

The Paddock Enhancement Project

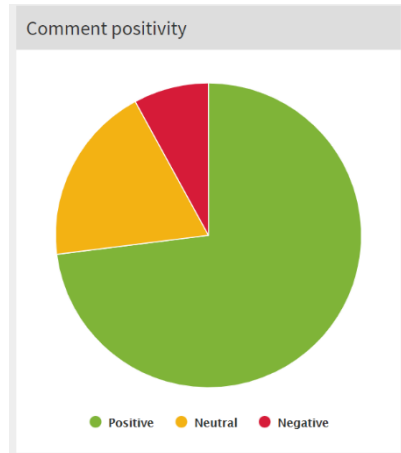
Summary Phase 2 (July to September 2021) public consultation results

Thank you to everyone who gave their feedback on plans to improve The Paddock.

The second phase of public consultation on improvements to The Paddock took place from the end of July 2021 to 13th September 2021.

The consultation asked the community questions about the proposed masterplan, movement and accessibility, protecting habitats and the approach to the treatment of Japanese Knotweed. The feedback will be used to inform the next stage of the design process.

Feedback was gathered through an online survey on the project's Commonplace website ([Have Your Say Today – The Paddock – Commonplace](#)), two engagement events with the design team at the Paddock, and feedback via a dedicated Parks email address.



Overall feedback

The online questionnaire generated 126 responses. Analysis shows that almost 75% were positive, approximately 18% were neutral and 7% were negative.

The proposals for habitat access and protection were the most popular, receiving the most positive responses and least negative responses.

Approximately 66% of the responses to the visitor centre proposals were positive, the lowest for the various proposals.



Thematic Responses

Specific responses to the open questions on each set of proposals are summarised below.

Protecting nature

Most responses were supportive of these proposals as a quiet, natural place to enjoy nature. However, there was also a desire to include features to attract families and groups, such as play equipment and a larger grassed area for gatherings, whilst ensuring the Paddock remains welcoming to people with dogs. Some respondents raised concerns about opening up the dense woodland to access, and questioned whether the proposals offered sufficient protection for nature.

Visitor Centre design

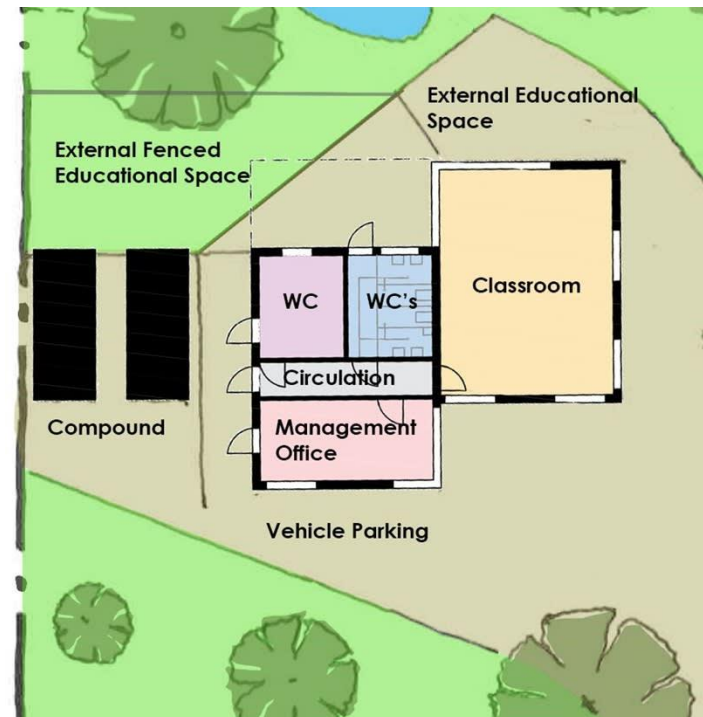
Two thirds of the responses were positive about the design of the building. A few raised concerns about its size, and expressed a preference for more natural looking colours and material. There was also a suggestion to re-locate the building closer to Ferry Lane, to enhance natural surveillance and protect the building.

