People and Place Management

BOWDEN HERITAGE PRECINCT

Targeted Engagement – Stage One

24 April 2020





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Executive Summary

Project and Engagement Background

The six hectare former Brompton Gasworks site, now known as the Bowden Heritage Precinct, is being cleaned up and redeveloped after standing dormant and fenced off for many years. A key element of the redevelopment is the public open space located within the Heritage Listed Brompton Gasworks; bounded by the retort house, railway corridor, purifying house and Chief Street.

In preparation for this Renewal SA engaged the services of design firm ASPECT Studios to assist with establishing design principles and concept design options – in a three-stage engagement and planning process over a period of 12-18 months:

- 1. Developing the design principles for the public open space
- 2. Developing public open space concept design options
- 3. Refining a preferred public open space concept design

Often the voice of younger community members is found to be absent or significantly under-represented during community engagement processes. For this reason Renewal SA has committed to undertaking targeted engagement activities with this cohort to ensure that their views are represented throughout the three stages.

This report covers a subsection of the first stage of engagement in which the focus was on obtaining the views of young people with regards to what will make a great public space. This targeted engagement was undertaken in March 2020, following opportunities between November 2019 and January 2020 for the broader community to provide input both online and face-to-face. The ideas shared by the broader community were subsequently summarised into 39 key themes with these themes forming the foundation of this targeted engagement exercise.

Invitations to participate in this stage of targeted engagement were sent to two local schools, with Brompton Primary School expressing a keen interest in being involved. Approximately 60 students from year six and seven classes were invited to participate.

The thoughts and ideas shared by young people during this targeted engagement will be used to help ASPECT Studios to develop guiding principles for the next stages of planning.

Engagement Method

This targeted engagement was focused on obtaining the views of young people with regards to what will make a great public space, with the specific intent to identify similarities and differences between the key themes identified through engagement with the broader community and the relative importance of these themes to young people.

A walking site-tour was held to familiarise students with the area and the vision for Bowden. Approximately 60 Primary School students from two classes participated. One week later each class split into three independent groups, participating in workshops facilitated by staff from the Renewal SA Engagement Team.

The students undertook three consecutive exercises:

- Importance of Themes students 'voted' on whether each of the 39 themes was important or not important to them. Facilitators used cards with a representative image and brief descriptor and students voted with a thumbs up/thumbs down card.
- 2. What is most important to you each student identified which of the 39 themes was the most important to them, and subsequently explained to their group why they had chosen that theme.
- 3. **Group Discussion** based on the themes identified as most important, the students identified a small number of themes to discuss in further detail as a group. Where there was no clear preference, the facilitator selected the themes taking into consideration both the results of exercises one and two and the results from the broader community engagement.

The facilitators gave a brief verbal summary of their group's results to the class at the end of each workshop.

Results

An assessment of the comments and ideas collected during the broader community engagement identified 39 themes. Of these, comments most frequently related to the following top five themes:

- 1. Recreation Facilities
- 2. Flora
- 3. Social
- 4. Amenities
- 5. Atmosphere

In comparison, the top five themes considered to be important by the 41 participating young people, based on the number of students who indicated that the theme was important to them, are:

- 1. Sustainability
- 2. Accessibility
- 3. Flora
- 4. Food & Beverage
- 5. Safety

There is a clear disparity between the value placed on particular themes by the general community cohort and the value placed by this cohort of young people.

While atmosphere was ranked in the top five most frequently referenced themes among the broader community comments it was ranked in the bottom five themes based on student votes with only 56% of students considering it to be of importance. Sustainability in contrast was voted important by all students.

Background

The six hectare former Brompton Gasworks site, now known as the Bowden Heritage Precinct, is being cleaned up and redeveloped after standing dormant and fenced off for many years. Renewal SA purchased the site in 2010 with a vision to revitalise it as part of the 16 hectare Bowden Project by transforming it into a lively, pedestrian friendly neighbourhood.

Once remediation is complete the focus will turn to the delivery of infrastructure and public realm elements which include the public open space located within the Heritage Listed Brompton Gasworks; bounded by the retort house, railway corridor, purifying house and Chief Street. In preparation for this Renewal SA engaged the services of design firm ASPECT Studios to assist with establishing design principles and options.

Renewal SA, with the support of ASPECT Studios, has planned a comprehensive engagement process for delivery over a period of 12 – 18 months across the following three stages:

- 1. Developing the design principles for the public open space
- 2. Developing public open space concept design options
- 3. Refining a preferred public open space concept design

This approach to engagement was developed in consultation with the City of Charles Sturt, while the two Hindmarsh Ward Members were briefed ahead of engagement commencing with the broader community.

