
Creating High Quality Green Finger Walking Routes in West Walworth

Early Ideas



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1. Summary

- There is an opportunity to create high quality links between the estates of West Walworth and the Walworth Rd itself. A series of major developments are planned along the Walworth Road including Manor Place Depot, Chatellaine House, the Metropolitan Police site at Amelia St, the Watkins Jones student accommodation between Steedman St and Hampton St and, in the longer term the Kwik Fit garage.
- If considered and designed together these can create a series of high quality and attractive walking routes for people living in the major estates to west of the Walworth Rd. These routes can both address the poor quality links that exist at present and the shortage of access to green space and nature but will also allow local people to benefit from these developments and the creation of shops and services and public spaces which will result from the regeneration of the Heygate Estate site.
- Our inspiration comes from the Green Fingers proposed for the Aylesbury which will provide attractive, safe and green links into Burgess Park and encourage people to walk and cycle and improve well-being through greenery and a more attractive environment.
- Creating these routes would also offer the opportunity to link up with the proposed and existing green links and spaces in East Walworth (Victory Park, Salisbury Row Park, Nursery Row Park and Faraday Gardens) and create a viable walking and leisure cycling network of low trafficked and people friendly streets.

2. Background

- In view of a number of major planning applications in and around the north and west side of the Walworth Road there is an important opportunity to consider the condition and improvement of the four streets (Hampton St, Steedman St, Amelia St and Manor Place) which link existing local communities to the Walworth Road, as well as important congested lateral streets such as Penton Place.
- Each of these streets and the public realm generally has had little investment and improvement despite the significant number of new developments and residents introduced into the area since the 1990s. A walk along each road reveals a patchwork of public realm made up of cracked and uneven pavements, a clear picture of where each new development began and ended.
- These four streets are now heavily used by more people on foot (and shared unequally with motor vehicles) as their only access to the Walworth Road where all the main local and national transport connections and shops are located. They are also used by a large amount of cyclists, who are seeking to by-pass the main roads at the Elephant and Castle.
- Local residents and members of the local T&RAs are concerned about the current condition of these streets and that local residents will not benefit from the major new developments at various stages of pre-planning and planning and construction.
- The concerns are also that these developments will see both Manor Place and Amelia St used primarily as service access for delivery vehicles into the back of Chatellaine House and as loading bays for other shops on the Walworth Road. Increased use by lorries is neither a safe nor compatible use given these streets:
 - are the main access routes for many local pedestrians of all ages
 - service the busy and heavily used bus stops at the corner of Amelia St
 - are used by retail delivery drivers who are often on contract and are ignorant of the area or the residential/heavy pedestrian usage of these streets.
 - are used by many people who congregate outside the Tankard pub, which is the only pub in this area. It has a sunny outside area which may be cast into shadow by proposed developments, significantly affecting the quality of this public space.

- The local area suffers from a significant shortage of green space and access to nature. Newington Ward as a whole scores amongst Southwark's lowest in terms of the proportion of the ward that is open space and the proportion of homes that have good access to nature.

Table 1. Comparison between Wards in terms of Access to Nature and Open Space¹

Area	% of the area that is open space	% homes with good access to nature
London	39.0	73.7
Southwark	22.6	70.4
Peckham Rye	45.7	100.0
College	43.7	97.8
Surrey Docks	40.3	100.0
Rotherhithe	34.1	100.0
Village	33.8	82.9
Faraday	30.0	100.0
East Walworth	24.1	71.6
Riverside	23.2	51.2
Nunhead	20.1	50.8
South Camberwell	20.0	71.2
Cathedrals	15.3	-
Brunswick Park	7.0	92.7
Peckham	7.0	83.5
The Lane	6.0	50.0
Chaucer	5.6	-
Livesey	4.5	58.5
Grange	4.5	39.5
Newington	3.8	40.8
South Bermondsey	3.0	100.0
Camberwell Green	1.6	99.4
East Dulwich	0.7	89.4

- In addition, population densities are already significantly higher in Newington ward than across London and Southwark as a whole. Within the Lower Super Output Areas which make up this northern part of Newington Ward (see Map 1 below – the area within the red line boundary) population densities are even higher than the ward average with 217 persons per hectare (2011 Census). More intensive residential development is planned for the area which will increase these densities still further. High density is not in itself a problem but needs to be mitigated with improvements which can improve well-being and happiness such as a more attractive public realm, greenery and high quality walking and cycling routes.

