

Wray Crescent Park building proposal: public engagement summary report



Image 1: Proposed building

Background

The London Borough of Islington (LBI) secured full funding in 2020 to replace the brick pavilion at Wray Crescent Open Space with a new, multi-use building that will improve on the current facilities and offer improved space for sport and community use. The building will provide a community space for the public benefit, facilitating community events and providing a hub for residents and users to come together. In addition to the building, there will be a replacement of the existing cricket pitch, upgrading it to a 'spike pro' grade non-turf pitch.

Partial funding for the scheme was awarded from London Marathon Trust and Sport England with the aim to improve the existing sport facility that was decommissioned in 2017. Additional funding has been received from Section 106 contributions (contributions from developers aimed at providing infrastructure to support and mitigate the impact of development) as well as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2020 allowing the project to move forward. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has contributed full funding for the replacement of the cricket pitch.

The project team appointed NBF architects in autumn 2020. The designer was appointed to oversee all stages of the scheme, from demolition of the existing building, to the final design and build of the new building.

A number of technical surveys have been undertaken to ascertain the condition of the existing building and the surrounding site, including a visual condition report, topographical and soil survey, a measured building survey, an asbestos survey (surface areas only), a BS5837 Tree Survey and an ecology and bat survey. The visual condition report of the existing building was carried out in January 2017 and concluded that it has suffered from progressive and ongoing subsidence and that major refurbishment work is required.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage 2 designs were produced in spring 2021 and visuals of the proposed building were produced for the public engagement planned for early summer 2021. The design of the building, in particular the interior layout, that was prepared for the public engagement was a first draft of the layout and would be used to start the conversation around how the community would like to use the building and to make suggestions for changes to the layout design.

Public engagement on the project began in June 2021.

Aims and objectives of the public engagement sessions

The public engagement period on this project was from 10 June 2021- 16 July 2021. The aim of the public engagement was to get feedback and comments on the design of the building and how parks users would like to use the new building.

The information received from this exercise has been used to help refine the interior layout design of the building as well as help to inform the details of the management plan for the building. The management and operation plan is a document that has been drafted to accompany the planning application and sets out the details such as:

- Permitted hours of operation
- Permitted uses for the building
- Safety and security
- Permitted occupancy
- Maintenance arrangement

Feedback collected from this engagement period helped to detail this document.

Public engagement approach and methodology

We engaged with the public via:

- A leaflet/letter drop
- Two evening public Zoom sessions
- An email inbox (wraycrescentparkbuilding@islington.gov.uk)
- Online forms and our website

Online Zoom sessions

Two public Zoom events were held on Thursday 10 June and Tuesday 15 June 2021 from 7-8pm to provide an opportunity for the local community to give their feedback about the proposed building design. The sessions were attended by over 30 people in each session. The sessions were hosted by Kate Tibbetts, Park Projects Team Manager, and co-facilitated by Head of Parks, Barry Emmerson.

The Zoom sessions began with a short five-minute PowerPoint presentation to explain the progress on the project and to show images of the most recent building designs.

The final part of the hour was a question-and-answer session using the hand raising icon to allow the hosts to call on people individually to speak.

The 'chat' function was used to capture real-time feedback and comments during the online sessions. We were only able to capture chat data in the second session due to a technical fault in the first session. The chat data has been analysed as part of this feedback summary document.

Leaflet distribution

2,200 consultation leaflets were distributed to the local residents in the Wray Crescent Open Space area in the Tollington Ward. These were delivered on Friday 4 June.

The proposed designs and leaflet were published on the Wray Crescent project webpage in the parks service part of the Council website. This webpage was also used to provide details of the Zoom sessions and a link to the online form with a submission deadline of 16 July.

Online Forms

Three questions were included in an online form using Microsoft Forms on Office 365. The form was created before the first online Zoom session and settings made public to allow responses from anyone with the link. The deadline for receiving feedback via this link was set as 16 July 2021. This allowed 5 weeks for responses to be submitted.

The link was distributed via the Council website, e-mails to stakeholders and the chat function during the Zoom sessions.

The questions asked were the following:

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed new building for Wray Crescent?
2. How would you like to use the building once it opens, in particular, the community space?
3. Please add any other comments or thoughts about the new building here.

