



KNOWLE GREEN COMMUNITY PROJECT

A Public Consultation



Figure 1

Introduction

Welcome to the Knowle Green Community Project Consultation. We hope that you will be able to take the time to read about this project and answer a few questions for us and we hope that you will be as excited about the opportunity as we are when you have done so.

What is the Project all about?

The objective of the project is to give the area between service roads on Station Road, surrounding the 'Knowle Green Bus Terminus', a facelift. We want to improve its appearance and have it enhance, rather than detract from, the buildings behind. We would also like to make it a space that is valued by our community. It is also planned to incorporate within the project a memorial to Dr Ronald Bower, who did so much to retain the character and heritage of Knowle.

Is this area really known as Knowle Green?

Well, it is to some and it appears under that name on Centro's bus timetables. These days it is a misnomer, because it is not as green as, say, 'the other green' outside the Guild House. However, the name goes back to the time before the present Station Road shops when here was indeed a green on the corner of Station Road and Warwick Road.

Who is 'we'?

Three village organisations have come together to work on this initiative. Knowle and Dorridge Rotary Club, The Knowle Society and Knowle Traders. We are being supported by Solihull Council's Neighbourhood Management team.

Together, we have formed a Steering Group to progress the project. The Group is also being helped by an architect from the Balsall Common based practice, FBDA, and also a charity specialising in environmental landscaping projects, called Groundwork. We hope that as a result of reading about the project, we might also have your support.

Isn't this going to be expensive?

Until we know what we are going to try to achieve, we do not know how much it will cost. A minor scheme could cost as little as £25,000 whilst an ambitious scheme could cost a quarter of a million. We hope, though, that we will be able to make a big difference and still keep the cost under £100,000.

Where will that sort of money come from?

We will not realise this project without going for external grant funding. There are a number of Funds which will potentially give a grant (ie money which does not have to be repaid) for this sort of project. It may also be necessary to run some community fundraising events. There are, however, plenty of examples where communities like ours have raised the sort of money needed.

Shouldn't the Council pay for this and will it affect rates?

The Council would like to see this area improved but is unable to prioritise the whole cost of the work against other demands on its limited budget. It does, however, plan to contribute at least £5000 towards the project. It will not affect rates.

Will the project definitely happen and how long will it take?

It is not certain, there is funding to raise and planning rules to negotiate. However, the Group has a determination to succeed, subject to your support through this consultation.

Also, this is not a short term project. It will not be completed in less than a year and may take two or even three.

PART A – THE BUS SHELTER

The building which houses the bus shelter at Knowle Green has some interesting features, including a roof feature that some think might look more at home at the side of a cricket pitch. It is past its best and it needs some attention. It used to incorporate toilet facilities, but these have been closed.

There is also a view held by some that this present building is too large and masks the particularly fine former bank behind it and that a more modest construction would enhance the street scene.

The Steering Group has identified five options for this building which need consideration:

A1 – Redevelop the building, using the existing shell, attending to any maintenance needs and giving it a new lease of life, as in Figure 1 on Page One.

A2 – Develop a new and more modest construction, but do so in a way sympathetic to the current building and re-using materials, especially its bricks and roof materials, as in Figure 2 on the next page.

A3 – Provide a new but different construction, potentially a more modern form of shelter with seating, as in Figure 3 on the next page.

A4 – Do away with a shelter with seating and install a standard bus stop at which passengers stand and wait.

A5 – Do nothing, leave the building as it is and let it continue to slowly decay.

Of these, the Steering Group would not like to see A4 or A5 and has a strong preference for option A2 of those remaining– but what do you think?

