

APPCT response to Wood Green Area Action Plan Consultation – March 2017

1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. The Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust (APPCT) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the next stage of the Wood Green Area Action Plan.
- 1.2. Set in 196 acres of parkland, Alexandra Palace is an iconic North London destination of important historical significance. Opened in 1873, it provides a significant recreational community resource for the London Borough of Haringey and wider area. Our thriving events programme sees over 700,000 people visit the Palace each year to enjoy a varied programme of live sport, exhibitions and music gigs. The total number of visitors to the site (including the Park) is c2.3m visitors per year.
- 1.3. On events days, there can be anything between 10,000 and 50,000 people coming to the Park and Palace, many of whom arrive via public transport. In conjunction with the variety of events on offer, the Park and Palace boast a range of family-friendly and community activities, including a year-round ice rink, a pitch and putt golf course, boating lake, public house, playground and skate park.
- 1.4. The Park particularly is at capacity in some areas, placing heavy pressure on the flora and fauna, the recreational facility and the Trust in terms of managing the impact of visitors, litter and security - all of which are compounded by historical poor drainage. There are areas of the Park that have not been designed for large volumes of visitors. The on-site security team keep a daily record of Incidents of Interest and it is estimated that the split between issues relating to the Park and to the Palace is c60/40, rising to 70/30 over the summer months as the team deal with a variety of anti-social behaviour activities from rough sleeping to fly-tipping and graffiti.

2.0. APPCT's Strategic Vision

- 2.1. APPCT is currently developing a Strategic Vision for the charitable assets. This Vision will help to guide and focus the direction of the Park and Palace over the next 25 years, and articulate what public resort and recreation mean in the modern day, acting as a framework for future development and investment.
- 2.2. The regeneration of Wood Green and Alexandra Park and Palace should be mutually beneficial and complementary, and APPCT would welcome opportunities to work with Haringey Council colleagues to identify ways in which APPCT and the Council can work together to deliver the objectives of the Vision and the AAP where they align.
- 2.3. Maximising the cultural and entertainment offer, increasing activity throughout the daytime and into the night time, prolonging dwell time and maximising spend in the local economy are all principles that are welcomed by APPCT and are mirrored in the Strategic Vision work.

Wood Green AAP

3.0. Access to Open Space

- 3.1. Accessibility improvements to all open space in Wood Green is welcomed; a priority for APPCT will be to understand what financial provisions (through CIL or otherwise) will be made for upgrading, maintaining and improving these open spaces to mitigate against the impacts of 7,700 new homes and their residents.
- 3.2. In particular, APPCT looks forward to reviewing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Investment Framework documents in the summer. Again, APPCT would welcome the opportunity to discuss the ways in which Wood Green's AAP can work with the Strategic Vision to ensure that the strategic open space of Alexandra Park can be a sustainable, welcoming and well-maintained recreational asset for the Borough's residents without impairing our ability to welcome the public from further afield.

4.0. Accessibility: pedestrian and cycle routes

- 4.1. In response to previous consultation on the Wood Green AAP, APPCT's top priorities include improving on existing and creating new physical and visual links from Wood Green town centre to Alexandra Park and Palace. We welcome the weight given to establishing a new primary route east-west from Wood Green to Alexandra Park through Coburg Road via the Hornsey Filter Beds site and into the Park (*fig.5.1*). *Policy WG8 (item C)* is considered favourable as it explicitly expects improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes to and the overall quality of Alexandra Park.
- 4.2. It does however need to be appreciated that the current layout of paths and roads within the Palace grounds and parkland does not facilitate east-west passage westwards from Wood Green (towards Muswell Hill). We appreciate the need for improving this from an urban regeneration perspective; however the primary purpose of Alexandra Park and Palace is as a place of resort. We would welcome further conversation about how both of these purposes could be achieved.
- 4.3. The proposal to consider alternative methods of transport for visitors to the Park and Palace is welcomed. APPCT would welcome conversations about greener forms of transport and bike hire and other healthier methods of moving around.

5.0. Wayfinding, signage and lighting

- 5.1. APPCT welcomes the AAP area-wide public realm/ network improvements proposals particularly the overarching approach to lighting to improve night time appearance and safety, and the coherent and legible signage and wayfinding strategy.
- 5.2. A combination of good lighting, signposting and wayfinding will help to orientate visitors, guide them to key locations and destinations and make them feel safe. Legible signage and branding for key areas will need to be developed with input from local businesses and organisations to ensure coherence, relevance and distinctiveness. At this stage however, APPCT does not wish to add new lighted routes inside the Parkland itself. This is something that the Trust is looking at in the Strategic Vision.

