

Hook Park – Community Update

December 2020

Overview

Following the Hook Park Enquiry by Design (EbD) process which took place in October 2020, the project team are in the process of reviewing the detailed feedback alongside progressing the technical work as we look to promote the site through the Local Plan process.

The EbD was an extremely productive and informative process and we were pleased so many members of the community chose to get involved at this very early stage. The following document provides a summary of the feedback received and the next steps which will be taken in the process.

The key purpose for using the EbD process for Hook Park was to facilitate a community-led plan by collating local residents' input which could then be examined by the workshop stakeholders in tandem with technical data, and be used to directly influence the workshop discussions and shape the workshop outcomes. By drawing the emerging consensus on plans, local people have something tangible to respond to and the design team can then adjust the designs to respond to ideas and concerns.

To recap, the EbD comprised:

- *Thursday 15th October (5pm - 8pm)* – A drop in session, with information boards and physical versions of the two online consultation exercises, as well as an opportunity to ask members of the project team any questions.
- *Friday 16th October (9:30am – 5:15pm)* – An all day workshop with members of the project team. Presentations shown at the technical workshop were repeated for public consumption and site visits undertaken. Members of the public were then able to work with members of the project team to draw up initial ideas for the site in the following areas: Movement, Landscape, Urban Design, and Architecture.
- *Saturday 17th October (10am – 4pm)* – A drop-in session, with information boards, physical versions of the online consultation sessions, copies of the initial plans drawn up at the Friday session and an initial overview of feedback received to date.
- Hosting 3 virtual events via Zoom concurrent with the in-person events above between 15th and 17th October 2020.

The EbD Sessions

Technical Enquiry by Design Session – 5th October

A technical session was held for key stakeholders and technical experts. The session was intended to provide an overview of the history of the site, the opportunity that it presents and commencing the Enquiry by Design process. In total, 3 people attended in person and 8 people attended virtually.

Public Enquiry by Design Sessions – 15th October

This session was a drop-in event, with information boards and physical versions of the online consultation sessions. The information boards and virtual presentation can be found on the [website](#). In total 35 members of the public attended in person with 5 people attending virtually. Attendees at this event included representatives of the Chessington and District Residents' Association, the Chessington Equestrian Centre and two ward members for Chessington North and Hook.

Public Enquiry by Design Sessions – 16th October

This session was a full day workshop, which provided opportunities for people to attend in person, as well as virtually, with technical briefings, a site visit and an opportunity to work with members of the project team to draw up initial ideas for the site in the following areas: Movement, Landscape, Urban Design, and Architecture. Virtual attendees were able to view the presentations from the four groups. In total 8 people attended in person and 3 attended virtually. Attendees at this event included representatives of the Chessington and District Residents' Association, the Kingston Business Forum, and the Hook and Southborough Cricket Club.

Public Enquiry by Design Sessions – 15th October

This session was a drop-in event, with information boards and physical versions of the online consultation sessions. The information boards and virtual presentation can be found on the [website](#). The session also provided an initial

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overview of feedback to date and the initial plans drawn up in the Friday session. In total 75 members of the public attended in person with 6 people attending virtually. Virtual attendees were able to view the presentation, initial feedback and plans, and had the opportunity to ask any questions they may have had. Attendees at this event included representatives of the Chessington and District Residents' Association, the Chessington Equestrian Centre, and a ward member for Alexandra.

The 'Beauty in my Back Yard' (BIMBY) Survey

The BIMBY survey follows processes set out by the [Prince's Foundation](#) and enables communities to share their knowledge of the local area. The survey focuses on how they view their community, how local spaces are used and what people would like to see in the local area. The BIMBY survey was available on the project website and was completed by 80 people. 40 additional answers across the 35 questions were also received at the in-person workshop events on the 15th and 17th October. A summary of the key points is below:

Natural

Comments in this section cover the natural environment, both on the site and in the wider Hook and Chessington area:

- Support for the protection and enhancement of green spaces
- Importance of links to the countryside
- Lack of accessible green space
- Importance of the environment and biodiversity
- Pride in the quiet 'countryside feel' of the area
- Pollution concerns
- Concerns with the principle of building on Green Belt land

Social

Comments in this section cover the provision of facilities in the local community and the way in which local people perceive their community:

- Pride in the close-knit community vs. lack of a 'village feel'
- Pride about the quiet feel of Hook, caveated by concerns for the future of the area
- Pressure on local schools
- Pressure on local health facilities
- Importance of local schools for community building
- Importance of affordable housing provision
- Concerns regarding overdevelopment and overpopulation of the local area
- Concerns regarding crime
- Importance of providing community facilities, including those for younger and elderly people
- Support for more sporting facilities, particularly a swimming centre
- Support for improvements to surrounding sports and recreational facilities