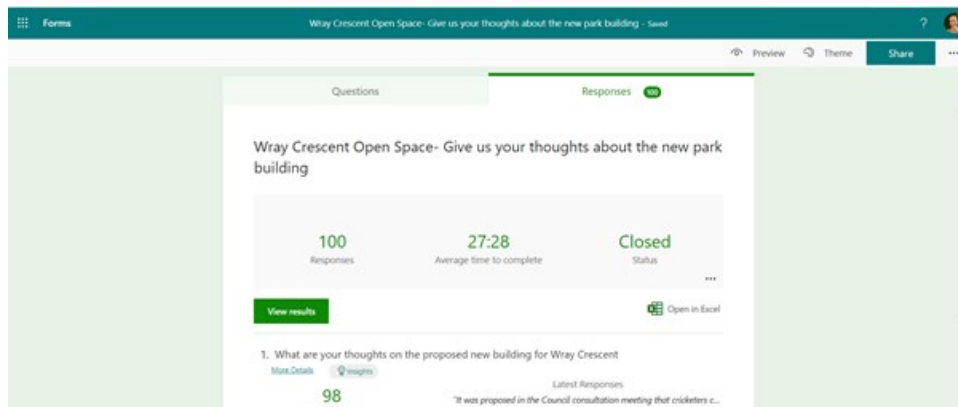


Image 2: Example of the Microsoft Online Form

Wray Crescent e-mail inbox

We created a project email address to provide another method for sending in comments. Comments from those emails submitted within the feedback window have been analysed as part of this summary document.

Responses and feedback

As described above, information and feedback from residents and park users was gathered using three main sources:

- Dedicated email inbox,
- Public meeting over Zoom and
- Online Microsoft Form.

In total, we received:

- 100 Microsoft Form online responses
- 78 emails
- 1 Zoom chat text document

Zoom chat feedback

35 people attended the Zoom session on 15 June 2021.

112 comments were submitted into the chat function during this second Zoom meeting, contributed by 11 different people.

Of these 112 comments, 50 were made by two participants.

The comments were in response to remarks or conversations during the live public meeting and therefore a lot of times have no context in which to determine the responses. These were reactionary statements such as 'well said!' or 'Good question'.

There were many questions submitted into the chat. Those have been extracted and contributed to the Frequently Asked Questions that are published on the website.

Microsoft Forms feedback

The responses to the questions are organised into three categories and have been defined as the following:

1. Positive Responses – These responses are defined as being supportive of the proposals and used positive language to describe the proposal. The responses sometimes included suggestions for design changes to the building.
2. Neutral Responses – These responses did not definitively describe support or objections to the proposal. The responses often contained questions as part of the submission. These responses also often included suggestions for design changes.
3. Negative Response – These responses objected to the proposals and used negative language to describe the proposals.

This method of organising responses gives an overall sense of the views of those who submitted their comments and helps determine general attitudes about the proposals.

In addition to the response categorisation, main themes of the responses from each question were then extracted and are listed below as part of the qualitative analysis.

Lastly, feedback specifically about the design of the building or suggestions for design changes were filtered out and listed below each question. These suggestions helped shape the changes to the interior layout of the building.

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the proposed new building for Wray Crescent?

Analysis of Q1: This question received **98** responses.

- 56 positive responses
- 9 neutral responses
- 33 negative responses

Examples of positive responses

'I love it'

'I think it's a brilliant idea'

'great, we need a new pavilion desperately'

'Fully supportive'

'Great idea, is long overdue'

Examples of neutral responses

'I have no strong views on this'

'Should have a communal room'

'Would be great to be able to hire it for birthday parties'

Examples of negative responses

'Cricket (which benefits a very small number of people who are not local) is being prioritised over the needs and wishes of the local community. The children's play area should be improved, crime in Wray crescent addressed, the green space made available for general use and other sports for a substantial proportion of the time and the building should reflect this kind of mixed use. There is nothing here that will obviously benefit the community'

'The plans are not ambitious enough. The community space lacks privacy, the kitchen space lacks a hatch to work as a community cafe, the cricket office overlooks the community space, there is no separate access for use of the community space, and what access does exist means others need to walk through cricketers to get there, there is no storage provided for other uses, even the football goals, there is no funding for community resources and the design and construction of the building prioritises just one need, cricket. The building solves no problems other than for cricket, and does nothing of significance for the local community'

'It displays a huge lack of imagination, ambition and is a complete disappointment for the local community.'

