



Whitfield Gardens – Responding to your comments

Over the summer of 2018 we asked residents, local businesses and people who use Whitfield Gardens to share their views on the new designs for the space. This document shows how we are responding to the concerns and comments that were shared with us.

You said:

Create a separated space behind Café Nero.

We did:

We were asked to provide a wider space between the building and the gardens to stop access to the edge of the Café Nero building.

After investigating the options we have not made this change for a number of reasons. Adding railings and providing the space needed for maintenance would have meant the loss of 10m² of the garden area (1% of the total space in this area).



Public space is scarce in Camden, particularly in this area, and so the priority was to keep all of this much needed amenity in public use and Camden ownership. Having a space between the building and the garden would also have meant a complicated scaffolding set up to maintain the back of the building, which caused safety concerns.

Anti-social behaviour issues are being addressed in the design of the space as a whole. Having a fenced off area would likely to have been both a trap for litter, encouraging people to dump more rubbish, and could have actually encouraged anti-social behaviour in an attractively cordoned off and hidden area.

If you'd like to read more about how our design has responded to anti-social behaviour you can read our secure by design report on our website here:
<https://www3.camden.gov.uk/westendproject/the-project/green-spaces/>



You said:

Keep the park well lit.

We did:

We were asked to improve the ability for people to see clearly around and through the garden helping them to feel safer.

We have removed the railings and climbing plants that separated the garden from the square to remove potential hiding places and open up the space. We have also taken out the raised planters behind the Café Nero building.



We are working with a specialist lighting designer to create a new lighting design aimed at providing a safe and welcoming area. There will be eight new columns with functional and feature lighting to remove any shady areas like the ones behind the Café Nero building.

If you'd like to read more about how our design has responded to anti-social behaviour and lighting you can read our secure by design report on our website here: <https://www3.camden.gov.uk/westendproject/the-project/green-spaces/>

You Said:

Address rough sleeping.

We did:

We were asked to make rough sleeping less attractive in Whitfield Gardens.

While the design alone cannot counteract social issues such as homelessness we are working closely with the local policing team, community, businesses and other stakeholders to look at antisocial behaviour more broadly.

Within the design we have sought to ensure the space is open with good visibility and have designed furniture that is less attractive for rough sleeping.

If you'd like to read more about how our design has responded to rough sleeping you can read our secure by design report on our website here: <https://www3.camden.gov.uk/westendproject/the-project/green-spaces/>



You said:

Include Tottenham Street as part of the park in terms of materials

We did:

We were asked to include the area of Tottenham Street that faces the square as part of the project.

We have now done this. To integrate the two spaces we will be laying new paving in front of the buildings on Tottenham Street that face the park and a new surface in the road which is similar to that used in the square.



You said:

Use one material across both the square and the park

We did:

We were asked to consider using one paving material for the square and the park.

We looked at this request but felt that the different, but complimentary materials, reinforced the different character of two spaces. The two spaces also need to function differently, which affects the choice of material. The square will have granite which is durable for events, is stain resistant and has a special sealant whereas the resin bound gravel in the garden can be laid over trees and shallow areas which will allow the trees to continue to grow and flourish.

You said:

Take into account flooding and water run off

We did:

We were asked to be aware of issues with water drainage in the garden. A full civil engineering exercise has now taken place to ensure that the design improves on the current drainage. The garden area will be a fully permeable using a

specifically chosen resin bound surface. This will improve on the existing drainage issues, allowing water to drain into the ground.

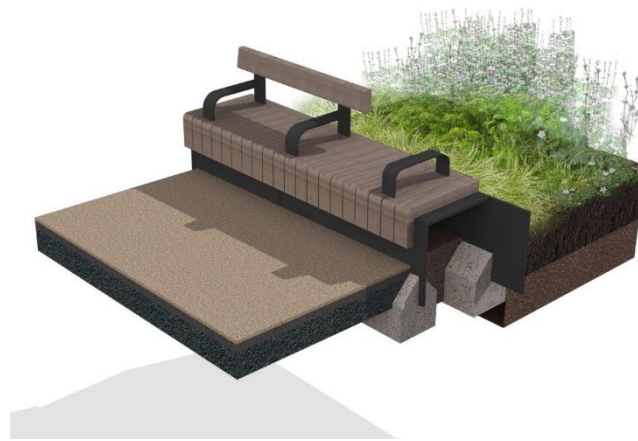
You said:

Put comfort first.

We did:

We were asked to design the seats to make sure that there is a variety of types of seating, which include those with back rests and arm rests.

We have introduced into the scheme a greater variety of furniture, all designed for comfort, to encourage people to spend longer in the space. There will be seats with arm rests and back rests provided.