Local Economy

Comments in this section cover local businesses, retail and employment:

- Desire to see a greater variety of local shops
- A need for more and varied job opportunities
- An existing lack of supermarkets

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- Support for the relocation of businesses currently occupying the site

Built Environment

Comments in this section cover the buildings in the area and the character of the local area:

- Hook described as having a traditional, 1930s suburban feel
- A lack of distinct character and identity for Hook
- Queries about the building design proposed
- Crowded residential areas
- Hook experiences a sense of disconnect from the wider Borough
- The site itself is not connected to the wider area

Travel

Comments in this section cover movement around the area, including on foot and by bicycle:

- Pressure on roads, particularly Clayton Road
- Support for the potential for a new access from the A3
- Recognition of the scope for improving transport links, footpath, and Hook Parade
- Car parking pressure
- Poor public transport links in the area, including infrequent and overcrowded train services.

Summary

There is a clear recognition of the opportunities offered by the site and the potential for future development. There are concerns over traffic and highways and a desire to ensure that any future development can address and improve the existing situation. Community provision across amenities, service and the local economy are seen as important and providing a means to bring greater investment and community cohesion into the local area.

The site itself is regarded as anti-social with the majority of local people not having been onto the site, with the exception of those who use the equestrian centre. Overall, there is a willingness to see something take place on the site which can improve connections and bring a broader benefit to the Hook community.

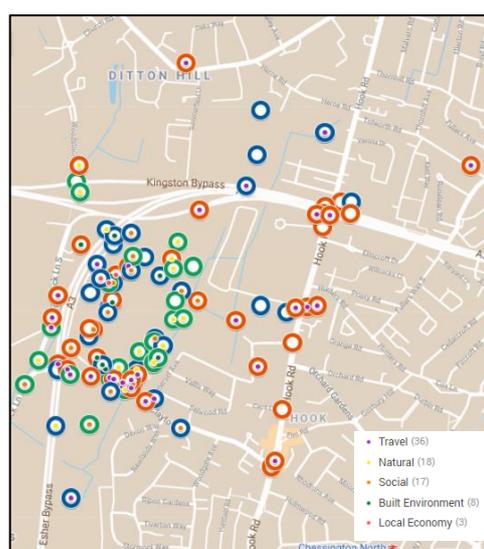
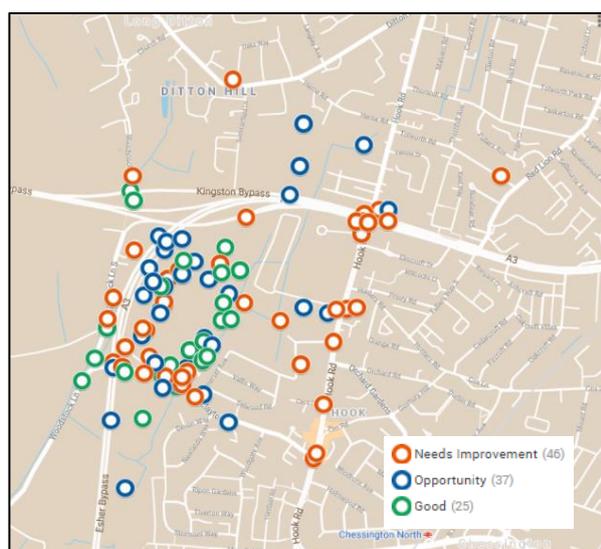
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Dots Exercise - Mapping Local Ideas and Feedback

This exercise enabled participants online and in person to identify areas of the site as one of three categories: Good, Needs Improvement or Opportunity Area. 108 individual points were placed on the map across both the online consultation and the in-person consultation events on 15th and 17th October.

The map above, with additional information on the corresponding categories of comments made can be seen below. Please note, not all respondents from the workshop events gave corresponding comments with their dots.



Natural

Good

- Support for the protection and enhancement of green spaces
- Importance of links to the countryside
- Importance of the environment and biodiversity
- Pride in the quiet ‘countryside feel’ of the area
- There were particular concerns that any travel improvements would destroy the remnants of Clayton Wood.

Needs Improvement

- Lack of accessible green space in the area
- Pollution concerns
- Stakeholders connected to the equestrian centre were keen to see bridleways improved, particularly alongside Woodstock Lane South.
- There was some concern about the principle of losing green belt land.

Opportunity

- Opportunities to link green spaces
- The vast majority of attendees were in favour of a 20-acre park, with most of these preferring one large park.
- The idea of a Community Land Trust to protect the park was popular, with residents wanting to be engaged in the character and type of management.
- Whilst most were favourable towards building on the west of the site, some were concerned with noise and pollution. However the idea of a bund was popular.
- As part of any landscaping, there were large spread support for water within the landscape.

