

Underhill Circus Redevelopment: Public engagement on initial design ideas, January 2019.

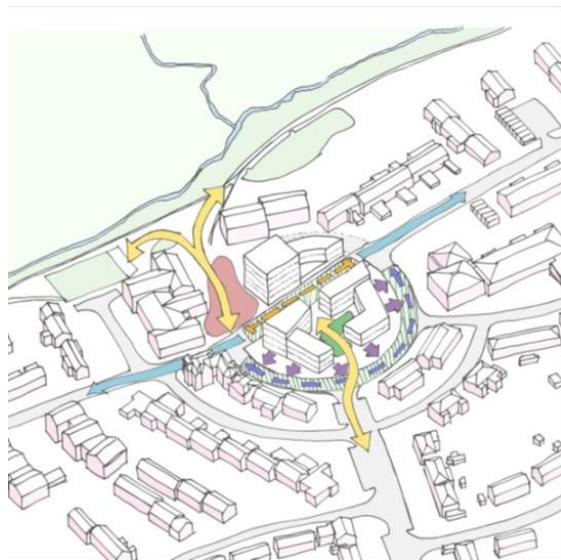
This report summarises feedback received on two initial design ideas for redeveloping Underhill Circus.

Barton Community Association volunteers delivered leaflets to Barton households advertising an engagement event at Barton Neighbourhood Centre on 10 December 2018. The event was also advertised on social media. Around 20-25 residents attended, and were able to view design boards and talk through the plans with council officers and architects. 10 completed paper responses were received at the event, as well as several sticky notes with comments. Hard copies of the survey were left at the Neighbourhood Centre along with a returns box from mid-December to January, but none were completed.

Alongside this, an online survey was published via the Council's website, which ran from 5 December 2018 to 9 January 2019. The survey was advertised from mid-December. 13 fully completed responses were received.

All 23 responses, as well as available sticky note comments, have been reviewed and the main themes are detailed below.

Feedback on 'Idea 1'



Key:

- Community Square
- Shops/Active Retail Frontage
- Improved Routes
- Active Residential Street Frontage
- Bus Route
- Two-way Residential Street
- Semi-private Courtyard
- Existing Green Open Space
- On-Street Parking

'Idea 1' involves creating a new road layout with a through-route for buses, with housing and shops on either side of the road.

Key features of this idea include a new community square; a new through-route for buses, bikes and pedestrians; ground-floor resident parking; a semi-private courtyard; limiting northern access to residents and emergency vehicles; and improved pedestrian routes between homes to the south and existing green space.

The most frequently mentioned positives about this idea are listed below, with the number of mentions in brackets:

- **The new through-route for buses (6):** it was mentioned this might help with traffic, bus access, and help to simplify the road layout. 2 further responses also said the design might improve traffic issues in general.
- **Parking provision and/or ground floor parking for residents (4):** as well as resident parking provision, one response added that the “more sensible road layout” would create “more dead ends for parking”.
- **Shop positioning (3)**
- **The community square (3):** one commenter hope this would provide a green area within the new development: “Keeping green space is important so the courtyard space and community square are welcomed, hopefully they will involve some grass and trees”.

3 commenters said they liked the idea in general, and 3 commented that they thought the area is in need of a general update and the provision of new buildings.

The most frequently mentioned negatives about this idea are listed below, again with the number of mentions in brackets:

- **The through-route/shared surface (5):** 3 of these comments expressed concern over the proposal to mix bikes, buses and pedestrians in one space without clear cycle lines/pedestrian-only areas.
- **The 2-way route (4):** there were concerns that this would make the road more dangerous than it already is, cause more traffic issues, and encroach onto green space.
- **Creating a ‘closed-off’ area (3):** one commenter wrote that “Underhill Circus is a fairly open area and that’s a positive. The problem with the square is that it looks rather like a the creation of a prison yard with high buildings surrounding it, and the access points on foot look inconvenient”, with another comment stating that they disliked “The idea of high buildings facing inwards, creating a space that excludes the rest of Barton”.
- **Creating more opportunities for anti-social behaviour (3):** some concerns were expressed over the courtyard and community square creating more opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
- **Loss of green space (2)**
- **Restriction of parking spaces to residents only (2):** “Removing/restricting parking for members of the public would definitely reduce footfall in shops at Underhill Circus”.
- **‘Built-up’ feel (2):** comments expressed worries about the ‘built-up’ feel of the design and height of the buildings.

One comment also highlighted a potential traffic concern: “extra traffic will be short cutting through Fettiplace rd to get access to Islip route to M40”.

Feedback on 'Idea 2'



Key:

- Community Square
- Shops/Active Retail Frontage
- Improved Routes
- Active Residential Street Frontage
- Bus Route/Two-way Street
- Private Courtyard
- Parking Court

'Idea 2' involves keeping the road to the south of Underhill Circus, but limiting vehicle access to the north.

Key features of this idea include a new, larger community square; making the road to the south two-way; ground-floor resident parking; a private courtyard; limiting northern access to residents and emergency vehicles; and improved pedestrian routes between homes to the south and existing green space.

The most frequently mentioned positives about this idea were:

- **The large community square (8)**
- **Traffic improvements/safety (3):** one commenter felt the design would create easier bus access, and others thought the flow of traffic would be slowed down and liked that traffic would be directed away from the square.
- **Shop positioning (2)**
- **Ground floor resident parking provision (2)**
- **Limiting opportunities for anti-social behaviour (2):** "The safer, overlooked space would be welcomed, although this is the same as in the first plan".
- **The courtyard area (2):** "Courtyard is larger and more functional".

3 commenters also said they generally liked the design, with 2 saying they preferred it to Idea 1. One commenter felt Idea 2 was "a friendlier design than the last".

The most frequently mentioned negatives about this idea were:

- **Traffic issues (6):** various different issues were raised in the comments, including parked cars blocking bus access; concerns about creating a 2-way road; "potential rat running from Barton Park to access M40 via Islip"; and concerns about getting stuck behind buses – "it would be useful to have a separate buses/residential only route through".

- **The courtyard area (5):** the closed-off area created by the courtyard was seen by some as being exclusive and a potential cause of social division; others thought the closed-off area would be impractical for pedestrians.
- **Loss of green space (2)**
- **Creating opportunities for anti-social behaviour (2):** e.g. through the new community square.

2 commenters said they preferred the design of 'Idea 1' in this section.

Shop Provision

People were also asked what services they would like to see in the new shop provision.

The most frequently asked-for facilities were:

- **Post Office (19)**
- **Supermarket (14):** many also asked for a better supermarket provision with more affordable, healthy options.
- **Chippy (11)**
- **Pharmacy (8)**
- **Café (5)**

Other mentions included a pub (2), a provision for Youth services (2), and a hairdresser (2).

Other Comments

The final survey question asked for any further comments in relation to redeveloping Underhill Circus.

There was a mix of further feedback in this section. Commenters noted that:

- There needs to be an emphasis on preserving/creating green space
- The area should not be gentrified (e.g. through semi-private courtyard area)
- Parking controls may be needed
- Thought should be given as how to make the community square well-used
- The area will need disabled parking spaces, bike-locking points, and a community noticeboard
- Provision of good lighting will be key
- There will be a need to avoid duplicating facilities in the new Barton Park development
- There are concerns over the proposed height of buildings
- The area generally needs more affordable housing provision

Next Steps

This feedback has now been passed on to the architects, and we will be looking to do further community engagement on plans in Spring 2019.