

## BELL GREEN URBAN RENEWAL

### Minutes of Preliminary Meeting 1 held at 10.30am on Saturday 19 January 2019 at the Offices of Thomas Ford & Partners, Sydenham

Rev A 01.02.19: Post Meeting Note - Item 1. Council Wards corrected

#### 1. Attendance

1.1	Cllr Chris Best	Cllr CB	Sydenham Councillor
	Cllr Alan Hall	Cllr AH	Bellingham Councillor
	Cllr Liam Curran	Cllr LC	Sydenham Councillor
	Cllr Jacq Paschoud	Cllr JP	Bellingham Councillor
	Annabel McLaren	AMcL	Sydenham Society
	Barry Milton	BM	Sydenham Society
	Steve Grindlay	SG	Sydenham Society
	Pat Trembath	PT	Sydenham Society
	Julia Farr	JF	Sydenham Society
	Ruta Beneyte	RB	Sydenham Society
	Barbara Kerr	BK	Sydenham Society
	Steve Myles	SM	Sydenham Society
	Angela Hall	AH	Sydenham Society
	Julia Webb	JW	Sydenham Society
	Stephanie Hayman	SH	Sydenham Society
	Michael Abrahams	MA	Forest Hill Society
	Bruno Tonelli*	BT	Discourse Architecture
	Simon McCormack	SMcC	Discourse Architecture

\*video link from Brescia

#### 1.2 Apologies

Cllr Tom Copley	Cllr TC	GLA & Sydenham Councillor
Cllr Sue Hordijkeno	Cllr SH	Bellingham Councillor
Cllr Sophie Davis	Cllr SD	Forest Hill Councillor
Derek Randall	DR	Sydenham Society / Forest Hill Society

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 SMcC opened the meeting by introducing himself and BT. They have been involved with the Forest Hill Society in the proposal for Forest Hill town centre and wish to support the community-led scheme for Bell Green and its environs. This work is being done in their own time as *Discourse Architecture*. The intention is to give Bell Green a “sense of place” and to create a better environment for local people and businesses by improving the quality of the urban realm, transport and air.

AMcL stated that the Sydenham Society’s recent interest in Bell Green has been to prevent the gas holders being dismantled. She is grateful for the help of local Councillors and officers in this task. We are keen to ensure that the gas holders and adjacent site are earmarked for housing and pleased that Aldi had decided to relocate to the empty Toys R Us site on the Bell Green retail park. SGN have announced their intention to remove the gas holders although they are prepared to retain part of the structure.

### Purpose of Meeting

SMcC explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review and develop the scope of the project, as initially set out in the Sydenham Society / Discourse Architecture document ‘Project Scope’ (attached), and agree on how to facilitate community engagement in the process.

## 3 Information

### Aldi / Gas Holders

- 3.1 Cllr CB announced that Aldi are dropping their planning appeal / public inquiry in connection with LBL’s refusal of planning permission for the gas holder site. The Lewisham Mayor has written to SGN asking them to retain part of the structure of the gas holders.

### Bell Green Health Centre

- 3.2 Cllr CB reported that she will be attending a meeting to discuss the rebuilding of the health centre with residential accommodation above. The Health Centre’s Patients’ Panel has expressed concern about the height of the proposed building and the potential loss of parking space for patients and staff. SMcC noted that the existing building has a very poor relationship with Sydenham Road. The raised planters adjacent to the road do not relate to the wider landscape.

### Freeholders

- 3.3 Viv Evans at Lewisham Planning Department is carrying out a search to identify the freeholders of the sites at Bell Green