Often the voice of younger community members is found to be absent or significantly underrepresented during community engagement processes. For this reason Renewal SA has committed to undertaking targeted engagement activities with this cohort to ensure that their views are represented throughout the various stages of this engagement.

This report covers a subsection of the first stage of engagement in which the focus was on obtaining the views of young people with regards to what will make a great public space. This targeted engagement was undertaken in March 2020 following opportunities between November 2019 and January 2020 for the broader community to provide input both online and face-to-face. The ideas shared by the broader community were subsequently summarised into 39 key themes with these themes forming the foundation of this targeted engagement exercise.

Invitations to participate in this stage of targeted engagement were sent to two local schools. With Brompton Primary School expressing a keen interest in being involved.

The thoughts and ideas shared by young people during this targeted engagement will be used to help ASPECT Studios to develop guiding principles for the next stages of planning.

Engagement Method

This targeted engagement was focused on obtaining the views of young people with regards to what will make a great public space, with the specific intent to identify similarities and differences between the key themes identified through engagement with the broader community and the relative importance of these themes to young people. Approximately 60 students from across two year six and seven classes at Brompton Primary School were invited to participate.

Project Tour

Students were first invited to tour the Bowden Project. The walking site-tour was hosted by key staff from the Bowden Project Team and included stops at the Information centre, Plant 4, Bowden Town Park and Plant 19 (the location of the previous community engagement drop-in session).

The intent of the site-tour was to familiarise students with the area and the vision for Bowden. During the tour students were also shown video footage of the State Heritage Place (The Brompton Gasworks) and were briefed on the outcomes of the engagement with the broader community.





Figure 1. Students on tour of the Bowden Project

Workshop

One week later representatives of the Renewal SA Engagement Team conducted two independent workshops with the two classes in their rooms at Brompton Primary School. Both workshops followed the same format, with the class split into three independent groups each facilitated by a staff member from the Renewal SA Engagement Team. Following a brief re-orientation to the Bowden Heritage Precinct students were guided through the following three exercises over a 50 minute period:

Exercise One: Importance of Themes

Students were each provided with a voting card with a green thumbs up on one side and a red thumbs down on the other. They were advised by their facilitator to use the card to 'vote' on whether each theme presented was important to them. Facilitators used a series of 39 cards, each featuring a representative image and brief descriptor, to present students with all of the themes identified through the previous engagement with the broader community.





Figure 2. Students participating in Exercise 1

Exercise Two: What is most important to you?

Once students had completed exercise one they were provided with one sticker and asked to use that sticker to identify on a board of all themes which was the most important to them. They were subsequently asked to explain to their group why that theme was of greatest importance.





Figure 3. Students participating in Exercise 2

Exercise Three: Group Discussion

Based on the themes identified as most important the students were asked to identify a small number of themes to discuss in further detail as a group. Where there was no clear preference the facilitator selected the themes taking into consideration both the results of exercises one and two and the results from the broader community engagement.

Students were provided with further detail regarding the key suggestions relating to the selected theme from the broader community engagement. Students were encouraged to and discuss as a group the extent to which they either agreed or disagreed with those suggestions and to add their own thoughts and suggestions relating to that theme.

Following the completion of the three exercises each facilitator provided a brief summary of their group's results to the whole class.



Figure 4. Workshop Materials: theme cards, voting cards and sticker boards.

Results

An assessment of the comments and ideas collected during the broader community engagement identified 39 themes. Of these, comments most frequently related to the following top five themes:

- 1. Recreation Facilities
- 2. Flora
- 3. Social
- 4. Amenities
- 5. Atmosphere

In comparison, the top five themes considered to be important by the 41 participating young people, based on the number of students who indicated that the theme was important to them, are:

- 1. Sustainability
- 2. Accessibility
- 3. Flora
- 4. Food & Beverage
- 5. Safety

Table 1 below, demonstrates the total number of students who voted that the theme was important to them in comparison to the total frequency in which the theme appeared in comments during engagement with the broader community. There is a clear disparity between the value placed on particular themes by the general community cohort and the value placed by this cohort of young people.

While atmosphere was ranked in the top five most frequently referenced themes among the broader community comments it was ranked in the bottom five themes based on student votes with only 56% of students considering it to be of importance. Sustainability in contrast was voted important by all students.

Table 1.

