King Edward Memorial (Shadwell) Park Master Plan

The weekend came up with a host of creative proposals which we believe would create a super park to follow the building of the super sewer.

The main changes proposed are as follows:

1. A baffle wall along the Highway: The use of the terrace/promenade is blighted by the noise and pollution of the Highway. A baffle wall would remedy that and create the opportunity to earn a significant income from advertising on the roadside.
2. Niches along the terrace: A series of spaces along recesses in the shrub bed to the north of the terrace/promenade would create an opportunity for sculpture or other installations and be an outdoor gallery.
3. Retaining the bowling green area as grass: A particular concern for residents was that there should be no increase in hard surfacing given the requirement for an access road. The bowling green area should be retained for less formal sports like goalkeeping practice or wooden boules. The additional tennis courts proposed by the master plan could be much better located at the rear of the John Orwell Sports Centre and on the currently derelict but well fenced court in Wapping Gardens.
4. A bigger football pitch and multiple use games area. There is no other
9-a-side pitch in the area. This one could be floodlit and accessed separately when the park is closed, as could the two tennis courts. Residents are firmly opposed to the use of the park for film crew parking and the Council could derive a similar income by using the barely occupied John Orwell car park.
5. Retain the public toilet: There is a crucial need for facilities when there is a children’s play area and adjacent sports pitches. The existing building is a charming and modernist one, and should be sympathetically renovated.
6. A children’s play area in one location: A play area threaded through high fenced sports pitches would present supervision difficulties to parents/carers with more than one child. A large area north of the new play area under construction would be much preferable, and substantially cheaper.
7. A new water front café: Located at the western end of the waterfront, a new substantial café/restaurant could be accessed in the evenings by retaining the existing path and railings. With such amenity, it would produce a substantial rental income.
8. Water features near the main (south west) entrance: Because the park fronts the Thames, bubbling jets set in the access road would signal its connection to water to visitors. A fountain in the play park would be popular.
9. A landmark to disguise the twin vent pipes: It could be a fountain, a lightwork, a helter skelter or something else. An international competition could elicit the best proposal from architects and artists. An artwork that links the land and the water could also be installed on the riverfront itself.
10. A history wall: Next to the southeastern entrance, a series of plaques could tell the history of the site.

These amendments to the master plan would make it significantly less expensive, preserve the character of the park in the original vision set out by King George V when he opened it, and be complete in time for the centenary in 2022.

The income generation from the proposed advertising and café/restaurant would cover the park’s maintenance costs. We are requesting that the Council establish a steering group with community and Thames’ Tideway representatives to appoint the detailed design stage architects and guide their work.

There was a great deal of concern about emissions from the Rotherhithe Tunnel vent. There doesn’t seem to be any filtration from the fumes extracted from the tunnel and dumped in the park. We are taking up this issue with the Mayor of London and TfL as a matter of urgency.

We plan to ascertain local residents’ views on these alternatives by means of a questionnaire and look forward to a fruitful dialogue with you to create a community asset for everyone’s benefit.