Table 2. Population Density Comparisons²

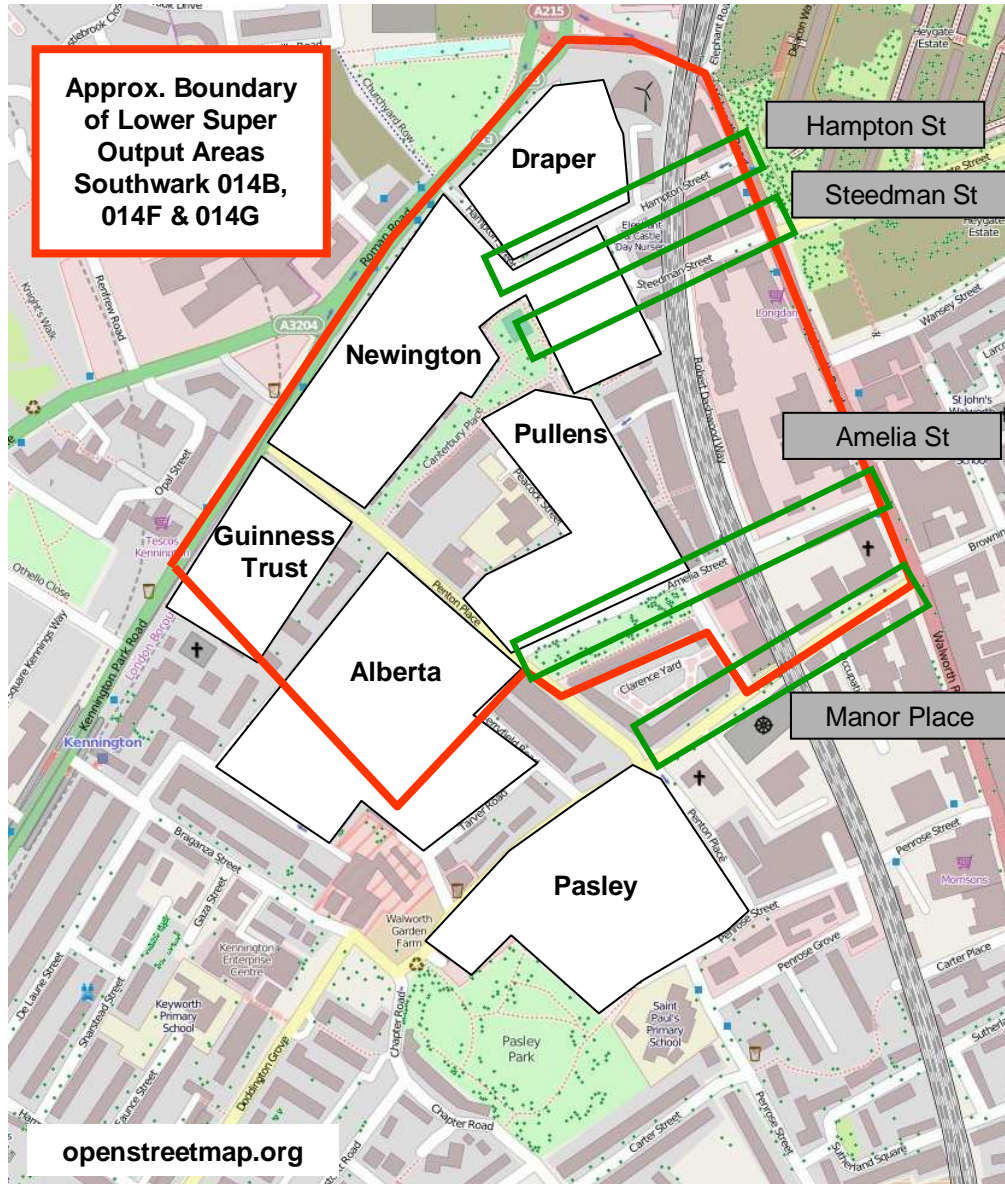
Census 2011	Persons	Hectares	Person/Ha
England	53,012,456	12,929,867	4
London	8,173,941	157,191	52
Southwark	288,283	2,886	100
Newington Ward	14,136	83	170
LSOAs Swk 014B/F/G	4,238	19	217

¹ Greenspace Information for Greater London (<http://www.gigl.org.uk/>)

² www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

- In all residents from 6 major local estates can benefit from improvements to these streets.

