



Shape
12C Tower Workshops
58 Riley Road
London
SE1 3DG

Tessa Craig, Planning Officer
5 Pancras Square
Kings Cross
London N1C 4AG

RE: Sumatra Road Open Space Renovation (2017/2608/P)

Dear Tessa

Thank you for the opportunity to reply some of the queries raised by objectors. With this letter, Shape will provide you some background and clarifications, which we hope will be useful in compiling the case report.

We have attached Shape's report summarising the engagement process undertaken on behalf of the Council, and the results. It shows that this renovation (including moving the fence slightly forward) has the support of the community and that the plan under consideration with this Application – the arrangement of fencing, gates, and green area outside the play area, as shown on page 6 – responds to concerns we heard expressed at the last engagement event. At that event, we had long and productive conversations with neighbours directly affected, with dog walkers, and with advocates for 'adults without children' – each of whom had concerns – as well as with many adults and children who were wholly supportive of the scheme.

Firstly, we confirm that thorough and well publicised consultations have been carried out, including conversations with 50+ people at the first event and forty at the second; these inform the current design. Camden Park's brief, to widen the appeal and increase the amount of play on offer at the park, was openly discussed; this requires moving the fence line, and was supported by the vast majority of respondents. Contrary to reports from some objectors an open green area at the front is retained in the current plan; if upon further reflection our Client wishes to add more benches here, this can be done. Initial engagement results were fed back to residents, and the final plan has been posted on site since the last week in May; the composition of the respondents been shown to broadly reflect Census data for the Ward

The plan accompanying this Application includes a second access point for convenience and utility. Two points of access are recommended by ROSPA and Shape typically look for this at fenced-in play areas. As mentioned in the DAS, the 2nd gate frees up circulation across the play area, and it helps separate age group use of the park, which many residents supported. Also mentioned in the DAS is:

- the revised gate location taking on board comment about visibility along the street
- specification of self-closing gates, and
- improvement in visibility into and throughout the park with the proposed removal of tall shrubs.

All these points were discussed and agreed with Camden Parks and are included in Shape's Risk Assessment. The telephone junction box mentioned by objectors is narrow and at 0.9m height does not block visibility, though it may prevent some direct movement onto the street; the Risk Assessment also recommends that Camden Parks liaise with Highways regarding installation of a kerbside pedestrian barrier rail, and we confirm this is well underway.

The remainder of the objector's queries refer to the play area which is not subject of this Application, but which Shape are happy to respond to. Generally, acting in conjunction with Camden Parks and local residents we are balancing widening of play provision and appeal with retention of the green and 'enclosed' quality that make the place special. As landscape architects working with residents on changes to public spaces for 20 years we are well placed to do this, and to carefully address the ASB / points of potential nuisance that we know to be present.

Addressing their particular points:

1. Shrub Removal / Cutting Back

In discussion with Council officers (including Rangers) the level of ASB here is relatively low, but sufficient to prioritise removing shrubs to improve visibility to the back of the site. Planting to both sides of the site (including the hedge, vine & arches) would remain, but tall shrubs other than those screening the ballcourt fencing will be removed – with low growing species planted instead. At the back of the site, shrubs will be limbed up and the timber fencing repainted. Cutting back is proposed at the eastern boundary, where laurels prevent light entering the windows; this neighbour is fully supportive of the revised proposals.

2. Paved vs. Planted Areas

There is a surprising amount of paving already in the park; about half of its 1150m² is paved – mostly bitmac, with some safety surfacing. Camden Parks and almost all of the people we spoke with agree that the current appeal of the play area (primarily for under 7's) needs to be widened and this will require conversion of some planted area to rubber crumb – a small reduction in planted area from 570 to 500m². There are still 'green' areas throughout, including along the street. The amount of porous paving will actually increase and there will be no net change to drainage on site.

3. Area to Front of Site nr. Gate

There will be more use toward the front of the site – not beyond the line of neighbouring buildings to each side – but (from west to east) table tennis, pod swing, and exercise bars) that would encourage more visits by the many young people living in the area. The current arrangement was discussed with local residents including neighbours, and support for this was 18 to 9; it also bears mentioning that the many teens present at the first event were not present at the second. The green space (and bench) available for use without entering the play area is retained, in light of objections raised at the 2nd event.

4. ASB / Nuisance

The proposal does not change the height of the fence so will not make entry after hours any easier, and as recommended by neighbours themselves

- keeps shrubs which deter climbing at the front corners in place
- relocates the litter bin which is used to climb over the fence.

In conjunction with the increased visibility shrub clearance would provide and retention of a street-side bench, the proposal may actually decrease some ASB internal to the park. New gates would be provided with anti-slam closers and rubber blocks to prevent finger trapping; the latter will also be added to existing ballcourt gates, so the annoying slamming of gates should be significantly reduced.

The current plan does not include fencing off the back corner, as upon consideration Camden Parks did not wish to lose use of the space; instead

- shrubs will be limbed up to improve visibility
- fencing will be painted
- ground will be tidied and lawn planted.

5. Boundary Treatment, 74 Sumatra Road

Shape discussed in detail with the owners, and agreed:

- retention of boundary hedge, arbour arches, and vines
- no change to bark mulch route alongside hedge
- no change to ballcourt (the skate feature- backless bench-is now located further away.

Shape noted a table tennis table with bench could be introduced, as supported by a 2:1 margin (18 of 9 responding, off to the side (not the front) of this house, which does not have any windows facing the park. This location near the street is a reasonable one for older children and young adult play and socialising; it makes use of space which is not underneath a tree and is currently underused. The lawn adjacent the street is otherwise retained.

Please do not hesitate to call us on the above number if we can further assist.

Respectfully submitted

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Richard Peckham.

Richard Peckham

cc: Joe Lewis / LB Camden