mentioned that a Southwark Council Devolved Highway funding bid was submitted to improve the arches and implement calm traffic measures on Fielding Street, but unfortunately this was unsuccessful. However, Fielding Street already has existing traffic control speed bumps and a 20mph speed limit.

Due to budget restrictions and efforts to increase green space, the previously proposed path and new

pedestrian entrance on Empress Street has been removed from the updated design.

Grassy mounds

The grassy mounds will be reduced to increase views across the park and help reduce anti-social behaviour, with a small new mound created near the Empress Street entrance with the excavated soil. They should still offer some play value, which two respondents said they liked.

Water fountain

One person suggested a drinking water fountain, which we unfortunately don't have the budget for, however a good location for one has been chosen, if funds become available in the future.

Graffiti

Two respondents asked us to consider how to remove graffiti, but it was not highlighted as an issue in the park. Increasing natural surveillance by more people visiting the park has the benefit of deterring graffiti, as does instilling pride in the local area by improving the quality. Graffiti can be reported via <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/street-care/graffiti>

Next steps

The design has been published and the public have another chance to comment during June 2021. A planning application will then be submitted, and there will be a further opportunity to comment

during the statutory consultation period. Construction work is estimated to commence in winter 2021 and expected to last between 2 to 4 months.

For more information about the project visit www.southwark.gov.uk/pelierpark2 or to join the mailing list for future updates please contact parks@southwark.gov.uk