Map1. West Walworth showing the estates, the streets and the area covered by LSOAs Southwark 014B/F/G



3. Current Position

- At present these streets offer a poor experience for local residents in terms of the quality of the environment, the imbalance between capacity for motor vehicles and for those on foot and a lack of greenery.
- **Manor Place.** This is the main walking route to the Walworth Rd for residents of the Pasley Estate. It has narrow pavements and is dominated by the carriageway and large provision of car parking.



Manor Place – west from
Walworth Rd

- Manor Place will become even more important for those on foot with the redevelopment of the Manor Place Depot site. At present the improvements that were made with the removal of the mini-roundabout at the junction of Manor Place and Penton Place do not continue east as carriageway widths increase from 7 metres at the zebra crossing at Penton Place to up to 13 metres outside 33 Manor Place.



Manor Place – east from
zebra crossing at junction
with Penton Place

- There is an opportunity to create a more attractive walking environment with the redevelopment of the Depot site (and the fact that the road no longer has to accommodate large volumes of waste lorries) by rebalancing space between people and motor vehicles.

- **Amelia St.** While there may be issues with changes to the road owing to its role as a route for emergency vehicles, the street is a poor walking route from the Pullens and Alberta Estates to the Walworth Rd with little character, a lack of greenery, a poorly maintained public realm and, at present, fast moving vehicles owing to the absence of traffic calming.



Amelia St – west from the Walworth Rd

- At present new developments are poorly knitted together with the existing public realm and the quality of the pavements is extremely poor in places.



- There is significant concern that the overshadowing of the new Chatellaine House development will cast shadow onto the Tankard pub, affecting the viability of its sunny pavement area and making the entrance to Amelia Street feel dark and unwelcoming as is already the case with Steedman St and Hampton St.

- **Kwik Fit Site.** The Elephant & Castle SPD envisaged the creation of a walking route to Crampton St from the Walworth Rd when the Kwik Fit site is redeveloped and an appropriate railway arch being opened up for public use. This could provide a significant alternative to using Amelia Street for pedestrians, especially because:
 - some bus stops have already been relocated adjacent to the end of this route
 - it would meet the Walworth Road opposite the new town square (developed as part of the Heygate Regeneration). The design of this route should be carefully considered in respect of safety, lighting and design quality.



Potential walking Route through to Crampton St from the Walworth Rd

- **Steedman St.** This heavily used walking route to the Newington Estate suffers currently from narrow pavements, an excess of carriageway, poor lighting quality (during the day because of the overshadowing of the corner buildings as well as at night) and its appearance - tree planting and greening can help to soften the space. Overall it is important to create a high quality and safe route through to the Newington Estate.



Steedman St – west from Walworth Rd

- **Hampton St.** A barren and desolate street with a wide carriageway (for very few vehicles) and narrow pavements which are in an appalling state on an important link to the Newington Estate and the Guinness Trust. The street will become more important once the Watkins Jones student accommodation is completed and its residents look for a walking route to the universities at the Elephant & Castle and transport links to other parts of London. Improvements have been made already to the railway bridges and these are far more attractive than they were. The s106 agreement for the student accommodation envisaged funding for improvements to Hampton St and/Steelman St.
- We think that there is an opportunity to name, sign and light these railway arches in inventive ways as has been the case closer to the river, to indicate to drivers of motor vehicles that they are residential areas and to give a sense identity to the different neighbourhoods, particularly as areas like the Pullens have become used by visitors from outside the local area.