LB Lewisham

3.4	<p><b>Livesey Hall – Unauthorized Extensions</b></p> <p>Paddy O’Connor, Lewisham Planning Enforcement Officer, is initiating enforcement action</p>	LB Lewisham
4	<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	
	<p><b>Aspirations</b></p>	
4.1	<p>Cllr AH called for a long-term vision for the site and to create strong connections with the surrounding area. Lewisham Council should aspire to be positive and creative. He proposed an early public meeting to discuss with the local community to listen to their concerns and priorities.</p>	
4.2	<p>JF called on SGN and Keir to raise their aspirations for Bell Green, citing the recent transformation of King’s Cross as an example of what can be achieved with sufficient vision</p>	
	<p><b>Transport Strategy</b></p>	
4.3	<p>Cllr LC stated that the long-term plan for the site would be greatly enhanced by the further extension of the Bakerloo Line from Lewisham to Hayes. This would enable Lower Sydenham station to be relocated close to Sainsbury’s and possibly for the railway bridge to be rebuilt and widened. This would relieve the pinch point for traffic and allow generous pavement on both sides of the road. The walkway along the Pool River needs to be extended within the site. We should consider the many facilities which are near to the site – Southend Park, Home Park and the library; Bell Green health centre; Haseltine School, the Old Bath House etc.</p>	
	<p><b>Footpaths</b></p>	
4.4	<p>Cllr LC proposed that we should open up the site and the area around it to provide better access for pedestrians. Access to buses and bus routes would benefit from improved footpaths and walkways to and from existing bus stops.</p>	
	<p><b>Buses</b></p>	
4.5	<p>Cllr JP noted that Bell Green was well served by buses but that a bus to and from Bromley would be a huge asset and would link the Bell Green Heath Centre, Lower Sydenham station, Brent Knoll, Sedgemoor and Bonus Pastor Schools. Pedestrian access to the site from all approaches needs to be improved.</p> <p>Cllr CB argued for better bus connections to Forest Hill and other areas to provide much-needed access to shops and schools.</p>	
	<p><b>Highways</b></p>	
4.6	<p>MA noted poor traffic management at Bell Green and particularly the problems for pedestrians using the area around the railway bridge. MA said that the Scoot traffic management scheme has been cancelled – but the site still needs an advanced traffic scheme.</p>	
4.7	<p>A discussion followed about the gyratory system. It’s increasingly busy - and traffic is now making heavy use of the site’s spine road in order to avoid queueing at the traffic lights. Is the amount of traffic causing pollution and harming health?</p>	

4.8	<p><b>Parking</b></p> <p>A survey to collect information about the use of the car park would be useful in assessing the potential to reduce the parking area</p>	Sydenham Society
4.9	<p><b>Mixed Use</b></p> <p>PT argued at the 2003 and 2005 Public Enquiries that increased online shopping would result in a reduction in out of town retail provision. A study should be undertaken to assess the potential to reduce retail on the site and replace it with residential use.</p>	
4.10	<p><b>Public Health – Air Quality / Haseltine School</b></p> <p>CLlr CB mentioned that Haseltine School was currently conducting a public health survey of air pollution 400m around the school, with a stakeholders’ meeting to be held in the next month.</p>	
4.11	<p><b>Bell Green &amp; Environs</b></p> <p>It was agreed that although the study should focus on Bell Green, linked improvements to the surrounding area should also be identified. Neighbourhoods around Bell Green include: Lower Sydenham, Perry Vale, Bellingham, Catford, Sydenham, Forest Hill and New Beckenham.</p>	
4.12	<p>Apart from the Livesey group of buildings and the associated gas holders, Bell Green and its environs includes buildings and structures with character, important local amenities that have become degraded and would benefit from repair and improvement: The Old Bath House/Surgery; The Railway PH, The Bell PH, Home Park; Southend Park; Sydenham Library, the dis-used sports changing rooms.</p>	
4.13	<p><b>Gas Holders</b></p> <p>It is proposed vigorously to resist the demolition of the gas holders, which is underway. SGN have expressed the intention to clear the site for sale. Damien Egan has reported receiving an undertaking from SGN that part of the gas holder structures will be retained for display on site. Discourse Architecture propose that demolition should be halted while a study is carried out to explore creative re-purposing of the gas holders.</p>	
4.14	<p><b>Livesey Group of Listed Structures</b></p> <p>The Memorial Hall, War Memorial, bowling green and boundary walls should be sympathetically repaired to reflect their local and historic significance. The War Memorial Trust will pay 2/3 of the cost of its restoration.</p>	
4.15	<p><b>Landscape &amp; Ecology</b></p> <p>The re-wilding of the River Pool by Lewisham Council and QWAG has been very successful. It is proposed to review the potential for greening the Bell Green site, perhaps evoking the original ‘Sydenham Green’ on the site or creating an extension to the Linear Park</p>	

