



Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Community Review: Bramcote Park

Monday 20 February 2023
231 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5LU

Group

Gurmeet Sian (chair)
Hugh Balfour
Shelene Byer
Julia Feeney
Hazel Flynn
James Glancy
Mike Levitt
Aaron Mo
Saidat Oketunde
Peter Warren

Attendees

Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark
Bonita Meli	Bonamy and Bramcote TRA
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Abigail Joseph	Frame Projects
Gail Ross	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Tyreece Asamoah	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Victoria Oluwables	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Sydney Simms	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Madison Westwood	Old Kent Road Community Development Panel
Loretta Doku	London Borough of Southwark
Wing Lau	London Borough of Southwark

Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation the London Borough of Southwark is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and, in the case of an FOI request, may be obliged to release project information submitted for review.

1. Project name and site address

Bramcote Park, Bramcote Grove, London SE16 3BT

2. Presenting team

Alice Edgerley	Assemble
Loretta Bosence	Local Works Studio

3. Planning authority briefing

Bramcote Park is located within the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, which is set to experience significant growth including 20,000 new homes and 10,000 new jobs. The Old Kent Road Area Action Plan sets out the strategic vision for the redevelopment of this London Plan Opportunity Area, which has the support of the Greater London Authority and Transport for London. One of the key themes of the Area Action Plan is the idea of the Greener Belt, a network of green spaces connecting Pimlico with Rotherhithe which will provide valuable green lungs, and be an integral part of the way people move in the area. Bramcote Park is specifically identified as an opportunity project that will contribute to the development of the Greener Belt by tying in with several other initiatives locally.

Bramcote Park is in two parts with a north and south end separated in the middle by Verney Road. The north side of the park is bounded by Barkworth Road and the south side by Varcoe Road. Bramcote Road runs the length of the western edge and residential homes overlook the park on all four sides. The park has two owners; Notting Hill Genesis and Optivo which has led to an inadequate maintenance regime and the park becoming run-down. Southwark Council now has a £0.5m budget to make the needed improvements to the park, which is funded by Section 106 agreements from projects such as the Varco Road Pocket Homes and the Barrett Home schemes in Ilderton. Southwark Council launched a design competition through New London Architecture, where six practices were shortlisted and Assemble was ultimately selected to take the project forward.

Southwark Council asked for the panel's views, particularly on the proposed connection between the north and south sides of the park; on how behaviours can be improved so that children and families can use the park alongside dogs; and how the design and need for a new pitch can be resolved to ensure everyone from the community feels free and able to use both the pitch and wider park.

5. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel supports the overall proposals for Bramcote Park and feels the design is moving in the right direction.

A key issue for the panel is that a robust and long term maintenance strategy needs to be put in place, as a high quality environment will be essential to sustaining positive social behaviours in the long term.

The panel supports the proposal to remove fencing from the games area to create a multi-use shared space, which it feels will encourage park users to use the space regardless of gender, age or accessibility needs, as well as encourage mixing between age groups. It suggests the park terrain design could be more ambitious with additional raised and lowered areas to create zone delineation, and to contain activities on the pitch more effectively. The panel suggests the corner entrance into the northern section of the park from Verney Road could be replicated to provide a similar entry point into the southern section, giving pedestrians a choice of entry and creating a natural desire line. The panel commends the design team's approach to re-using existing materials, sourcing materials locally and employing local craftspeople. In addition to this, it suggests incorporating a location for a curated element of local artwork that is changed periodically to further engage the community with the park.

Whilst the panel supports the proposal to slow the Verney Road traffic through Bramcote Park, it also highlights that these changes need to be carefully considered within the wider context of the light industrial use of the area. Verney Road is a functional route for local businesses and the panel feels further local consultation is required to ensure businesses can still operate.

These comments are expanded below.

Landscape design and layout

- The panel supports the removal of fencing from the games area and park, and feels it will create a multi-use environment that is welcoming to everyone.
- The use of banks to create natural barriers in lieu of fencing is welcomed and the panel suggests banks could be used more within the park to create level changes between uses or to form natural seating.
- The panel supports the removal of fencing from the park perimeter and feels this will deter people from taking their dogs to the park and allowing them off-lead. However, it also suggests further consultation with residents closest to the park is required, as the removal of fencing may leave them exposed and compromise their privacy.

- The panel queries whether the pitch should be incorporated at a nominally lower level from pathways for safety, and to improve its functionality by preventing balls rolling onto paths or roads.
- The panel suggests the corner entrance into the northern section of the park from Verney Road could be replicated to provide a similar entry point into the southern section of the park, creating a natural desire line and providing a choice of entry.
- The panel highlights the need for a robust lighting strategy that will ensure there are well lit paths and no dark spaces. It likes the illuminated basketball precedent used, and would like to see more of these fun and creative solutions to lighting within the park.
- Whilst level access is provided throughout the park, the design team will look to include a variety of accessible furniture of varying heights.

Community and park uses

- The panel commends the different characters and uses proposed for the north and south section of the parks. It also feels introducing a barbecue area, table tennis, and an area where bikes can be parked and locked would be beneficial.
- The panel recommends providing an area of the park for gardening that can be managed by the local community, and highlights that existing community gardening groups in the area may well be interested.
- The panel suggests incorporating a location for a curated element of locally created artwork that would change periodically, and further embed the park within its community.
- The panel feels that, due to the size of the park, it is reasonable to require that dogs are kept on a lead. This will avoid tensions between park users and reduce dog fouling.
- The panel commends the design team's approach to re-using existing materials, sourcing materials locally and employing local craftspeople to create objects needed for the park.
- Involving local schools with litter picking is commended, but the panel stresses the need for this to be part of a robust maintenance regime and not solely relied upon for the park's upkeep and maintenance.
- The panel is pleased that the design approach aims to promote collective ownership of the park, It suggests more consultation should be carried out with people who live directly in the vicinity, and that a girls-only consultation would be beneficial.

Vehicle movement

- Whilst the proposal to slow Verney Road traffic through the middle of Bramcote Park is welcomed, the panel has concerns regarding the potential impact on local traffic and businesses. Verney Road is a functional route for local businesses and the panel recommends carrying out more consultation to ensure businesses are aware of proposed changes.
- The panel recommends that the design team and the Council review how the Verney Road proposals will integrate with future developments within the area, such as the logistics facility and part-pedestrianisation proposed to the west end of Verney Road.
- The panel supports the proposal to reduce Verney Road to a single lane through Bramcote Park, and feels it will slow traffic and encourage drivers to take an alternative route.
- The panel suggests alternative mitigation measures to slow traffic could also be considered: introducing traffic lights prioritising pedestrians, a zebra crossing, or installing gates on the road for vehicles to pass through. It also suggests installing height restrictions to prevent lorries and vans driving through the park.
- However, the panel does not support closing the section of Verney Road that runs through the park permanently to traffic. It asks whether an option can be explored to open up the closed Barksworth Road to the north, which could reduce traffic through the park for example on match days at the New Den stadium.

Maintenance and management strategy

- The panel recommends that a robust and long term maintenance strategy is put in place to sustain positive behaviours and maintain a high quality park environment. It is re-assured by the Council's comments that maintenance of the park will be managed directly by Southwark, and not by current the park owners who have not maintained the park well to date.
- The panel feels improved visibility of bins and in locations close to seating is required to encourage their use. It also recommends the provision of well sign-posted dog waste bins, potentially with the provision of free dog waste bags.

Next steps

- The panel is available, if required, to review the proposals again prior to submission of a planning application.