To an extent, your preference may be determined by what you think its purpose should be. A number of thoughts and considerations have been discussed by the Steering Group. These are:

- Should a possible new construction be more open, like the examples on the next page, or see through, to allow better appreciation of the buildings behind for passing motorists and pedestrians?
- To what extent a new construction needs to be graffiti and vandal proof, for instance, would a clear plastic screen behind the seating, as in Figure 2, although good for light transmission, be too likely to be damaged?
- Would double sided seating be a good idea, one side to wait for the bus, the other to sit and enjoy the newly landscaped area and, perhaps, have a lunchtime sandwich?

- Would it be a good idea to use part of the building, as in Figure 5 on Page 5 and Figure 8 on Page 6, or perhaps a clear screen, again as in Figure 2 below, as an information source, maybe a map of the village, showing its historic buildings?

The following sketches have been prepared by FBDA to illustrate the discussion above; they are not, at this point in time, definitive detailed proposals, merely thought provokers:

Figure 2

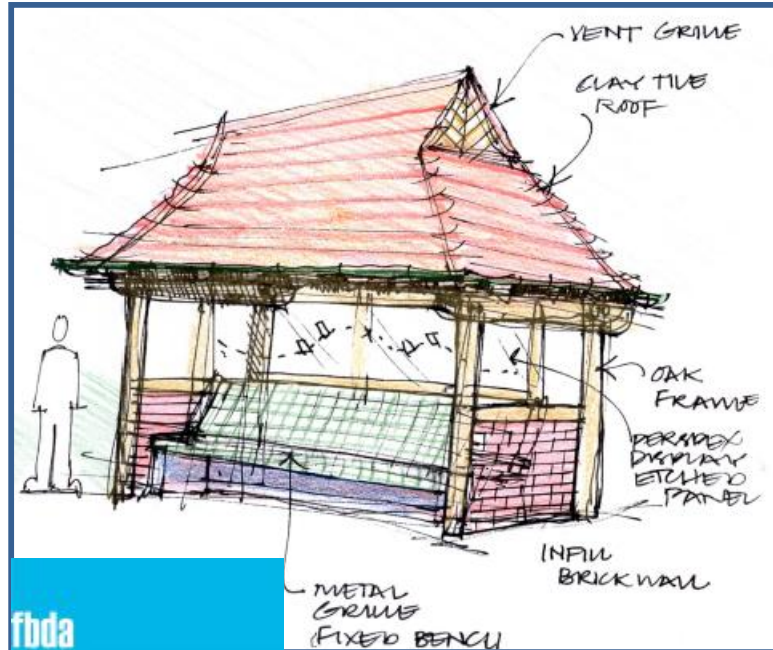


Figure 3



So, what are your thoughts? Please answer the questions on Page 7.

PART B – THE SURROUNDING AREA



Figure 4

The existing area around the Bus Terminus, between the service roads, is planted but has overgrown and does not look as appealing as it should within the street scene. The Steering Group has examined a range of possible styles in which the area could be landscaped afresh.

B1 – it could be mostly ‘hard landscaped’ with a variety of complementary colours and textures built into paving and low walling, as in Figure 5:

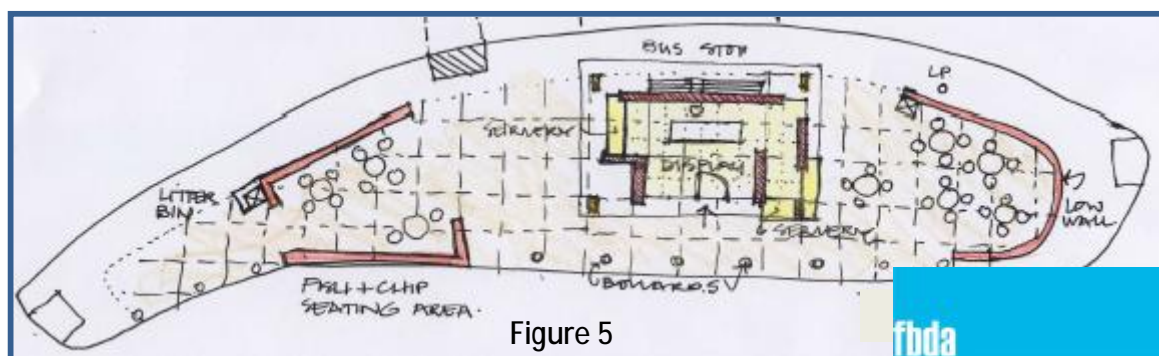


Figure 5

B2 – it could be restored to a ‘Green’ by allowing grass to predominate, although that does have maintenance implications.