4.16	<p><b>Understanding the History of the Site</b></p> <p>It is proposed to research and record the story of Bell Green, to inform proposals for the site and, potentially, for publication. It is hoped that JW, SG and Derek Randall will collaborate on this exercise. Consider oral history survey to record local peoples' memories – SG has already done work on this</p>	JW, SG, DR
4.17	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>It is proposed to prepare a schools' pack for local primary schools with links to National Curriculum topics</p>	Discourse Architecture
5	<p><b>Working with Stakeholders &amp; Consultees Effectively</b></p>	
5.1	<p>Cllr JP also emphasised the need to include all of the ward councillors surrounding the site and also the local neighbourhood especially those living east of the site. We must include Bellingham residents as well as those from Sydenham, Forest Hill and Catford.</p>	
5.2	<p>SMcC emphasised the need to build coalitions if we want the site to be developed responsibly and socially. We need to include Kier and SGN in our discussions. Freeholders will benefit from the increased value that would result from a coherent vision for improved infrastructure and amenity</p>	
5.3	<p>JW stressed the need for SGN and Kier to have a sense of overall vision (a masterplan) for the site. And to encourage better cultural and other facilities on to the site.</p>	
	<p><b>Lewisham Council, TfL and Network Rail</b></p>	
5.4	<p>Lewisham Council Highways Department, TfL and Network Rail must be involved in developing improvements to the transport infrastructure. SMcC noted that, despite repeated requests, TfL and Network Rail had failed to provide feedback on the Forest Hill Town centre project, and appealed to Councillors to encourage these organisations to engage with the community. The fundamental problems at Bell Green derive from the poor quality of roads, provision for cyclists, footpaths, train and bus connections – these issues must be addressed in order to achieve meaningful benefits for the community.</p>	Lewisham Highways TfL Network Rail Councillors
6	<p><b>Outputs: Launch Event, Exhibition, Online/Offline etc</b></p>	
6.1	<p>SMcC proposes to present the proposal at an exhibition, performances at the Livesey Hall, and possibly a festival in November, close to Armistice Day. This would link in with the need to refurbish the listed war memorial.</p>	

<b>7</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	
	<b>Public Meeting</b>	
7.1	The first public meeting to obtain the views of the local community prior to development of any proposals will be held at end of February. Time and venue to be confirmed. <i>Note this meeting will be open to all people who live or work in and around Bell Green</i>	Sydenham Society
	<b>Launch of Bell Green Proposals</b>	
7.2	Public exhibition - November 2019	
	<b>War Memorial</b>	
7.3	2020 will be the centenary of the inauguration of the Livesey War Memorial – organize a commemorative event?	
	<b>Project Phasing</b>	
7.4	Cllr LC suggested that the masterplan should be conceived in two phases: medium and long term. The long-term proposal would include a new station associated with the Bakerloo Line extension. This development should be compatible with the medium-term proposals	
<b>8</b>	<b>Communications</b>	
	<b>Internal communication</b>	
8.1	By email	
	<b>Community Information &amp; Discussion</b>	
8.2	Sydenham Society & Discourse architecture websites Twitter – Councillors, Sydenham Society & Discourse architecture. Please use hashtags: #BellGreenSE26 #Generations #SaveOurGasHolders	ALL
<b>9</b>	<b>Notification of Freeholders</b>	
9.1	Sydenham Society to contact freeholders and explain the objectives of the Bell Green community masterplan	Sydenham Society
<b>10</b>	<b>Actions</b>	
	<b>Neighbourhood Forum</b>	
10.1	Cllr LC suggested that a Bell Green Neighbourhood Forum is created to develop a Neighbourhood Plan under the Planning Act 2011. This would ensure that a community-based plan is developed for the area, which can be incorporated into planning law.	ALL

- Umbrella Group**
- 10.2 Discourse Architecture propose to form an umbrella group of sympathetic individuals with specialist skills to inform the development of the masterplan. They would like this to include:  
History; Transport; Planning; Landscape & Ecology; Youth/Education; Public Health; Retail Consultants/Economists  
Please ask anyone that you think would like to contribute a small amount of their time to contact Discourse Architecture
- ALL
- 11 Enclosures**
- 11.1 Sydenham Society / Discourse Architecture document: 'Project Scope'
- 12 Distribution**
- 12.1 All those in attendance and those who gave apologies plus:  
Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham  
Paul de Zylva, QWAG  
Viv Evans, Lewisham Planning Department  
David Syme, Lewisham Planning Department  
Joanna Ecclestone, Lewisham Planning Department  
Dan Edwards, SGN  
Adam Conchie, Carter Jonas (representing Keir Group)  
Sydenham Society Website <http://www.sydenhamsociety.com/>  
Twitter:  
Sydenham Society @ SydenhamSociety  
Discourse Architecture @d-architecture  
#BellGreenSE26 #Generations #SaveOurGasholders