

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

UNDERSTANDING THE MASTERPLAN PRINCIPLES

THE

ALTON ESTATE

2017

Downshire Field (Bull Green)

- Paving to split green up and avoid people wearing down grass by walking across it
- No to amphitheatre – would be impractical, not used all year round and attract wrong kind of people when out of use
- Lower and flatter to improve access – a level crossing across Danebury Ave. from Portswood Place
- Used in the summertime by people drinking and dogs are also off-putting (as they are potentially dangerous dogs, not family dogs)
- Green areas are “spooky” and intimidating – lots of trees

Danebury Avenue

- Too narrow and too much parking on the street makes it effectively a one-way street and very hard to navigate. Parking problem is chronic across estate
- Longer sequencing on traffic lights and widening at junction between Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue is needed to ease congestion
- More focus needed on improvements to Danebury Avenue allowing traffic on the estate to flow better

Portswood Place

- Retail offer is run down – needs to be improved but keep community focussed offer, rather than attempt to attract people from further afield than current users
- Improve bus drivers’ facilities – permanent toilet
- Sheltered Housing Clubroom hasn’t been looked at – this should be protected and could be expanded with workshops for older people to do their hobbies.
- Retail/community facilities should include:
 - Replacement for Londis
 - Pharmacy (currently nearest is Danebury Centre, not good for less mobile residents)
 - Café – students could be involved in running this
 - Expanded Health Centre (Physio, Podiatry etc)
- Portswood Place is not central enough – people from the Danebury Centre end don’t go down that far

Danebury Centre

- Merging Youth Club and Base facilities would be a sound idea. Young people’s facilities need to focus more on older teens 13-18 – secure facilities as part of expanded Base/Youth Club. Could also include workspace for local apprenticeships.
- There are currently queues at the supermarket – always busy
- Market stalls would be nice in the public square
- Shopping area should be made bigger with larger shops
- Coffee shop – area for mums to socialise
- Fruit and veg/healthy options are required – too much junk food available at the moment
- Library – should be open 5 days a week

General Points:

- Turnover of residents on the estate is high and this means many residents do not care about the estate's history
- Architectural diversity of the estate is valued and should be preserved
- Young people should be engaged and involved in the development of arts and culture projects - this will ensure they respect and help maintain them
- Spaces will work best if they are functional as well as decorative
- Spaces should be usable for the whole community and all age groups
- A programme of guided walks could be developed to educate residents about the history of the estate

Open landscape and public art

- Protect and raise awareness of the Watchers and Bull statues
- Bull statue could be enhanced by moving away from car park and hedges that were installed nearby
- Leave Downshire Field largely untouched

Roehampton Village

- Historical location of village should be recognised - the Estate should be recognised as a part of Roehampton

Harbridge Avenue

- Street should be kept tree-lined - and not pollarded

Mount Clare views

- Protect the Capability Brown landscape and open up where possible - but protect trees

Portswood Place/Grade II Listed bungalows

- Mural by old school - should be protected and made into a place to commemorate the history of the estate.
- Protect and enhance views and surroundings of the listed bungalows

Danebury Avenue

- Green space entrance to the estate from Roehampton Lane should be preserved
- Student accommodation - disappointment expressed at ugliness of these buildings
- Potential location for a central art display as part of the entrance to the estate - this was the original intention when the estate was first constructed

General Points:

- Access and movement - more people need to be encouraged to walk through the estate - a new access to Richmond park and new shops could help draw more people in

Housing Quality

- Need to reduce turnover of residents - fewer properties being sublet by leaseholders
- A balanced community is important but more social housing is needed and tenants need security
- Quality checking, both for post build 'snags' and long term maintenance are important to stop the estate deteriorating

Lighting and CCTV

- Lighting is important but light pollution needs to be considered - a potential solution would be sensor activated lights in some areas
- CCTV is important but cannot be relied on alone to prevent crime - needs to be designed into the scheme - not retrofitted

Refuse Management

- Litter a big problem, caused by lack of road-sweepers and inadequate numbers and sizes of bins - new buildings need to have large and secure bin stores
- Refuse collection needs to be looked at across the entire estate, not just the regeneration area

Security in residential buildings

- Key-fob entry not secure enough - people can leave doors open and follow others through
- Front doors need to be strong and easy to maintain

Parking and cycle storage

- Underground parking should be well lit and well monitored
- Cycle storage should be internal and located close to stair cores

Bull Green/Downshire Field

- Amphitheatre would attract crime
- Cafe overlooking the Green would keep eyes on the open space helping to prevent crime

Danebury Avenue/Laverstoke Gardens

- Laverstoke Gardens should be closed off at one end and pedestrians encouraged
- Quality of pavements needs to be improved - lots of uneven paving stones and lack of dropped-curbs
- Closer integration with Roehampton University is important - a study space in the library could embed them in the community

