



Old Kent Road Community Review Panel

Report of Community Review: Leyton Square Park

Monday 30 September 2024
231 Old Kent Road, London, SE1 5LU

Panel

Gurmeet Sian (chair)
Shelene Byer
Simon Donovan
Mike Levitt
Rahul Mani
Sarah Osei
Sydney Simms
David Stoker

Attendees

Pan Chong	London Borough of Southwark
Tim Cutts	London Borough of Southwark
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Yingli Tang	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Colin Wilson	London Borough of Southwark
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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

Leyton Square Community Hub Project
Leyton Square Park, Peckham Park Road, London SE15 6SX

2. Presenting team

Sarah Tahir	Southwark Council
Emma Naylor	Knox Bhavan
Ashwin Patel	Knox Bhavan
Daniel Morris	Friends of Leyton Square Park
Nicholas Okwulu	Friends of Leyton Square Park

3. Planning authority briefing

Leyton Square Park is located within the Friary Estate on Peckham Park Road, and is within the Old Kent Road Regeneration Area. It is situated between two schools in a largely residential area, and to the north of the site are industrial estates and the Old Kent Road.

This scheme proposes replacement of two existing buildings, the Play Room and Adventure Play Hut buildings, with a new single-storey community building accessed from the Friary Estate, and associated landscaping.

The project is being part-funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money. It is expected that the project will commence on site in summer 2025.

Southwark Plan Policy P57 states that development on Borough Open Land should consist of ancillary facilities that positively contribute to the setting, accessibility, and quality of the open space and does not affect its openness or detract from its character.

Southwark Council officers asked for the panel's views on the design of the new community hub, its materials, façades, boundary treatment, and how to ensure the new building would be inviting to local residents.

4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The Old Kent Road Community Review panel is enthusiastic about the proposed new community hub in Leyton Square Park. It likes the way the designs are progressing, and is pleased to hear how consultation with residents has been taken on board. As design work continues it encourages careful thought about ease of maintenance for both the building and landscape. It is also keen for the designs to maximise the range of uses that the building and the storage containers can accommodate. Details such as the robustness of the kitchen, provision of external power and drinking water taps, will be important to allow for the widest possible range of activities at different times of the day and year. The panel is supportive of the architecture, but asked questions about the use of timber cladding in terms of potential fire risk, and ongoing maintenance. It suggests windows and / or signage should be added to avoid a blank wall facing Friary Estate Road. There was support for colourful cladding at the consultation event, and the panel agrees. A landscape architect is being procured to join the design team, and the panel made several suggestions about the play area, community garden, and boundary treatments. It would welcome an opportunity to comment on this aspect of the scheme at a future review. These comments are expanded below.

Community consultation

- The panel is impressed by the way public consultation has informed the designs. The involvement of the Friends of Leyton Square Park gives the scheme credibility.

Park entrances and street elevations

- There are currently no windows facing Friary Estate Road, because the hub has been designed to open onto the park. However, this blank elevation could feel unfriendly.
- Adding windows and / or signage to the street elevation would help signal the presence of the community hub, and give it a more welcoming presence for passers-by.
- A community notice board could be provided, with a plan for this to be kept updated in several languages spoken in the local community.
- Lighting might be another way to animate the street edge.
- The panel thinks the Council should consider installing bollards or chicanes at the entrances to the park. This would make people feel safer, by discouraging bikes and electric scooters from using the park as a cut through.

- Some people may arrive by car, for example if they are bringing equipment or supplies for events or maintenance. The panel asked for clarification about parking and vehicular access to the building.