Theme by important votes and comment frequency

Theme	Important Votes	Comment Frequency	Order of 'Importance'	Order of 'Frequency'
Sustainability	41	8	1	25
Accessibility	40	17	2	16
Flora	39	53	3	2
Food & Beverage	39	24	4	8
Safety	39	17	5	15
Maintenance	39	9	6	23
Amenities	38	46	7	4
Recreation Facilities	37	64	8	1
Car Parking	37	13	9	18
Public Transport	37	11	10	19
Wayfinding	37	3	11	37
Open Space	35	33	12	6
Water	35	20	13	12
Events	35	11	14	20
Adaptive Reuse	35	2	15	39
Sport	34	23	16	9
Walking	34	19	17	14
Adaptability	34	11	18	21
Lighting	34	7	19	31
Vandalism	34	4	20	35
Solo	33	4	21	36
Plant 4	32	8	22	27
Social	31	52	23	3
Cycling	31	26	24	7
Retail	31	10	25	22
Markets	31	7	26	30
Wildlife	31	5	27	33
Theatre	29	4	28	34
Art	27	21	29	10
Dog Park	27	19	30	13
Live Entertainment	27	9	31	24
Performance Space	26	8	32	26
Community Garden	24	8	33	28
Heritage	23	15	34	17
Atmosphere	23	41	35	5
Built Environment	22	21	36	11
Naming	19	6	37	32
Workshops	16	7	38	29
Height	13	2	39	38

It is important to acknowledge that these results are likely impacted by acquiescence bias (i.e. a response bias characterised by a tendency for respondents to select a positive response option or to agree with a statement rather than disagreeing), leading to elevated numbers of 'important' votes.

When asked to select the one theme that was 'most important' there were several students who had great difficulty making a decision and subsequently changed their minds throughout the exercise. Only their final response is captured in the results below.

Overall 22 different themes were selected by the 41 students indicating a high degree of variability among participants. However, there were a small number of stand outs with eight (19.5%) students selecting sport as their most important theme, five (12.2%) selecting wildlife and four (9.8%) selecting safety. Table 2 below outlines the number of students that selected the theme as 'most important' in comparison to the number of students overall that voted that theme as important.

Table 2.

Number of students selecting the theme as 'most important' and overall important votes

Theme	Most Important Votes	Important Votes
Sport	8	34
Wildlife	5	31
Safety	4	39
Open Space	2	35
Water	2	35
Sustainability	2	41
Lighting	2	34
Theatre	2	29
Recreation Facilities	1	37
Flora	1	39
Atmosphere	1	23
Cycling	1	31
Dog Park	1	27
Walking	1	34
Accessibility	1	40
Live Entertainment	1	27
Plant 4	1	32
Community Garden	1	24
Markets	1	31
Vandalism	1	34
Height	1	13
Adaptive Reuse	1	35

Group Discussion - Themes

The following summarises discussion on the top five themes, as ranked in Table 1 above by the students' responses to the important/not important exercise, noting also where the theme was selected as the most important by individual students in exercise two. (The facilitator's initials have been included to enable cross-referencing with the raw data contained in the separate appendices document).

1. Sustainability

Across the six groups sustainability gained the most important votes and was discussed in some detail by three groups.

AW Sustainability was discussed in detail with one group. Sustainability was selected as most important by one student as they thought it was important for the space to be environmentally friendly and to save electricity. Approximately half of the group liked the idea of a sustainability centre. Most were unlikely to visit a community garden, some indicated that they would visit but probably not participate. Two students thought it was important to include water sustainable plants, while most liked the ideas of using renewable energy and recycling water. Only one student liked the idea of including a solar plant.

FR Sustainability was important to both groups – a place that's eco-friendly, save the planet with energy and water-wise approaches for the space.

2. Accessibility

AW Accessibility was selected as most important by one student as they thought it was important that people with a disability were able to enjoy the space.

3. Flora

AW Flora was selected as most important by one student because there are not many plants in the city and Bowden would be a good place to include lots.

4. Food & Beverage

FR Important to both groups – food from around the world, no fast food, vegetarian food, affordable, a space where people can sit outside and where people can meet and chat. Where people can eat and spend time together, sushi, health options, coffee vans, drive- thru and fast food outlets, popups and dog friendly cafes also popular.

BD While food and beverage wasn't the final choice in the second exercise, two participants initially placed their dots on it and it was seen as important by all participants – to the point of being essential. Café offerings in a pleasant and social environment was most popular. Discussion on dog-friendly cafes (triggered by two dogs in the illustrative photo) drew divided opinion with some being highly in favour of people bringing their pets in to the café environment and others saying they should be in a restricted area or not included.

5. Safety

AW Safety was discussed in depth with both groups. Reasons for selecting it as most important including (1) wanting to feel safe in the space and (2) not wanting to be robbed at night. Conversation in both groups focused on what would make the students feel safe in the space. Regarding dogs, one student stated, "if the dog bites keep it on a leash otherwise who cares?". There were multiple suggestions for the inclusion of CCTV surveillance, other suggestions were:

- Anything that lowers the chance of kidnapping
- Open space with lot of people (passive surveillance)
- No drug addicts
- Security gates around areas for small children
- Fencing around water
- Any bars should be kid-friendly, and people should keep track of alcohol consumption, so people don't become drunk and disorderly
- Locks on doors
- Lockers to store personal belongings
- Lots of exits to allow people to leave quickly
- Attending with friends or family
- Inclusion of emergency phone

BD Safety was viewed as very important, with suggestions including: good lighting for night time; and building can help people see into the place (i.e. passive surveillance). Keeping dogs controlled on a leash was also mentioned.

