

BELL GREEN URBAN RENEWAL

Project Scope - December 2018

Introduction

This proposal to develop a community-led plan for Bell Green has been initiated by the Sydenham Society with Discourse Architecture. It has been registered with Lewisham Planning Department in response to their recent 'Call for Sites' for consideration in the development of the new Local Plan. The catalyst has been the proposal to demolish the gas holders, adjacent to the Livesey Hall and Perry Hill, and construct new retail and light industrial units at the west end of the site. This has highlighted the profound failure of development at Bell Green to provide a good environment for local people, and the urgent need for a fresh vision for the area.

Our principle concerns are:

- High levels of atmospheric pollution being generated by heavier than anticipated traffic. This is an unacceptable health hazard, to which children, the frail and elderly are especially vulnerable.
- The poor quality of external space, which is dominated by busy roads, narrow pavements, large areas of under-utilized surface parking and inadequate landscaping
- The lack of trees or other soft landscaping of a quality or scale sufficient to mitigate the negative effect of traffic and large car parks
- The lack of integration between the site and adjoining residential neighbourhoods. This is exacerbated by the barrier effect of roads around the site - creating an environment for vehicles, rather than local residents and people using the area
- The bland quality of the place, increasingly drained of local character and identity. The ubiquitous style of retail and commercial buildings, not necessarily bad in itself, but pieces of an anonymous grey corporate jigsaw that is making everywhere the same and nowhere specific



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Strengths and Potential of the site include:

- The Listed building group of the Livesey Memorial Hall, War Memorial and bowling green
- The two remaining gasholder structures - a legacy of the former industrial use of the site and distinctive structures that frame the sky
- The topographic character: a flat plain with a dramatic approach from high ground to the west and north
- Under-utilized surface parking at the south end of the site, to the west of the Sainsbury's Petrol Station, that could be used to construct new housing/mixed use development that would humanize this currently bleak section of Southend Lane
- The island site between Stanton Way and Southend Lane could have the potential for housing/mixed use development
- The green space of the Linear Park and the River Pool – a highway for nature, pedestrians and cyclists
- There is the potential for significant greening of the site to mitigate poor air quality and the negative visual impact of vehicles and tarmac surfaces. This could also connect with the Linear Park to increase the therapeutic critical mass of the existing natural environment – proving that our cities can be great places for nature and do not need to be sterile deserts
- Traffic calming to mitigate the negative impact of vehicles and facilitate better spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, making it easier to cross the roads, allowing the site to be connected to surrounding neighbourhoods
- To better integrate sustainable transport modes of walking, cycling, buses and trains into the site
- Consideration of relocating Lower Sydenham Station into the site and the extension of the long-planned Bakerloo Line extension



Our Aspirations:

- To consult with local residents and businesses to identify their needs and desires
- To encourage development that benefits local people and increases prosperity
- To replace car parks with housing particularly on the street frontages
- To create a greener environment
- To improve the quality of public space
- To mitigate the negative impact of roads
- To preserve and celebrate the distinctive surviving historic fabric that contributes to local character: the Livesey Memorial Hall, the gas holders, 'The Bell' public house, The Old Bath House and Haseltine primary school
- To define a framework for the future development of Bell Green that reflects the aspirations of local people and businesses

Next Steps:

We will develop a community-led vision for the future development of Bell Green for discussion with Lewisham Council, TfL, Network Rail, freeholders, leaseholders, other stakeholders and consultees



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