B3 – it could be predominantly bedding combining colour and low shrubs, as in Figure 6:

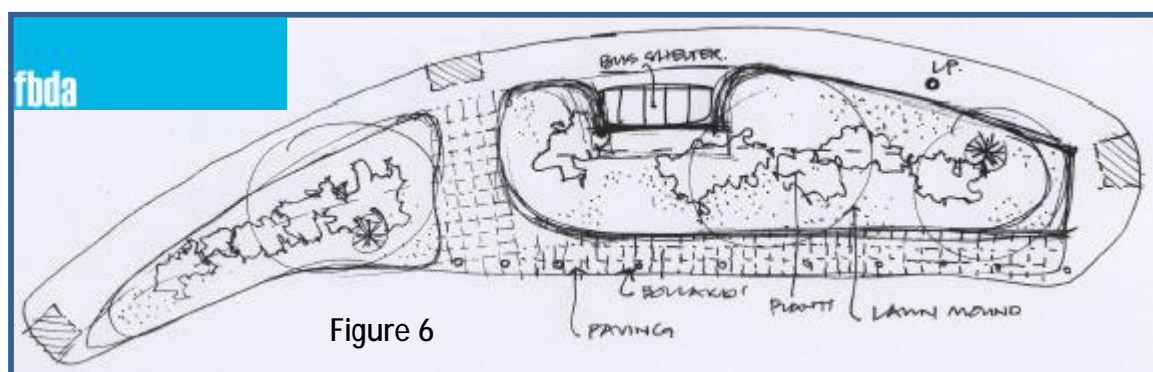
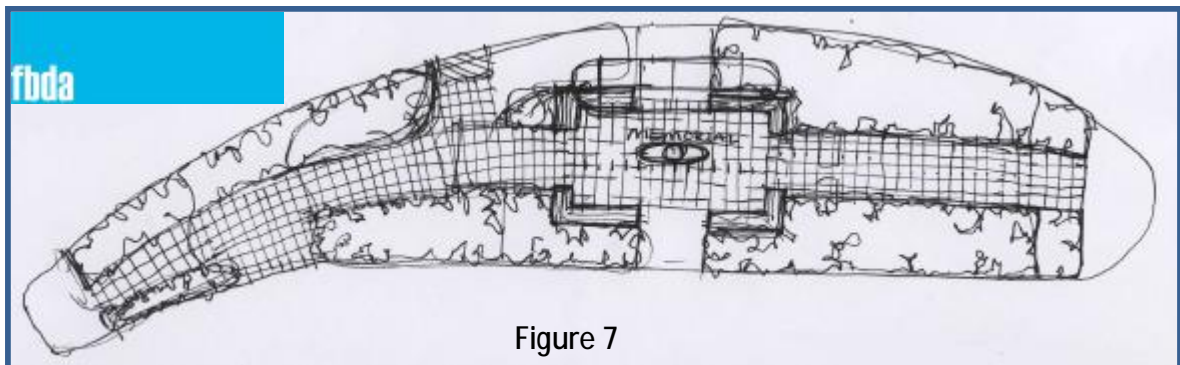
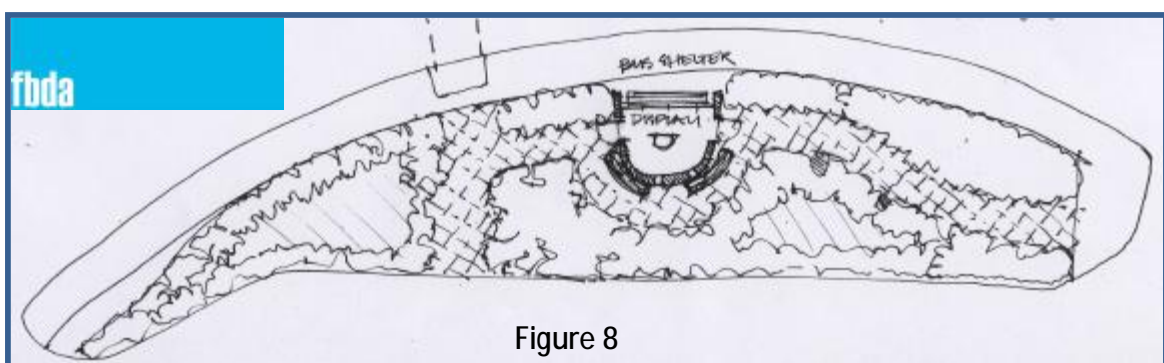