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Social

Good

- Importance of local schools for community building
- Pride in the close-knit community vs. lack of a 'village feel'
- Importance of providing community facilities, including those for younger and elderly people. Many participants cited the King's Centre as an example of a strong community development.

Needs Improvement

- Pressure on local schools, although many did not support an extension to Lovelace Primary School
- Pressure on local health facilities
- Concerns regarding overdevelopment and overpopulation of the local area
- Concerns regarding crime
- Importance of affordable housing provision
- There were mixed perceptions around the availability of secondary school places.
- There were a number of concerns with the levels of litter in the area and the implications this could have on any community owned park.

Opportunity

- Support for more sporting facilities, particularly a swimming centre
- Support for improvements to surrounding sports and recreational facilities
- Opportunities to provide homes for older people.
- More playing parks needed
- Providing new homes particularly for young people and key workers was popular with attendees. There were some concerns with zoned social rented housing.

Local Economy

Good

Support for the relocation of businesses currently occupying the site

Needs Improvement

- A need for more and varied job opportunities
- An existing lack of supermarkets
- A perception that local shops are struggling and concerns with any increase in competition

Opportunity

- Desire to see a greater variety of local shops
- Most participants favoured the idea of a mixed-use development, rather than residential only.
- A number of participants identified the growing demand from tech companies for smaller, flexible workspaces.
- High-speed broadband was identified as being critical for local businesses.

Built Environment

Good

- Hook described as having a traditional, 1930s suburban feel
- Most attendees supported some form of development on the site to replace the informal uses currently on site.
- The mansion flat typology was popular with participants, although some felt that the design could be more reflective of the local housing stock, with gables and more domestic features.

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- Bay windows, balconies and additional workspaces were supported.
- Everyone was supportive of a mix of unit sizes within each block.

Needs Improvement

- A lack of distinct character and identity for Hook
- Crowded residential areas
- A large number of people did not support the delivery of tall buildings in the wider borough.
- Concerns with any proposed housing in terms of height and density
- There were some concerns with a perceived loss of open view to the rear of existing properties.

Opportunity

- Queries about the building design proposed
- Some people feared that the site could eventually be developed with taller buildings if not developed sympathetically now.
- Participants generally preferred any buildings to be located to the west of the site, away from existing residents on Somerset Avenue and Oaklands Close.
- People favoured taller buildings to the west and lower buildings further into the site.
- Many attendees were supportive of the location of any new homes facing the park.
- Some participants wanted family homes to be located to the south east near existing homes.

Travel

Good

- There were some concerns with the width of local roads for an extension of the mini-Holland scheme, although the principle was well supported.
- The idea of improving Hook Roundabout was well supported.
- Connecting the site to other open space sites was popular with attendees.
- There was general support for improving the Woodstock Lane underpass.
- The majority of people supported the idea of periphery parking, although in terms of quantity of parking, views were more mixed.
- There was widespread support for improving north-south journeys for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Almost all attendees thought that electric bikes and scooters were the future.

Needs Improvement

- Pressure on local roads, particularly Clayton Road. There was a split in opinions on how this should be dealt with.
- Informal parking was identified as an issue as there were no controlled parking zones in the area. Many people were concerned that this development would exacerbate existing issues with this.
- Poor public transport links in the area, including infrequent and overcrowded train services into central London.
- Concerns with existing lack of public transport links to Surrey
- Cycling and walking not currently well provided for
- Many residents were concerned with rat-running on local roads, although residents of Clayton Road, Somerset Avenue and Vallance Road were keen to be able to continue to use these routes.
- Public transport links from the site to Hook Road, Chessington North station, Esher and Hinchley Wood were seen as essential.

Opportunity

- Support for the potential for a new access from the A3
- Recognition of the scope for improving transport links, footpath, and Hook Parade

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- Local people questioned how traffic restrictions on Clayton Road via number plate recognition would work, particularly for visitors.
- A number of attendees wanted to know if parking would be provided for the park, as this was seen as particularly important for those with impaired mobility.
- Some residents of Oaklands Close were concerned with any proposals for site access located near them, although were receptive to potential mitigation for this.
- Attendees were keen that access from the Kingston Bypass is explored fully.

Summary

The Dots Exercise provides a more detailed insight into the way in which people view their local area along with views on potential plans for the site redevelopment. Infrastructure and open space formed a key theme of thinking with regard to the opportunities that the site can present in connection with the existing community. The provision of a park is seen as the primary positive aspect of the plans with people recognising the need for homes on the site and a clear opposition to taller buildings and towers but evidence of support for the mansion block typology proposed for the site. A number of very specific issues were raised which impact on residents living in immediate proximity to the site which will be addressed as the masterplan evolves and in ongoing discussion with the local community.