You said:

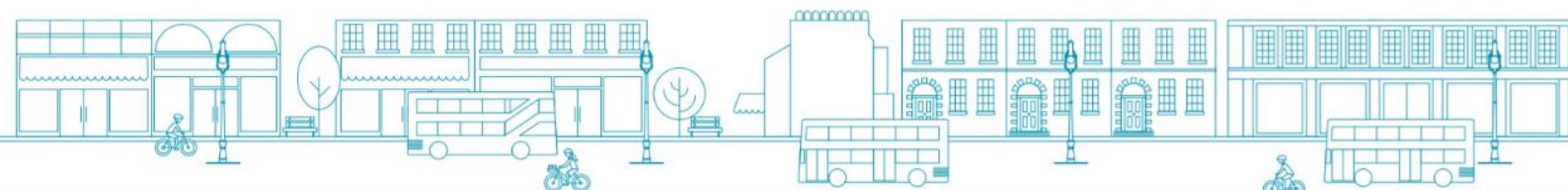
Respond to concerns of vandalism.

We did:

We were asked to ensure that the materials we used could stand up to vandalism.

We can confirm that all the materials that have been specified are tough, durable and well suited to an inner city urban environment. This includes Forest Stewardship Council (FCS) certified well-seasoned dense hardwood or engineered timber, which has a good resistance to burning for use on seat tops, for example. All fixings will be anti-vandal and tamperproof with no visible fixings on outside surfaces. Anti-graffiti coatings will be added to all furniture making it easier to clean and less attractive to graffiti artists.

If you'd like to read more about how our design has responded to other forms of anti-social behaviour you can read our secure by design report on our website here: <https://www3.camden.gov.uk/westendproject/the-project/green-spaces/>



You said:

Explain the function of the square.

We did:

We were asked to clarify what the purpose of the square next to the garden was in terms of possible uses and to how it could be used more for events.

We reviewed the opportunities for the space such as including trees, water features or public art but it was concluded the space should be promoted as an everyday seating space which is flexible enough to support occasional events. This is in response to the demand for more seating locally, continuing the use of the space for events and making sure that the Fitzrovia Mural is easy to see. To facilitate this flexible use a pop up power point will be installed in the square to encourage more events and any furniture will be able to be removed for events by a manual fork lift truck.

You said:

Highlight the history of the site

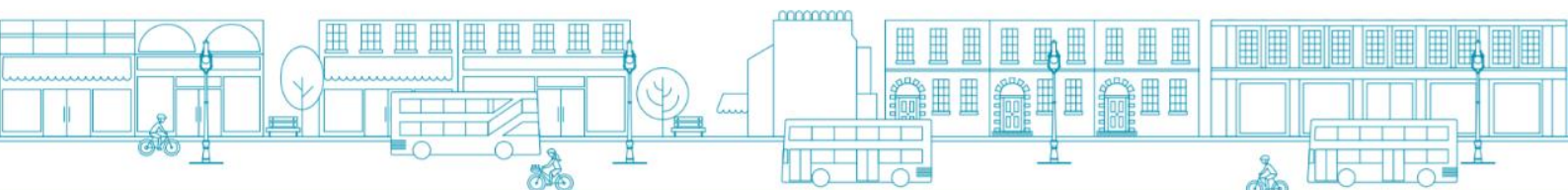
We did:

We were asked to highlight the interesting history of the park.

We have now included in the design two interpretation panels. The first will provide a simple key to help people identify the different components of the Fitzrovia Mural while the second will share the early history of Whitfield Gardens.

The communal dining benches will be engraved with names that relate to historical titles of Whitfield Gardens:

- The Little Sea
 - Whitfield's Tabernacle
 - The Half Acre Burial Ground
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You said:

Prevent privatisation of the space for outdoor café spaces

We did:

There was some concern that a large part of the open space would be used for the local café spill out.

We reviewed the designs and felt that a second café space was an over provision and so have removed this space.

You said:

Ensure the plant selection encourages wildlife and provide native planting in deep beds

We did:

We were asked to consider providing deeper beds full of native planting which attracts wildlife.

We have not used deep, single area planting beds because they provide places for people to hide, which is an issue at the moment that contributes to making the gardens feel threatening when passing through at night. The design has therefore reconfigured the planting areas to create shallower beds.



The choice of plants has been made using Camden’s Biodiversity Action plan which describes a range of recommended plants. This list has been used and supplemented with additional ornamental or herbaceous plants to provide wildlife benefits, a long season of interest and that suit the dry shady conditions. The plants included are of a higher biodiversity than the existing palette which over time has been dominated by blocks of single species evergreen woody shrubs. We have also chosen plants which can be seen through and avoid creating areas that could be hidden in.

There will also be three bat boxes and three bird boxes added to the space to provide new nesting places.