Figure 6

B4 – it could be developed as a mixture of textured hard landscaping and bedding in an appealing layout which incorporates paths, in a formal design, as here in Figure 7:



B5 – as B4, but in an informal design, as in Figure 8:



There are, of course, the two further options of:

B6 – tidying up and cutting back what is there at present

B7 – doing nothing.

Of these, the Steering Group would not like to see B6 or B7, and has a preference for the informal approach of option B5 – but what do you think?

Some other thoughts and considerations have been discussed by the Steering Group. These include:

- Should the area incorporate further seating, away from the shelter, so that it might be enjoyed even more, as in Figure 5 on the previous page? Or, would this encourage abuse of the facility, particularly in the evenings?
- Should a piece of 'public art' such as a sculpture, statue or relief be included in the design as a focal point, as illustrated in Figure 7 above, or would this attract vandalism?

Well, that has, we hope, given you a good picture of what this project is about. Now, we would like to have your views. Please submit any queries to chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk

QUESTIONNAIRE – ABOUT YOU

(Please tick as appropriate)

Are you?	MALE	<input type="checkbox"/>	FEMALE	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is your age group?	UNDER 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	18 TO 34	<input type="checkbox"/>
	35 TO 59	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 & OVER	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you live in Knowle?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you work in Knowle?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR VIEWS ABOUT THIS PROJECT AND THE BUILDING

	Very Much	Probably	Neither	Probably Not	Absolutely Not
Do you support the idea a project to redevelop this area of Knowle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you support the idea of making changes to the existing building?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>		NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

(If no, proceed to the next Section. If yes, tick all that apply below)

Do you support the idea of redeveloping the current building?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you support re-using materials to develop a smaller building?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you support replacing the building with a modern shelter?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any other comments about the building? _____

YOUR VIEWS ABOUT LANDSCAPING THIS AREA

Do you support the idea of improved Landscaping in this area? YES NO

(If no, proceed to the next Section. If yes, tick all that apply below)

Do you support redesign with predominantly hard landscaping? YES

Do you support redesign with predominantly grass? YES

Do you support redesign with predominantly bedding and shrubbery? YES

Do you support redesign with a formally laid out mix of elements? YES

Do you support redesign with an informally laid out mix of elements? YES

Any other comments about the landscaping? _____

YOUR VIEWS ON OTHER ISSUES (please tick all that apply below)

Would you like to see sheltered road side seating for bus passengers? YES

Would you like to see sheltered shop facing seating for other users? YES

Would you like to see other seating in the landscaped area? YES

Would you like to see local information, eg village map, included in the plan? YES

Do you believe precautions against graffiti and vandalism are vital? YES

Any other general comments _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT

PLEASE RETURN TO ERIC LYONS LTD OR KNOWLE LIBRARY BY JULY 26