

Wood Green Area Action Plan. February 2017. Consultation

Submission from the committee of the Friends of Alexandra Park

The Friends of Alexandra Park is a member organisation established in 2006 with aims to promote and protect Alexandra Park, the grounds around Alexandra Palace. The Friends group has a membership of 294 households, including local residents and supporters of the park living in other parts of London and beyond. We provide a programme of walks, talks and conservation activities in the Park which support the park management and the charitable objectives of the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust.

The open spaces of Alexandra Park are enjoyed by large numbers of visitors, particularly in summer when picnicking is popular and the park is crowded. Access to open space is accepted as highly beneficial to one's physical and mental well-being.

The Park is Metropolitan Open Land and a Local Nature Reserve. It has a unique character among the open spaces in Haringey because of its size, topography, combination of woodland and grassland, and water. As a result it has a range of plant life and wildlife which provides a significant contribution to the biodiversity in Haringey, as well as a rich educational resource for local young people. A 24 hour survey in 2010 recorded 600 species of plant, animals and fungi in the park. It is with this exceptional natural value in mind that we comment on the potential impacts of the developments contained within the AAP on Alexandra Park.

CAAC submissions

We strongly support the submissions of the Alexandra Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Hornsey Conservation Areas Advisory Committee.

East-West route through Wood Green

We recognise the benefits of opening up a significant route on the east-west axis through Wood Green and the improvement of the Penstock Tunnel for cyclists and pedestrians. This in turn provides the opportunity to improve access into Alexandra Park (but see comments under Filter Beds below). However this should not be seen as the basis for a new route through Alexandra Park with associated hard surfacing and lighting. The introduction of lighting and the (human) night-time activity it attracts would have a significant adverse impact on wildlife, and would not make this large and wooded park any safer.

Hornsey Filter Beds (SA-25)

We note that the AAP has been extended from the original study area to include the Hornsey Filter Beds, which border Alexandra Park and the reservoirs. Despite the water treatment buildings constructed on the east of this site, the filter beds together with the reservoirs provide a relatively low level, undeveloped boundary to the south east of the park. This greatly benefits the open character of the whole lower part of the park. Currently other parts of the park boundary are almost exclusively the back gardens of two storey housing. The construction of multi-storey housing on the filter beds, even if less than "Tall" would radically change the character of that part of the park boundary. The provision of a more direct route for the Penstock cycle and pedestrian path from the tunnel to the

Alexandra Park entrance is highly desirable, but does not require the construction of 300 homes (and the necessary removal of MOL status) to finance it. It would seem to be an entirely justifiable use of CIL derived from other developments in the AAP.

Tall buildings

We welcome the policy statement in WG6 stating the importance of considering views from and to Alexandra Palace when designing tall buildings, particularly in Heartlands sub-area. We agree that a tall building would not be suitable for Coronation Sidings (SA-21) because of those views. However we ask that the maintenance of the open outlook from the lower part of Alexandra Park, towards the east, is also considered when deciding on the height of any buildings in the sub-area.

Gordon Hutchinson
Chair, Friends of Alexandra Park
31st March 2017