Architecture of the hub building

- The panel generally admires the emerging architecture, especially the pitched roof and clerestory windows bringing natural light into the main space.
- The internal layout to maximise usable space, and minimise corridors is supported.
- Connecting doors between rooms could allow for different activities to happen without disturbing each other. For example, a door between the kitchen and study room could avoid people having to walk through the main space.
- The panel questions how timber cladding would perform in terms of fire safety and maintenance? If timber is used, it would like to be reassured this will be safe and not require frequent repainting or varnishing to continue to look good.
- There was support for colourful cladding at the consultation event, and the panel would also welcome the use of colour in the external cladding.
- Colour could also be used inside the building to create a sensory experience for young or neurodiverse people.
- The layout and construction of the building should maximise the range of uses it can accommodate would be encouraged. For example, the panel asks if there is scope to provide mirrors for dance classes, or to soundproof one of the smaller rooms for music practice or as a recording studio.
- The panel asks if the community hub is designed so that it can be extended in the future, if funding becomes available?
- At a detailed level, the amount of glazing should be optimised for good natural light, without overheating. Handles and locks should be specified to ensure that people with different abilities can use them.

Design details

- The panel is pleased to see that a WC is provided that can be accessed from the outside of the building, without disturbing activities inside.
- Details such as a robust kitchen, and floor and wall-finishes that are robust and can take knocks, will be important to the success of the project.
- External power supply and drinking water taps would allow for events in the park, such as festivals, markets or community celebrations.

- For nearby residents who don't have a private garden, this could be the ideal location for a communal barbeque.
- The kitchen is likely to be well used, especially in the holidays when children and young people do not have school lunches.
- A deep sink and swan neck tap will be needed to and wash up pots and pans.
- Currently an under-counter fridge is proposed, but a larger fridge could allow for food donations and cooking shared meals.
- One option might be to provide a secondary fridge in the shipping containers. This might also enable young people to take part in something like the Felix Project, which collects surplus food and delivers it to people who need it.
- The panel understands that the plant room will double as a cleaners' cupboard. This should include a sink at low level to make it easy to fill and empty buckets used for mopping the floor.
- There seems to be plenty of storage, both in the hub building and shipping containers, which is positive.
- Hooks for coats and bags should also be provided, as well as considering where buggies can be parked during mother and toddler groups.

Shipping containers

- The panel encourages further thought about how the shipping containers can be used.
- Equipment will be regularly taken from the shipping containers to the hub building. The surface between these should be suitable for wheeling trolleys, and a canopy could provide shelter.
- Racking will be needed inside the containers, to allow efficient use of the storage space.
- There may also be potential to use the containers for activities such as art classes. This would require electricity and water supply.
- A planted roof is shown on top of the shipping containers, and the panel asked for more information about how this would be installed to make sure it doesn't leak.

Landscape design

- Limited information was available on the landscape design, because Southwark are in the process of procuring a landscape architect.
- The panel asks for careful thought about the boundary between the external space around the community hub and the rest of the park. For example, a low hedge or fence would allow people to sit outside in a space that is separate, but visually connected to the rest of the park.
- Parents and carers arriving early to collect their children, would appreciate somewhere to sit and wait outside.
- The park is popular with families and the panel asked if it would be feasible to provide a water feature for children to play in?
- Surfaces should be specified with play in mind, for example to allow children to use roller skates or scooters.
- Providing opportunities for growing food could help encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Bike storage is proposed next to the shipping containers, and if this is enclosed in a 'cage' it should be designed to look good.
- Lighting in the park will be needed to make it feel safe at night, but should not be too bright for neighbouring residents.
- The landscape design should be robust and easy to maintain, as well as being attractive and providing for a range of uses.

Maintenance and running costs

- Designing the building to be energy efficient, with solar panels for electricity generation will help minimise running costs.
- The panel asks if the community hub could be provided with a 'dowery' from Section 106 contributions collected from development in the area, to ensure maintenance costs are covered.
- If the building looks clean and well maintained, it is more likely that young people using it will treat it with respect.
- The panel does not think that a business plan relying solely on volunteers to manage the building and landscape around it is realistic.

- It encourages Southwark Council to find a budget for management and maintenance of this new community facility, including the play area and garden.
- One option might be to plan for spaces to be rented out providing a source of income, for example if a room can be soundproofed as a recording studio.

Next steps

The panel is excited by the proposals for Leyton Square Park and asks the architects to consider its comments in consultation with Southwark planning officers. It would welcome an opportunity to comment on the landscape designs when they are available.