Hampton St – west from
Walworth Rd

4. Proposed Improvements

There is a huge appetite and evidence that the local community wants to play a part in improving these streets, and making them safer and greener for all to use. To this end we make a number of proposals to improve the current condition of these streets and to use the opportunity presented by this series of new developments. These proposals include:

A) Streets and Public Realm

- Considering Amelia St, Steedman St, Hampton Street and Manor Place as “green fingers”; extensions of the parks behind. This is especially relevant in the case of Steedman St with its link into the green space of Canterbury Place on the Newington Estate and Amelia St with its link to the Pullens Gardens (west of Crampton St).
- Creating safe wide planted pavements/public realm that benefit cyclists and pedestrians.
- Giving consideration to creating front gardens and more residential uses at ground floor on these streets at the outset rather than designating them as office spaces which later get changed into live work or residential without amenity space or greenery.
- Using greenery as central to the design process to ensure that delivery drivers turning off the Walworth Road understand that these roads are designed for predominantly pedestrian access to large residential areas where they should slow down and take care rather than treat them merely as service roads.
- Design the streets to encourage motor vehicles to move at no more than 15 mph (except where appropriate on Amelia St owing to usage by emergency vehicles).
- Develop and continue programmes to improve Pullens Gardens, Canterbury Place and Pasley Park owing to their importance as existing green spaces in an area that is significantly deprived of open/green space.
- Integrating these improvements with plans for the development and delivery of the Low Line, a new and safe route running along the base of the railway line north to Elephant & Castle and south towards Camberwell. This route has the potential to be a safe and quiet route for locals and an appropriate location for businesses/ workshops in the near future.
- Considering these improvements as a way of providing a balance with the investment planned for the east-wide of the Walworth Rd in this area.
- Considering the implementation of an alternative safe pedestrian route to the Walworth Road by opening up a railway arch and enabling direct access between South East Central and the Printworks to the Walworth Road as part of the redevelopment of the Kwik Fit site. This route would link directly to the proposed public square next to the Town Hall and across to the Elephant Market Square.
- Using some of the 200 trees (per annum) made available from the Heygate Regeneration.

B) Planning & Design

- Ensuring that new developments are co-ordinated in terms of design rather than being individually designed and constructed without consideration to the other schemes.
- Accepting as part of the planning process that all the commercial use spaces designated in all the housing blocks recently built in and around Amelia Street have been subsequently changed to residential/ live work use. Good residential design standards should be implemented from the start of the planning process, not post-construction.
- Considering the railway arches as key identifiers of the area.
- Involving local interest groups at all levels of the planning, design and implementation process to ensure their experience and expertise is utilised along with their goodwill in terms of maintaining appropriate patches of landscape.

5. Funding These Improvements.

- A number of sources of funding would be needed to realise this project and it is clear that its development would need to occur over a number of years. We envisage that the following sources of funding may be able to contribute to the project:
 - Planning gain in the form of s106 or CIL contributions from the following developments:
 - Chatellaine House
 - Manor Place Depot
 - Metropolitan Police site at Amelia St
 - Student accommodation between Steedman St and Hampton St (the existing s106 agreement from this development envisages contributions to improvements on Hampton St and Steedman St)
 - Kwik Fit garage
 - Southwark Council Cleaner Greener Safer in conjunction with the local T&RAs and other community groups active in West Walworth.
 - Heritage Funding potentially linked to the longer term aspiration of the designation of the Walworth Rd as a Conservation Area.
 - In kind contributions from the volunteer community which is active in the Walworth area such as local T&RAs and community groups and societies.

6. Conclusions.

- We are very aware that this is a long-term project and will require much hard work for it to be realised. The planning framework for the local area in the form of the Elephant & Castle SPD is, however, very supportive of proposals of this sort with its consistent mention of higher quality walking and cycling routes to enable residents of West Walworth to gain from the regeneration of area to the east of the Walworth Rd.
- A great deal of work is needed to gain full support for this idea with local T&RAs and other community groups and these ideas are very much at an initial stage.
- If these ideas are of interest, we are very keen to start work on developing them more fully, talking in depth to local people and those who will contribute to bringing it about – Southwark Council members and officers as well as local developers and local businesses and business groups.
- The prize of bringing this about is significant with much improved access to existing and new shops and services for local people in West Walworth and better links to the green spaces and other amenities of East Walworth.