Portswood Place and Minstead Gardens

- Alleyway between Minstead Gardens Clubroom is a crime hotspot - low walls used as seating attracting gangs and public drinking
- Street lighting at the rear of Minstead Gardens bungalows should be maintained, even if the footpath is removed
- There should be a small office or facility for Police Officers and PCSOs so they can spend more time on the estate
- There should be an improved toilet facility for bus drivers waiting at Portswood Place.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

LANDSCAPING AND PLAY SPACE

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Community Cohesion

- New landscape and play spaces need to be for all, rather than 'us vs. them' spaces
- University of Roehampton should be approached to get involved in new community spaces to integrate their students more with the local community

Community Gardening

- Potential for raised communal planting beds for growing fruit and vegetables
- Young people on the estate could get involved learning to care for their own spaces
- Could work in partnership with University of Roehampton - similar to their Growhampton initiative
- Beehives could be included on roof gardens
- Photo-voltaic panels could be included on roofs to provide power for residents

Play space and activity spaces

- Current playgrounds are good but often locked - new locations should be carefully chosen not to reduce open green space
- Community sports teams play an important role in gang prevention - sports organisations may be interested in sponsoring facilities on the site e.g. Chelsea Kicks project
- A new MUGA (mixed use games area) should be attached to the Youth Club
- All new play and activity facilities should be accessible to all
- Activity spaces for adults - outdoor gyms have been brought in elsewhere and worked well
- A gym path or trail through the estate would be a good idea - people can run or walk the trail between activity areas
- Facilities provided will influence aspirations of the next generation and young people need to be consulted.

Trees

- Trees should be thinned out to reveal the 18th Century 'Temple' near Minstead Gardens
- The landscape is improved by the number of trees - their health and condition needs to be monitored
- An appropriate strategy for the estate needs to account for listed buildings and structures and strategic views
- If trees have to be replaced - they should be replaced with more fruit and nut trees - these are good for bees and more interactive

Access to Richmond Park

- Considered to be a good idea for amenity cyclists and pedestrians
- Also a risk attached - might attract more drivers who will park on Danebury Avenue and make the parking situation even worse

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CAR PARKING, TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

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Buses

- Moving bus turnaround would help improve views on Bull Green but new turnaround should solve problem not move it elsewhere
- A bus route that offers direct access to Queen Mary and Kingston Hospitals would save people changing buses or relying on ambulances. It would also benefit parents of children at the new nursery on Portswood Place

Walking routes

- Bull Green/Downshire Field - lots of people use unpaved cut-across routes, paved routes need to be changed to reflect where people actually walk
- The state of pavements is poor - there is a lack of dropped curbs and the ones that exist are often blocked by parking spaces
- There should be a new level pedestrian crossing connecting Portswood Place with Bull Green

Cycling and access to Richmond Park

- Cyclists generally welcomed as long as they obey the rules of the road - currently a lot of cyclists go too fast down Danebury Avenue
- Fears that new access to Richmond Park for cyclists would attract more problem cyclists but hoped it may also promote more activity for estate residents

Trains and stations

- Putney station at full capacity and needs to be expanded with more people moving to the estate
- More people would use Barnes station if it was in Zone 2

Junctions

- Works to Danebury Avenue/Roehampton Lane junction should make the junction wider
- Traffic lights are needed on the junction of Holybourne Avenue and Danebury Avenue

Parking

- A key issue for the estate and currently a major problem, especially along Danebury Avenue
- Controlled Parking Zone - A potential solution in places but disliked by many due to the likely cost of parking permits
- University of Roehampton should rethink their policy of not allowing students to park on their campus
- New developments should have secure underground parking

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RETAIL, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY USES

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Community and leisure facilities

- There's a shortage of sports facilities - there are ball courts but little else
- Alton School playing fields - could dual access be provided for school and local community?
- The Leisure Centre site is constrained - no room for expansion and no swimming facilities
- There are accessibility issues with facilities for older people - the Library caters well for older people but could be made more accessible
- Better community organisation is needed to help get residents' associations off the ground and improve communications between Alton East and Alton West - there are currently separate groups on the estate - remits overlap
- Sports facilities should be flexible

Danebury Centre

- Danebury currently has more chemists than is necessary - could be dispersed across the estate more (Alton East, Portswood Place)
- Cafe Joy seen as a success story for the area - independent cafés and outdoor seating valued
- Currently a lack of licensed restaurants in the area offering food and drink and somewhere to sit outside in nice weather - but wouldn't promote excessive drinking
- Co-op seen as expensive, crowded and poor choice of products
- Any new supermarket has to cater for all residents - not too expensive
- A permanent location for the Feel Good Bakery should be found on Danebury Avenue
- Other potential retail units: homeware shop, key cutters, solicitor/accountant, computer support
- Underground car parking for new retail units

