

Welcome

Welcome to the 2nd N-gage, the newsletter of the Brixton Area Committee (BAC). This edition provides information on the Brixton Central Square project (BCS), including options on layout to be presented in a report to BAC on 13 July 2005. The project has an enormous potential for Brixton. Some residents

however, have raised concerns about the safety of an enlarged space and transport implications such as rat running on adjacent side streets. In view of this, the issue will outline how BCS has got to this stage and detail some of the key information that your local councillors will consider on the 13th.



A Summary of Background Project Beginnings

Brixton Central Square began in 2001 when the Council, in partnership with the Brixton Area Forum, commissioned landscape architects, Moore, Piet and Brookes to produce a report outlining how best to improve Tate Gardens, Windrush Square and Raleigh Hall including options for the closure of Effra Road to link with St Matthew's Peace Gardens.

The report included how the spaces connected with each other and the surrounding area. Between May and November 2001 there was extensive consultation to determine key design principles for the space. Over 2,500 community members were involved.

100 Public Spaces hits Brixton

In 2002, Brixton was chosen as one of the 10 central London locations to pilot the Mayor of London's 100 Public Spaces Initiative. On 11 July 2002, mayor Ken Livingstone and architect Lord Rogers of Putney formally launched the initiative from Windrush Square. The brief for Brixton was to 'create an integrated centre for one of London's most diverse, but most deprived neighbourhoods.' (Greater London Assembly, *Making Space for Londoners*)

Architects are selected

February 2004 saw Lambeth Council, Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London's Architecture and Urbanism Unit produce a design brief reflecting the views and aspirations of the residents who were involved in the original consultation process in 2001. In

July 2004, the landscape architect firm, Gross Max was appointed to work on the project. Selection was by a panel comprising of local Councillors, the chair of the Brixton Area Forum (Rachel Heywood), then Borough Police Commander (Dick Quinn), Lord Rogers, other designers and partnership officers.

Gross Max was asked to involve local residents and businesses in a process to develop a final design for Brixton Central Square. This resulted in a series of consultations running throughout February, March and April 2005. The period for submission of all comments on the emerging options closed 30 June 05.

Brixton Hill Coldharbour Ferndale Herne Hill Tulse Hill



What's happening now?

Building on views of the consultation process, Gross Max have developed designs to improve and unite the spaces of Tate Gardens, Windrush Square and St Matthew's Peace Gardens. This included the development of designs incorporating 'Option B,' the phased closure of Effra Road. During the consultation process, residents of adjacent streets off Effra Road became worried that the road's closure would increase rat running. This led to the proposal 'Option B' to keep Effra Road open to southbound traffic.

Next steps

At their 13 July meeting, BAC will consider a report based on the consultation findings with recommendations on the final design of the Brixton Central Square scheme. BAC will make recommendations to the Council's Executive who will make the final decision whether to progress the scheme to a planning application stage. This will be considered at their meeting on 12 September 2005.

What are the project specifics?

A Design Brief for Brixton Central Square

The vision for Brixton Central Square is to create a safe, high quality public space of local, national and international importance that expresses the significance of Brixton for multi-cultural Londoners and Britain. The design aims to commemorate past events and celebrate Brixton's present vitality. The project will address

concerns of community safety (especially at night) due to poor lighting, obscured CCTV sight lines and poor design. These factors make the current spaces difficult to police and inhibit their legitimate use. The use of creative and innovative lighting schemes and the incorporation of a café, thereby increasing footfall, aims

to 'design out' these issues. The starting point for the consultation process was the 2 sets of design concepts by Gross Max and TfL's transport proposals (available on the Lambeth Website). The original concept included closing Effra Road between Coldharbour Lane and Kellett Road (to the south).



Option B closure of Effra road with larger hard surface (above)



Option A Effra road open with larger hard surface (above)

A series of 5 events were held from February through to mid April 2005 which looked at different aspects of the proposed scheme, including community safety, accessibility, traffic implications, and how the space could be used.

The 3 key issues of concern to people at these events were:

- safety

- traffic rat-runs in side streets, particularly off Effra Road
- Council and police's ability to maintain and police the space once improved

Following these events, Gross Max and TfL have revised the initial concept for the scheme to produce options that include a phased approach. This would

see an initial stage that would keep Effra Road open to local traffic i.e. traffic heading south down Effra Road and reducing the amount of open space by keeping Saltoun Road open. Other design options produced looked at different amounts of green space within the scheme. The workshops culminated in an open day event on Saturday 16 April.

The Options

4 sets of options were shown on this occasion. Option A proposes to keep Effra Road open as part of a phased development, whilst Option B proposes Effra Road's closure. Both A and B include options on larger amounts of green space or hard surfacing.

Metropolitan Police View

The Police have actively been involved in the BCS project team since 2001 and sat on the selection panel to appoint Gross Max. They are enthusiastic about the positive impact of the project on the area.

Chief Superintendent Martin Bridger, Borough Commander of Lambeth Police had the following comments to make on the BCS project:

'Lambeth Police are fully supportive of the re-development of Brixton Central Square as part of the ongoing project to improve the environment of the area. Police will play a continual part in ensuring that the design of the scheme not only limits the opportunity for crime to occur but also addresses issues of people's perceptions of crime. Improved environments that communities take pride in, reduce crime and the fear of crime and I see this development as supporting this principle.'



Option B closure of Effra road with more green space (above)



Option A Effra road open with larger green space (above)

Transport implications

One advantage of the phased option to keep Effra Road open is to allow TfL and the Council to monitor the traffic impact. Lee Parker, Head of Transport Planning and Strategy for Lambeth explains: 'Transport for London undertook a traffic model of the proposed road layout that would be required to facilitate the Brixton Central Square project. This showed there would only be a very small increase in traffic on the residential side streets in the vicinity, if Effra Road were to be permanently closed. The Council is satisfied that the latest modified proposals to retain one lane of southbound traffic on Effra Road will further reduce any impact on the residential side streets. The Council will continue to monitor development of the proposals to ensure the residential roads in the area are not adversely affected.'

A key TfL objective relates to the reduction of Road Traffic Accidents or RTAs. TfL's view is that both options for the project would result in a reduced incidence of RTAs on what is presently a dangerous gyratory system. Further benefits identified by TfL include: enhanced bus movement; easier pedestrian access around the area generally and more specifically for older people, those with children and people with disabilities.

Brixton Area Committee's 13 July Meeting

Details for the next BAC meeting are as follows:

Date: Wednesday 13 July 2005

Time: 7.30-9.30PM

Place: St Matthew's Tenants Hall
St Matthew's Road
Brixton SW2

**The meeting is open to everyone.
We look forward to seeing you there.**

BAC Meeting Dates for 2005

7 September, venue TBA

9 November, venue TBA

For information on venues please contact Stephen Pollock of the Council's Democratic Services on **020 7926 0024** or email **spollock@lambeth.gov.uk**

More information

The Lambeth website provides more information on the project including the design brief and Transport for London illustrations.

Please consult the Brixton Central Square pages at www.lambeth.gov.uk. Or contact the BCS team **Tel: 020 7926 2766**.