FR Feedback specifically suggested that any bike racks be artistic and unique and included the need for safe pedestrian crossings.

Group Discussion – Individual Importance

Table 2 above, details the results from exercise two where dots were used to identifying the theme individual students considered most important to them. The following is a summary of the discussion with students on the top 5 themes identified through this exercise (with the exception of safety which has already been summarised above in the discussion on Table 1). Each overview below is also followed by a brief summary from the broader community feedback received.

- 1. Sport received 8 'most important' votes and was discussed by three groups overall, one in depth.
 - AW Reasons for selecting it as most important included (1) liking sports and thinking that Bowden has potential to include lots and (2) not having many options to play sport around where they live and wanting to see a variety of facilities grouped together. Generally, students were supportive of including a wide variety of facilities that were suitable for both adults and children. Most supported the inclusion of a skate park and a flat space for people to practice featuring basketball hoops, cricket nets and goals. Other thoughts included a suggestion for trees to include slacklines, concern that gym equipment might get vandalised and concern that any sport equipment/facilities would be used initially but then not at all as had been the case at the school.
 - BD Hugely popular with both groups. Most sports were supported with rock climbing, soccer, handball, table tennis and basketball particularly supported and additional suggestions of: volley ball, netball and tennis. Ice skating drew mixed reactions and parkour got a big YES from one group.

FR A variety of sports discussed for the site including football, gym, netball, cricket (and no cricket), no swimming pool, a safe sport environment (no roads nearby etc) a place where people can be active and enjoy a variety of sports including ice skating, bike riding, basketball and tennis.

<u>Community comments received for Sport</u> – advocated for the inclusion of sports amenities/facilities suitable for both adults and children; however the specific suggestions were wide and varied (bike track/skatepark/soccer/handball/gym equipment/cirkidz/YMCA/parkour/rock climbing/ice

skating/table tennis/basketball/indoor/outdoor) one comment advocated against a skate park, while comments suggesting skate parks, parkour facilities and YMCA type venues were controversial.

- 2. Wildlife was selected as their 'most important' theme by 5 students.
 - AW One student said they wanted a space that encourage wildlife to visit so that they could see and play with it.
 - BD One group was more supportive of the space being wild animal and bird friendly. A pond was suggested by both groups, with feeding the ducks being a suggested activity. One student not keen, being allergic to birds.
 - FR With both groups identifying as wildlife as important, feedback included a place that is bird-friendly, trees that attract wildlife, ponds for fish. A place that encourages people to spec time also encouraging ducks, lizards, fish, bees and frogs (but no smelly water).

<u>Community comments received on wildlife</u> – indicated an attraction to places with wildlife such as Monarto Zoo and Torch Lake Michigan while others supported the inclusion of plantings and features (such as bird baths) that encourage birds and other wildlife.

3. Safety – received four 'most important' votes (see students' discussion above).

<u>Community comments on safety</u> – largely focused on safety in general with specific comments relating to lighting, bike security, water security and dog security. A small number of comments objected to bars/clubs, a public pool and a skatepark for safety reasons.

- **4. Open space** was selected as the 'most important' theme by 2 students.
 - BD Where everyone can enjoy themselves. Flexible for rec and sport open and green. The flexibility for people to do what they want in space was favoured by both groups over things like events and markets using the space.
 - FR A space everyone can enter and room for all to enter a place for picnics, games, talking and walking.

<u>Community comments received for Open Space</u> – advocated for the inclusion of open space and parks for various uses along with a feeling of openness.

- **5.** Water was selected as the 'most important' theme by 2 students
 - **AW** It was important to one student as they thought it was important for people to be able to have fun on a hot day.
 - BD Inclusion of water was important to both groups with both a fun feature for human interaction and a pond for birds being favoured.

<u>Community comments received on water</u> – suggested the inclusion of water largely focused on pools, water features (spouts) and ponds (lakes/wetlands). Other comments suggested a bird bath and surf wave. Concern was raised about water that could become stagnant while comments suggesting a public pool and a wetland area were somewhat controversial.

Next Steps

This report complements the first stage of engagement with community members undertaken between November 2019 and January 2020 in which the focus was on what will make a great public space.

The thoughts and ideas shared by young people during this targeted engagement will be used to help ASPECT Studios to develop guiding principles for the next stages of planning.

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