Portswood Place

- Portswood Place should serve as a community and retail hub for the immediate community - not seek to attract visitors from the wider estate and beyond
- An improved convenience store should be provided but not necessarily any bigger than current facility
- An improved and expanded GP surgery should offer Physiotherapy and Podiatry to reduce need for trips to Queen Mary Hospital - there should also be a chemist attached
- A community run cafe facing onto Bull Green would be well used by local community and parents of children at the new nursery
- Regenerate are highly valued and should be provided with an improved office

Roehampton Library

- Library is valued and well used by a good cross-section of the estate, this should continue
- Library function needs to continue whilst new library is being built
- The library's opening hours need to be extended
- There should be a facility for local community groups and residents' associations to meet in the library
- The separate children's library should be kept to minimise disturbance for other library users

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BUILDING DESIGN, SCALE AND APPEARANCE

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Comments on the appearance of the current Estate

- Lots of open and green space - makes the estate feel light
- Great views over Richmond Park
- Danebury Avenue has poor frontages and in need of improvement
- Allbrook House valued by some and disliked by others - good size homes and great views but also seen as imposing and uninviting
- Laverstoke Gardens frontage is very bad and the need for delivery vehicle access to the retail units makes it hard to improve
- Various heights and styles of architecture on the estate - makes it interesting to walk through
- A lot of alleyways and footpaths on the estate attract crime and can be intimidating
- Properties aren't respected or valued by people living in them - left to deteriorate

Comments on building heights

- Residential elements should be 4-8 storeys in most places - tall buildings more appropriate for Roehampton Lane/commercial centre
- Shorter buildings around Harbridge and Kingsclere
- Opportunity to open up views of the church
- Variety of heights should be used, but buildings up to the height of Allbrook House would be appropriate

Comments on materials

- Brick widely viewed as preferred material - weathers and ages well - however there should be a mix of materials or the estate will look dull
- No bright reds/yellows that are often used on tower blocks
- Recessed balconies preferred to external ones
- Flat concrete surfaces could encourage graffiti and are too 'estate' looking

Suggestions for the regeneration

- The regeneration should be done in a way that makes the entire estate more attractive
- Basement servicing areas for retail units to avoid poor frontages associated with Laverstoke Gardens
- Green, open feel should be maintained, no building on current open spaces
- Natural slope of the site should be used to disguise height and incorporate underground car parking
- People with gardens should keep them where possible
- Architects should work with community and design should have community input - design visits to good developments nearby
- Soften hard landscapes where possible - roof terraces and gardens and raised flower beds and planters for community gardening

Comments on building styles and layouts

- Dual aspect very important to ensure natural light
- Courtyard blocks could block out light for internal homes - U-shaped blocks and varied height 'line' blocks preferred
- Courtyards can feel uninviting to non-residents and can attract crime if security gates break and are not maintained
- Noise issue with courtyards - noise gets trapped and create an echo
- All buildings should have two fire escapes
- Secure by Design standard doors and overlooking onto public spaces should be a good way to reduce crime and improve safety
- CCTV is essential but shouldn't be relied on as a method for preventing crime
- Buildings should be well lit but lights should be sensor activated to reduce light pollution

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REHOUSING AND UNDERSTANDING HOUSING QUALITY

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What works in existing homes

- Most homes are dual-aspect and have good natural lighting in both kitchens and bathrooms
- Good levels of privacy - open space means you are not overlooked
- Balconies are good - there is even space for plant pots
- Good views from Allbrook House
- Well designed layouts with lots of space saving storage

Problems in existing homes

- Allbrook House flats are nice but ground floor and entrance is very bad
- Lack of security and anti-social behaviour
- Kitchens not big enough for modern fridge-freezers
- Many homes have been altered over time - communal heating removed and boiler installed - led to a reduction in storage
- Bungalows have storage at high levels which is inaccessible for elderly and less-mobile residents
- Many buildings use bin chutes - these are left open and attract vermin, other buildings have bins that are long distances from homes or overflowing
- Lots of maintenance problems - CCTV cameras have stopped working, lifts out of action for long periods

What should be included in the new homes?

- Unit sizes should meet GLA standards - many units on the current estate do not
- There should be well-designed, purpose built storage solutions that are accessible and convenient
- No north facing, single-aspect units
- Good levels of natural light, especially in kitchens
- Instruction booklets on how to properly use and get the most out of new homes
- Design should be tenure blind - no buildings should stand out as being for social housing or private housing
- Front doors should be safe and secure, with well maintained signage that is lit at night and well maintained CCTV in communal areas
- All buildings with more than one storey should have lifts to ensure accessibility
- Bungalows should include facilities for mobility scooter storage and charging
- Built-in wardrobes should be included in each bedroom
- Separate kitchens and living rooms should be available for those who want them
- Individual letterboxes should be provided for all homes
- Enough space in dining areas for whole families to sit around one table at meal times
- Safety of children would be a concern on projecting balconies, recessed balconies preferred
- Bin stores need to be secure and accessed internally so only residents can use them