Headlines and themes from question 1

- Would like to see more sustainable features/green features on the building
- Access to the community space
- Prioritising cricket over other use
- Children's play area needs improvement
- Flexible open space important
- Community room use should be flexible
- Too much cricket played in the evening
- More clarity needed on how the whole park usage will change
- Consultation with the community not sufficient
- Need more input from community
- Need to accommodate needs of children

Question 1 design-focussed feedback

- need alternative access to the community room other than front

- office and community room to have independent, external access
- needs to have flexible storage space
- Small café desired
- Would like the far end of the pavilion to be fenced in
- Would like landscaping to exterior of building
- Kitchen to have external hatch
- Storage for sports equipment
- Add hallway to interior to block off the toilets
- Publicly accessible WC's
- Elderly and disability friendly design is important

Question 2: How would you like to use the building once it opens, in particular, the community space?

Analysis of Q2: This question received **98** responses.

- 0 positive responses
- 85 neutral responses
- 13 negative responses

The answers in this section were more about the desired operation of the building and use. The majority of these responses used neutral language and directly answered the question without expressing an overall opinion on the project itself.

The negative answers expressed sentiments about the project on the whole and did not specifically answer the question about use of the community space.

Examples of neutral responses

'Community events/birthday parties/sports days'

'Children's parties, parent and children's groups, there is also a lot of potential to host lessons/meetings, I would like to see yoga, tai chi, pilates classes.'

'Space for arts,craft, social gatherings. Possible children's clubs brownies/Cubs etc'

Examples of negative responses

'It will be unfit for purpose. You need to start over and think about the community and ask us what we need. I don't play cricket, therefore won't be able to use it!'

'It should not open at all and should never be constructed'

'What is there to use exactly? No private meeting space, time limited, lack of any meaningful facilities.'

Headlines and themes from question 2

These comments reflected how people envisage using the building and the opportunities the new building presents for the local community.

- Moveable, foldable staging for performances

- Birthday parties
- Toilet facilities accessible
- Yoga and exercise
- Private functions – hire space
- Parents groups
- Seasonal craft fairs
- No block booking – ensure fair booking system
- Baby support groups
- Booking possible via website
- Arts and crafts
- Workshops for kids
- Connect with Andover Community Centre
- Space for local businesses
- Local hub and information centre
- Community gardening
- A bar
- Library/teaching space
- Space for all local sports groups
- Mental health programmes
- Toddler stay and play
- Councillor surgeries
- Meetings
- Plays
- Public talks
- Classes run by local charities
- Islington archaeology and history group
- Children's singing groups
- A climate café
- Toilet facilities that accommodate children and babies
- Tai chi
- Pilates
- Sports for women in general
- Youth clubs
- Brownies/cubs
- Social gatherings
- Crèches
- Meet other people through cricket
- School access
- Rounders
- Local community gospel choir

Question 2 design-focussed feedback

- Need toilet access from the outside
- Café
- Storage facilities

- Changing rooms accommodate all sports

Question 3: Please add any other comments or thoughts about the new building here.

Analysis of Question 3: This question received **92** responses.

- 33 positive responses
- 26 neutral responses
- 33 negative responses

Please note: There were 93 responses submitted, however one response could not be counted as it was an incomplete sentence on the form and therefore could not contribute to the overall tally.

Examples of positive responses

'It's a beautiful design, very timely and much needed. My congratulations on this excellent community project'

'Having access to toilets is something the park needs so that is a positive addition to the park'

'It's so important for kids and in particular adults to be able to play team sport such as cricket locally. The huge benefits of physical and mental health are vital for many people in the local community. Team sport provides purpose and friendship for all that play, and in particular for many people who might otherwise not have so much of that in their life. We've all witnessed over the last 18 months how lots of people in our communities have become isolated and lonely and need shared experiences with others to maintain a healthy mental balance. And what better shared experience than sport? So I really believe that a place such as Wray Crescent and Finsbury Park should have a cricket pitch, and a renovated pavilion if possible, where local people can play sport, especially considering there are lots of green spaces for other important activities in the area including Finsbury Park itself and Elthorne Park just round the corner. I'm very grateful for everyone who's put this proposal together to renovate the building and make the cricket pitch a safer, better experience for everybody who wants to play sport there. Long may that continue for everyone's benefit'

Examples of neutral responses

'Consideration should be given as to how the glass will be protected given its proximity to the pitch. Perhaps some storage space could be added to support other park uses e.g. gardening equipment storage.'

