

Friends of Brockwell Park

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THE PARK IS IN DANGER

13 March 2007

Dear Member

At its meeting yesterday, the Friends of Brockwell Park Committee discussed the paper on the other side of this letter and passed the resolution which follows it.

You may be aware that there are ongoing discussions about the Herne Hill regeneration project which includes a plan to run a slip road across the park for left turning traffic from Norwood Road. This will take 1000 sq metres of parkland which will then become a traffic island. The toilets will be demolished and there are no current plans to re-build them.

You will probably have read the opposing points of view on this matter put forward in the latest FoBP newsletter, but in view of the importance of the situation, the Committee thought it imperative to take a view and to inform the membership immediately.

We have since found out that despite the claims made by the proponents of the scheme, the Parks department and the Planning department (Conservation) of the Council as well as TfL and English Heritage fear that the current scheme takes an excessive amount of parkland and that traffic improvements can be achieved with far less destruction of the park.

We have no problem with other aspects of the Herne Hill re-generation scheme but cannot support the loss of such a large amount of Brockwell Park. We recognise and accept that some part of the park may be needed to ameliorate the difficult traffic congestion at Herne Hill Junction but believe that this can be achieved with only a minimal loss.

This Saturday March 17th FoBP members and other park users will be going to the Herne Hill entrance at 2pm to protest at the proposed loss of parkland and form a human chain along the intended new boundary line.

If you too agree that it is vitally important to preserve our public open spaces please come along and join us in the park this Saturday.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Morland'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Laura Morland
Chair, Friends of Brockwell Park
On behalf of the FoBP Committee

Herne Hill Junction

The following statements are from answers to a Council Member's formal enquiries:

Statement from the Parks Department:

Parks consider the current proposal to take a large corner of the park, **wholly unacceptable**. Planning have also expressed concerns that the scheme represents too great a loss of parkland and Metropolitan Open Land. Parks and Planning / Conservation have never accepted the traffic island beyond the park railings could still be classed as parkland. And it now emerges that the "traffic island" will have to be paved to allow access and egress for the country show and other large events.

English Heritage advice:

We welcome the opportunity to improve the amenity and appearance of this important entrance to the park but this **cannot be at the expense of loss of Metropolitan Open Land**. If such a loss is to be considered it needs to be fully justified and any erosion kept to an absolute minimum. Improvements to the appearance of this landscape/townscape can incorporate traffic improvements but should not be led by them.

TfL advice:

The extent of land-take in the current scheme represents an **unacceptable loss** of open Metropolitan Open Land and could create an **undesirable precedent** for parks and commons elsewhere. Given the status of the park on the Register of Historic Parks, as MOL, and as part of a Conservation Area, **it is of fundamental importance that the loss of park land is kept to a minimum**. The creation of large traffic island between the Norwood Road / Dulwich Road slip road and the remainder of the highway would not be compensation for the loss of parkland.

(TfL Heritage advisor, Edmund Bird)

Note: TfL is currently working on a completely different scheme to take much less of the park.

Lambeth Planning Department (Conservation):

.... Both Metropolitan Open Land policy and Conservation/Heritage considerations mean that **the loss of parkland should be kept to a minimum**. A new traffic island would not be considered to be part of the historic parkland/MOL. Planning & EH would welcome the opportunity to make formal pre-application comments on the proposed designs.

Any alteration to the historic parkland will need to be acceptable to HLF as a condition of the Public Parks Programme grant.

Planning has never agreed a particular scheme. "From the outset I have expressed concerns about the extent of the take from the Park, and these misgivings appear to have been shared by English Heritage and TfL."

(Planning - conservation, urban design, policy & DC)

Note:

The Park is designated as Metropolitan Open Land; Conservation Area, and Listed Historic Parkland. Development on MOL requires GoL (Government Office for London) approval as a departure from UDP.

Conservation Area Consent for demolition of Council-owned structures also requires GoL approval subject to advice from English Heritage.

Assessment of an application for Planning Permission for the development must take into account its impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the historic character of the park land.

Any application for Planning Permission/CAC would need to include full details of the proposed scheme. Any consent for demolition would be dependent of approval of detail of the new structures/landscaping .

Resolution passed overwhelmingly by the Committee:

In view of the proposed loss of park land and loss of the public toilets, we the Friends of Brockwell Park Committee urge the Council not to proceed with this particular aspect of the Herne Hill Regeneration proposals.