6.0. Recreational/ community facilities offer

6.1. In accordance with proposed *Policy WG9*, APPCT would welcome discussions about how off-site investment and/or CIL payments could be used to deliver on community infrastructure requirements. We are keen to understand what provision will be made for leisure/ recreational/ community facilities for the proposed 7,700 new homes and their residents in the Wood Green area.

7.0. Energy and Sustainability

7.1. As the Palace explores opportunities for combined heat and power, we would welcome a conversation about the district energy networks and the potential for the Palace to play its part in the sustainable energy agenda for Wood Green.

8.0. Site Specific Allocations

WG SA 18 Clarendon Road

8.1. The redevelopment of the Clarendon Road site is of particular interest to APPCT, and we would be keen to be engaged in discussions during the planning stages. We are particularly interested in the opportunity for CIL payments to be utilised for Park improvements and the provision of new/ improved leisure and recreational facilities. As highlighted in the earlier section on access to open space, the Alexandra Park plays the role of a strategic open space and will be used by new residents of both this site and the wider Heartlands sub-area (this is particularly important given that the net anticipated residential units for this sub-area is 3,512, the largest proportion of the total 7,701 (*6.10 Outputs*)).

8.2. The potential for a landmark building on this site would need to be sensitive to the setting of the Palace, the Conservation Area within which the Park sits, along with the protected and local viewing corridors.

WG SA 20 Wood Green Cultural Quarter (North)

8.3. APPCT welcomes the principle that this area is not suitable for a tall/ landmark building given the potential impact on long views of Alexandra Palace from Lordship Recreation Ground and Lordship Lane/ Bruce Castle.

WG SA 21 L/A Coronation Sidings

8.4. The potential for a landmark building on this site would need to be sensitive to the setting of the Palace, the Conservation Area within which the Park sits, along with the protected and local viewing corridors.

8.5. This SSA's focus on improvements to the Penstock Tunnel improvements is welcomed.

WG SA 25 Hornsey Filter Beds

8.6. APPCT is particularly interested in the allocation of this site and the opportunities for uses complementary to Alexandra Park and those that would benefit the setting. A conversation about the type and scale of development would be welcomed given the site is located immediately adjacent to Alexandra Park.

8.7. In particular, we have concerns about the de-designation of the Hornsey Filter Beds from MOL – the site acts as a natural buffer to the Park and enhances our nature conservation area. The development of housing on that site and increasing the pedestrian traffic flow

via a new access route needs to be carefully designed to appreciate the unique setting and operations of the Palace and the Park. We would welcome a conversation about the future uses of the reservoir which are compatible with nature conservation and increased public access.

8.8. To conclude we would like to draw your attention to our previous submission from the earlier round of consultation. We attach this as an appendix.

APPENDIX 1

Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust

May 2016

Introduction

Several members of the Trust Board attended a session on the Wood Green Regeneration project on 9th March 2016 with representatives from Fluid, the consultants managing the project. The note of the meeting is attached. The Board agreed to discuss the regeneration proposals more fully, and in private, in order to develop a clear response to Haringey ahead of it producing a further consultation document of its preferred options later in the summer.

Below is a draft position statement for the Trust Board to consider, along with draft principles for the Board to consider, with some explanatory/exploratory notes underneath, to facilitate the discussion.

Position Statement

The Board welcomes the proposals for the regeneration of Wood Green, in particular the commitment demonstrated to improving access to the Park and Palace. As Wood Green is a major point of arrival for both event and general leisure visitors to the Park and Palace it is important that it offers a high quality visitor experience. Improving the streetscape, vibrancy and signage in Wood Green has the potential to have a positive impact on the charitable assets by improving the visitor experience and legibility upon arrival and better directing the flow of people to transport and walking routes to the Park and Palace.

The Board recognises that the plans are in some part aspirational and are set to be achieved over a long period of time. The Trust is embarking on its own long term planning exercise to create Strategic Vision, which has the potential to change aspects of the design of the Park and Palace and its uses.

Despite the long term nature of both pieces of work it is a reasonable assumption that the Palace will require a large flow of visitors to sustain itself into the future and that this flow will need to be effectively managed throughout the day, night and year.

The successful management of access and egress is a major consideration for the operation and future sustainability of the Park and Palace due to its impact on; visitor perception and appeal, road traffic flow, local residents, safety and the sustainable management of the Parkland habitats.

The Charitable Trust would also like to emphasise that the Park and Palace constitute a Statutory Conservation Area. There are several aspects of the regeneration proposals that have the potential to impact on this status e.g. the views both to and from the Palace and the impact of vehicular traffic.