'I think the building should be open and staffed as much as possible so all park users can use the toilets and the changing rooms, and people have somewhere to meet / socialise in bad weather. And definitely staffed all day on Saturdays and Sundays.'

'I'd like to see the community space to be free to use by everyone during functioning times independently from sports use. Good toilet facilities are really important, including an accessible toilet. I'd like it to have a water fountain facility.'

Examples of negative responses

'The building needed replacing but not as a centre of excellence or a base for MCC youth training . Do not pretend that it has any community use whatsoever. People do not object to the building so much as to its use as a base for 7 day occupation of the Open Space denying it to other non-cricketing users'

'The proposals do not meet park user need. No work has been done to ascertain that need. These plans should be withdrawn and a better proposal put together in consultation with the local community. The consultation in this has been less than skin deep.'

'Please start again and properly consult with the community as you are doing with other park improvements. The community is being added on as an after thought to a proposal for a cricket pavilion (explained in your leaflet). There is no vision for how the building will be used by the community. Our preferences are not included. The cricketers come in from outside the area and take over our park at will. It's very distressing. Do you think they are going to welcome us into their tea room. The toilets (which the park desperately needs) are only accessible through the main door. How will that work? Who will have keys? Who will be allowed in there. If you consult properly with the community you will hear what our needs are. If you had looked how this precious space sustained us during lockdown you would have a glimpse of what is really needed by the whole community rather than a small exclusive group of healthy men who have no connection with our precious park & this locality. It's an absolute tragedy. Please rethink. We can make this so much better and we can use the s106 finding to truly benefit the community. I fully support the representations made by the Friends of Wray Crescent on this matter.'

Headlines and themes from question 3

- More sustainable/green features to the plan welcome
- Make sure space is open and accessible to a wide range of users
- The space is even more important after COVID-19
- Outside space to the building should be considered
- Transparency about building use
- Management of the building should be transparent
- Consultation was not sufficient for the proposal
- Concerns over noise
- A small vocal minority should not stop the delivery of the new building
- New facilities would be a positive addition to the park
- Cricket does not represent the local demographic of residents
- Questions about how bookings will be made
- Make the building bookable for a wide range of sports not just cricket
- Communication from the Council has not been sufficient

- Community café needed

Question 3 design-focussed feedback

- Protective/enhanced glass for frontage of building needed
- Storage space needed
- Gardening equipment storage space
- Accessible toilet
- Outdoor space at far end of pavilion should be enclosed
- Provide secure storage for sports equipment
- Kitchen with external hatch
- Office and community room to have independent external access
- Security is of high importance
- Water fountain
- Baby change facilities

E-mail feedback

The majority of the feedback in the e-mails consisted of comments expressing positive support of the scheme or clear objections to the proposals. There were various e-mails that were neutral in tone, for example, asking to be kept up to date but not expressing an opinion on the proposal one way or the other. These e-mails were often composed mostly of questions requesting more information about the proposals and not offering an opinion.

The feedback for the email submissions has also been organised into three categories (positive, neutral, negative) following the same method as the Microsoft forms feedback.

There were **78** e-mails sent to the inbox wraycrescentparkbuilding@islington.gov.uk.

- 38 positive responses
- 18 neutral responses
- 22 negative responses

Examples of positive responses

'I live just down the road from Wray Crescent so use the park very regularly for walks and to get outside and enjoy the planting etc. Although I do not play cricket I also enjoy the fact that it is Islington's only cricket pitch and I enjoy watching the cricket when it is on. I appreciate the work the council are doing to rebuild the cricket pavilion to make it usable. I feel like they are doing it in a sensitive way and that I have been adequately consulted on this. I do not feel like this proposal will prevent me from using the park how I like to use it. On the contrary I feel like having toilets at the park and also a space that can be used by the community when possible is a huge asset.'

'I love this cricket pitch and I think it will be even better with a new clubhouse. I appreciate what the council is doing for the community and I believe cricket is part of the identity of this neighbourhood. I don't practise any cricket myself but I love the values and the respect it's bringing. It's one of the few cricket pitch in the area and it's fair to give it a proper venue.'