Precedent image of possible visitor centre design



Visitor Centre use

Community events, workshops, art/theatre performances and educational uses all received strong support. There was support from some respondents for some form of café or food/drink use to be introduced into the building or on site, as a source of refreshment and to create a destination. There was also support for school and youth groups and bookable space for community events.



Other considerations for the Visitor Centre

Several comments supported careful design and management of the proposed visitor centre toilets to avoid anti-social behaviour or suggested avoiding providing toilets completely. There was also support for multi-functional use of the classroom for community events, yoga or meditation, although one respondent didn't favour a café due to the increase in footfall this would create. Other suggestions included ecological design features that encourage visitors to replicate them at home (e.g. bat-boxes or bee hotels).

Arrival area at north-east of site

While there was strong support for the greater connectivity provided by the approved bridge connection to Hale Wharf, there was also strong concern about protecting the character and ecology of the site. The need to accommodate sensory disabilities was also highlighted, as was making the place feel safer through the appropriate siting of seating.

Footpath network

Respondents who expressed disagreement with the creation/upgrading of the footpath network were concerned about its potential impact on the ecology and peaceful character of the Paddock. There was also some support for retaining existing paths, as respondents considered these to be accessible and would have less ecological impact. Some respondents suggested that a new footbridge connection was needed from the Paddock to the Wetlands, to avoid the need to transit the Paddock. Several comments suggested that the signboards/interpretation proposals were unnecessary and could be a distraction from enjoyment of the space.



Proposed primary and secondary routes and access points

Other movement and access issues

Responses were wide-ranging, some repeating concerns about the potential loss of ecology, excessive signage and a suggestion of a new footbridge direct to the Wetlands from Hale Wharf to avoid the Paddock. Other responses supported the introduction of new green routes to support east-west movement, the opening up of the Paddock and other

green spaces to greater public access, and more boardwalks to get closer to nature. Comments were also made about maintaining open access to the Paddock, e.g. to facilitate early morning exercise - within slightly reduced hours to manage anti-social behaviour, if necessary.

Proposed new pond area

A significant proportion of respondents questioned the value of the new pond, its scale, maintenance requirements, and potential health/safety risks. There was, however, recognition of its value for learning, and suggestions about how its design and location could act as natural protection for the ecology of the site and direct foot traffic away from ecologically sensitive areas.

Design of the proposed Hide

There was overall support for the proposed materials and the Hide's role in creating a destination and providing closer access to wildlife. However, concerns were also raised about its scale, materials, and potential role in encouraging rough sleeping or anti-social behaviour. Some respondents questioned the need for a Hide, as the whole Paddock provides access to nature.

Summary

While the consultation has provided strong support for the proposals overall, a number of concerns and challenges have been raised for consideration by the design team:

- Ensuring that increasing access to the Paddock does not impact on its character and the ecology of the site
- Providing alternative routes to the Walthamstow Wetlands to avoid increased transit through the Paddock

- Considering whether there is a need to upgrade the footpath network
- Providing a range of facilities on site and within the Visitor Centre to encourage use by a broader audience
- Careful design or management of facilities like toilets and the Hide to deter anti-social behaviour and maintain quality
- Sensitive use of materials and design for the visitor centre
- Considering the need and location of a new pond
- Considering scale and materials for the Hide
- Maintaining open access to the Paddock

This consultation feedback is being considered by the design team, and the design response will be published as part of the RIBA Stage 3 designs.

Next steps

This stage of design work is due to be completed by the end of November 2021, following which Technical Designs will be developed to guide the implementation of the works.

The consultation period has now concluded, and we would like to thank everyone who took part for their contributions.

We are partnering with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to ensure that the Paddock is an inclusive space and meets the access needs of the wider community. We will continue to work with TCV to activate the space and encourage a wider representation of users.

If you would like to keep in touch or be part of the re-shaping of the Paddock, please visit the [Have Your Say Today – The Paddock – Commonplace](#) to sign up for news updates, or visit [The Paddock | TCV](#) to find out how you can get involved.