The Board therefore has some reservations about the proposals at this stage in relation to managing access and egress and the impact on the conservation area. There are some key principles that Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust would like to be taken into consideration when refining the Wood Green development plans.

In developing these principles the Trust recognises that its own Strategic Vision work has not yet commenced and that this will test and possibly challenge some of these principles. It is therefore important that the Trust and LBH remain in dialogue on these issues.

Draft Principles

- 1) There are primary routes that need to be preserved for large volume/high density access and egress to the Park and Palace**

Station Road needs to remain the primary route from Wood Green. Any alterations to the design and flow of this road have major implications for access and egress for both vehicles and people.

- 2) There are secondary routes which are not suitable for night time access or egress whether high or low volume or density**

The only routes suitable for night time access and egress are those which do not cross the Parkland. Night time access and egress need to be well lit. At this stage the Trustees do not wish to add new lighted routes inside the Parkland itself.

- 3) There are secondary routes which are suitable for low density, day time access and egress that need to be enhanced to act as suitable and appealing routes for the Park and Palace**

One of these routes is the walking link between Wood Green and the Park via the Cultural quarter.

The Park is not able to cope with large volume high density footfall in this area. Whilst the Trusts Strategic Vision work may look to enhance this area and make it more resilient to increased wear and tear, because of the contours leading to the Palace it is unlikely that a new path will be created leading across the Park to reduce the time to the Palace building itself.

Therefore this route would best serve as a leisure walking route for daytime visitors to the Park and Palace. With creative application it can be made more appealing as a route but it is unlikely that the walk time can be significantly reduced.

- 4) There are some routes which are not suitable for accessing the Park and Palace**

For example; the proposed green connection south of the Rail station. Whilst we recognise that it is feasible to access the Park at this point the current condition of the route is barely accessible and is height constrained, it enters the park in the designated nature conservation area. We would not recommend this as a promoted route into the park.

We note the potential to create a route outside of the Parkland alongside the rail route that may create a foot and cycle commuting route with minimal impact on the Park. However if this route was to be lit in the evening it would impact negatively on the designated nature conservation area.

- 5) The Trust does not rule out the possibility of changing the routes and points of access to the Parkland**

As the Trust embarks on its Strategic Vision project and despite the principles outlined above the Trust does remain open to potential changes to the layout of routes in the Park and points of access in order to not artificially constrain the Vision work. It is important therefore that LBH and the Trust remain in dialogue on these issues.

- 6) Traffic modelling for changes to the existing traffic flow in Wood Green must model the impact that the changes will have on the road that passes through the Park.**

The road through the Park is hugely important for visitors and suppliers however the usage of the route by non- Park or Palace users is significant and is growing. It is treated as if it is part of the highway, yet it is a private road. It is gridlocked during the morning and evening peak commuting hours and when there are issues on the surrounding roads.

Any changes to the traffic flow in Wood Green will have an impact on the usage and congestion on the road through the Park which increases pollution, impacts on the safety of Park and Palace users and damages the visitor experience.

7) The Wood Green Regeneration proposals need to be clear on how the relationship between new iconic buildings and historic landmarks will be balanced and managed.

The historic landmark of Alexandra Park & Palace already act as a major attractor for people to live, work, invest and visit the area, and have the potential to play a greater role in this into the future, thereby contributing to the overall regeneration, economic and employment growth of Wood Green.

The views are one of the main and consistent factors in achieving its 'iconic' status.

A key consideration of the Wood Green Regeneration proposals is therefore the impact of new buildings on the view. This not only relates to the official protected views but the panoramic view of London and beyond. This iconic building has established distinctiveness for the local area that has endured for generations, a rarity in an urban environment such as London.

The views to the Palace are also a fantastic feature of Wood Green and surrounding communities. Development in recent decades has not been as respectful of these views as it could have been. Obscuring the Palace from the local population and subsequently underselling one of the area's major assets.

8) The calculation of green and recreational space for new housing in Wood Green should not include the green and recreational space provided by Alexandra Park.

The Park and Palace were created with a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation to provide 'wonder and spectacle' and have hosted a range of events and installations to deliver on this purpose for over 140 years.

The Park and Palace exist for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and the Trust actively encourages the general public from Haringey and beyond to enjoy the entertainments and recreation on offer. However if we are to continue to deliver 'wonder and spectacle' and attract visitor income from outside the borough to support our purposes, maintain our uniqueness and iconic appeal and contribute to supporting and increasing employment in the area, whilst managing the pressures of an increasing population, building density and increased housing, we cannot become the default recreational space for Wood Green. This places too great a burden on the Park and its habitats and has a huge impact on the visitor experience.