'I'm getting in touch to register my enthusiastic support for the proposal to develop the current unused and unsafe pavillion on the Wray Crescent cricket pitch. I am also delighted to see the pavilion will made available to the local community when not in use for cricket.'

Examples of neutral responses

'Please can you add me to your mailing list? Thanks'

'Can I suggest that a cafe in the new building would be the best contribution to the local community? There is no existing cafe in the area and yet many people use this open space who have no connection to the cricket. It would make sense, therefore, to include those people in your plans.'

'I would like to make a firm request that any development of wray crescent park does not result in a reduction of access to the green space. It is the only flat grassy area in the area and is greatly valued by adults and children. Development and better cricket facilities will be great, but please don't let that come at the expense of public access to the park.'

Examples of negative responses

'However, for the duration of this pandemic I have had to curtail all travel plans and have "stayed local". This has led me to appreciate the wide range of neighbours who enjoy the benefits of having such a nearby green space as they walk past my door. And I have been criss-crossing it myself on daily walks and trips to local shops. There is a successful eco-balance of very diverse North Londoners who benefit from this democratic green space. How dare you sell it off? We don't need a cricket pitch – we have a cricket pitch. All children, all families, all athletes of all levels in a range of sports currently benefit. And many others including those who need to inhabit a green space for their mental well-being'

'Investing in open spaces in inner city areas such as Tollington is important. I can appreciate that getting access to funds is difficult at this time and a sports fund could help fill that funding gap, to save the councils money for other things. However, I disagree that this is an appropriate strategy to take with Wray Crescent. Changing the space from an open relaxation place to a dedicated sporting place doesn't meet any of the local community needs for open space.'

Headlines and themes from e-mails

- Community access important
- community to feed into design changes
- Community space for parties/classes
- Space in the park available for all park users

- Balance the use of cricket with the open space
- New toilets positive addition to the park
- Pitch to be freely accessible to the public when not booked by cricket
- Make booking system accessible and clear for people to understand
- Young people should be prioritised
- New building is essential and will be a benefit to local residents
- Welcome the new building and encouraging local sports
- Current building is an eyesore and should be demolished
- Sustainable features proposed not sufficient
- Lack of communication with residents
- Park should stay accessible to elderly and families
- Need consultation on use of wider park
- Consultation with residents was not sufficient
- Should have a café
- Covid-19 and use of park has changed – should not be dominated by cricket
- Better security in the park and address anti-social behaviour issues
- Keeping the park open and accessible is important for mental health
- Concerns over noise

Design-focussed feedback

- Office and community room to have independent external access
- A front door for the community room on street side
- Landscaping the street side
- The outdoor space at the far end of the pavilion to be fenced in
- The kitchen to be located on an external wall (with a service hatch/window)
- Flexible storage space
- Publicly accessible WC

Summary

Total tally of responses:

- 127 positive responses
- 139 neutral responses
- 100 negative responses

Total number of responses: 366

The responses to the proposals were wide ranging and many expressed clear support or objection. The majority of responses in this feedback exercise were of neutral tone. There were a large number of responses that contained questions and did not explicitly state opinions in one way or the other about the proposals. Many responses were almost entirely made of questions.

Because of the large volume of responses it was not possible to respond to each inquiry in detail. Therefore we have produced some Frequently Asked Questions

(FAQ) – [find these on our website](#). They will help clarify the proposals and answer the most common questions as well as to clear up any misinformation and rumours that have circulated since the proposals were made public.

Next steps

The design feedback has been reviewed and incorporated as best as possible into the most recent design proposals. [Head to our website](#) to find:

- The updated design proposals
- The community leaflet we distributed in summer 2021
- The Frequently Asked Questions

The feedback from this exercise will also contribute to the draft building management plan which will be prepared alongside the planning application.

An indicative timeline is below:

- October 2021: Public engagement feedback summary made available to the public
- November 2021: Submission of planning application
- Winter 2022: Procurement and appointment of building contractor
- TBC: Mobilise to site and construction

Please note: As part of the statutory process for planning applications there will be a consultation period where views of the residents and local park users can be submitted to the local planning authority. Residents will be updated when the planning application has been submitted so views and comments can officially be registered in regard to the planning application.