Additional ‘in-person’ Comments

The exhibition provided an excellent forum for broad and wide ranging discussions with all of those who visited. The themes of discussion were broadly the same as those reflected through the earlier BIMBY and Dots Exercise with a stronger emphasis on the way in which highways and transport solutions may work, coupled with improving pedestrian, cycle and green links. Extensive discussions were held between members of the community and the Highways Consultant who attended the session which resulted in constructive feedback to be input into the evolving plans.

Similar to the accompanying exercises, a focus on the benefits redevelopment of the site can bring in terms of replacing anti-social uses, protecting green space and providing sensitive mixed-use development was a core theme. Whilst concerns over development on greenbelt remain, these were largely outweighed by a recognition of what the site can deliver.

Comments Forms

At both drop-in events on 15th and 17th October, comment forms were provided to allow attendees to leave any additional comments or questions which they did not have chance to ask members of the project team. 11 comment forms were filled in in total. The comments provided largely reflect those given throughout the other exercise with a focus on the provision of community facilities, open space and sports provision.

Summary of Key Points

Across all the workshop sessions, online consultation and verbal feedback received to date, key themes emerged. It is clear that transport links and parking in the area are by far the most important issues to local people, however many respondents clearly understood the opportunities offered by the redevelopment of the Hook Park site for improving public transport in the area.

Participants also clearly had concerns regarding the provision of social infrastructure in the area, for example schools and GP surgeries. However, there was not one clear favourite solution for this, as some wanted the expansion of existing facilities and some favoured the creation of new schools and health facilities.

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Local people also clearly value the green footpaths and bridleways locally and support the proposals to improve the links between these. The majority of people were very supportive of a large new public park secured in perpetuity. However, some people did have reservations on whether it would be delivered, how it would be maintained and whether there would be anti-social behaviour issues associated with it. In conclusion, although there were some concerns with the principle of losing “Green Belt” land, there was a much greater recognition that the site currently does not offer any public benefit and they could not see anything positive happening without sensitive redevelopment of the site.

- People were supportive of new mansion flats and a 20-acre public park providing the traffic could be sorted
- Concerns over loss of greenbelt were balanced with a recognition of the benefits development of this site can bring
- The park should be held in a community land trust with an endowment to ensure it is delivered and maintained
- The park should be developed to incorporate local needs, provisions and complement/enhance the existing facilities to the east
- No eastbound car movement from the site should be allowed
- A number plate recognition barrier on Clayton Road needs more development to ensure local people enjoy access but less rat-running
- Most vehicular access to the site should be for the west on and off the A3
- A large bund planted bund should be formed using spoil on the site to separate the site acoustically and visually from the A3
- A large parking area to the west along the A3 should be used for parking to allow adequate provision but encourage walking
- A series of new green networks to and from the site should be developed to connect the existing neighbourhoods to Hook Park
- A transport strategy should be developed to improve the local road network
- No tower blocks should be allowed with mansion flats only (5-8 storeys) with taller blocks to the east and lower blocks to the east
- Visual links from the park into courtyard gardens in the mansion flats should be provided
- All mature trees and tree belts should be protected on the site where possible
- New affordable work space should be provided to encourage local jobs and start ups
- New primary school provision should be provided either by extending on or near Lovelace or on site

Next Steps for Hook Park

Following this initial Enquiry by Design process, the project team are drawing up initial plans for the site, reflecting the feedback received from the local community to date. Poppymill are committed to working closely with the local community and RBK as the local plan process progresses. The proposals are still at the earliest possible stage and Poppymill will continue to engage broadly as the proposals evolve in order to ensure a community-led vision for the site.

Conclusions for Consideration

Taking into account the key themes which have emerged from the engagement process to date, the Hook Park project team will continue to evolve plans specifically looking at:

- How we can progress potential highway solutions
- How will the park work, what will it comprise, how will it be managed
- The buildings in the area to develop a mansion block typology

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- What is driving the local economy and where is demand, how can this work with our proposed workspace and commercial provision
- What is the need in terms of school provision and how is this best accommodated
- What is the demand for different tenures and types of housing across the area; what is the demographic
- How can existing community facilities best be supported and/or integrated through the development proposals

Future Engagement

In early 2021 we will begin undertaking working group sessions focused on specific topics across the local area, these will be held via Zoom to ensure compliance with current COVID19 restrictions.

Further formal consultation will be held as plans emerge. This will be advertised through the website, social media, local press and direct engagement with those who have already been involved in the process.