

FRIENDS OF FRIARS GARDENS (FOFGA) – EALING LOCAL PLAN / LGS DESIGNATION FOR ACTON GREENS

OUR GENERAL RESPONSE

Our community group strongly opposes the de-designation of green belt land and MOL in the new plan.

In our own local area of Acton, we are concerned that 6 of the 13 sites pinpointed for development are deemed suitable for tall buildings, a status that we believe conflicts with the environmental aspirations of the plan as a whole.

We ask that future development in Acton be more in character with the Victorian terraces of the area and that enough green space is available to all.

We would like to stress that tall buildings have been proven to be more damaging for the environment than low-level blocks - please see the official response of Ealing Friends of the Earth to the plan, which FOFGA supports, and also read your own consultants' views (ie. ARUP in Site Selection report) that there is too high a level of pollution in Acton to increase population in highrises as suggested.

OUR REQUEST TO DESIGNATE 3 x LOCAL GREENS AS LGS

We do not see anything proposed for the new local plan as regards local green space designations. Three triangular greens in the Friary Park area contribute significantly to the beauty, character and tranquillity of our area. We request that **St Dunstan's Gardens** and **Friars Gardens** (land registry title AGL88554) and **Friars Place Green** (common land) be designated as Local Green Space (LGS) in this local plan.

In support of this request, we would like to point out that our three greens definitely meet the criteria of LGS as set out on the Open Spaces Society website.

<https://www.oss.org.uk/need-to-know-more/information-hub/local-green-spacedesignation/#criteria>

1. **All three greens are close to the community they serve.** Indeed our houses are clustered around them and we overlook these spaces.
2. **The parks are demonstrably special to our local community.** As a result of a) developers trying to build on our greens in 2021 / 2022 and b) the considerable debate arising from the TYS2 scheme to refurb green space at Friars Gardens in 2015/16, our neighbourhood has had three major, and very publicly documented, opportunities to consult on the value of these spaces.

In **Feb 2022**, **St Dunstan's Gardens POS** was hit by a planning application to build 52 care home units and 28 parking bays with the potential loss of a park that has been used for almost a century by the people living around it.

We want LGS designation for this green because why should we residents repeatedly have to undergo the stress and inconvenience of launching a major campaign to fight off developers every time one of them wants to take a punt with a money-making land grab? As there is an underlying

soil owner, this type of application is bound to happen from time to time and we need to put a stop to this harmful cycle.

The impressive campaign that we residents organised - [I attach a PDF of our website #HandsOffOurGreen](#) - shows the passion that neighbours had for protecting this green. We held meetings, wrote copy, designed promotional materials, set up website and social media accounts, had 18 volunteers posting 1,500 leaflets through doors. If you check your own planning portal, you will see that 798 people opposed the developer, 0 supported.

<https://pam.ealing.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=R7AJZHJMGHA00>

Not long before this, in **Sept 2021**, another one of our triangular greens, **Friars Place Green**, common land, was under seige by a different developer and the subject of an application by Mount Anvil to build their amenities on it for nearby Friary Park towers. Again the neighbourhood rallied and there were 417 opponents on LBE's planning portal, 0 supporters.

<https://pam.ealing.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

A small group of neighbours paid out of their own pockets to hire a property lawyer to point out the illegality of building on commonland and get the application withdrawn. Why should residents have to do this? Whilst this green has a different status from the others in the area, it is part and parcel of a distinctive series of three triangular greens in look/feel, and should be counted with the others.

Back in **2015/16**, I entered the middle triangular park of the three greens, **Friars Gardens** in the council's Transform Your Space 2 competition. A group of us (7 people in total) did a presentation to council officers and won £45,000 of public money to refurb this green. We also raised a considerable sum of money in matched crowd-fundraising. Since 2016, when, a loyal group of us have put in many hours caring for this garden ([see spreadsheet of our activities](#)). Notably, in 2021, we were part of Ealing's entry for London In Bloom, helping to secure LBE a gold award. The judges were most impressed with our garden.

If these activities are not evidence of a park that is 'demonstrably special', I do not know what is! And yet we are not secure in our enjoyment of our own park. The underlying soil owner also exists for this green and is a persistent threat because of a historical quirk in conveyancing. The residents deserve for this green to be designated as LGS to afford it extra protection and a long-term future.

In terms of why they are important, all three greens are valued for:

i) **Beauty** - the way they are set out, with their distinctive triangles, makes them an integral part of the street planning of the area and sets the character of the neighbourhood, making it unique from, say, Poet's Corner. ii) **Tranquility** - as a neighbourhood that is bordered by major rail and road arteries including the A40 and Horn Lane, where pollution levels have been measured to be illegally high, the green spaces, unspoilt by hard surfacing, are the green lungs of our area. They provide a pause in the urban sprawl and residents are mentally stronger/ happier for living around them. iii) **Recreational value** - all three of the parks are popular with people exercising their dogs, but also with those relaxing, doing yoga, having picnics, enjoying air/sunshine on park benches and, in the middle green, carrying out community gardening. There are often children playing in the middle green, where there is play equipment and an adventure trail. Children play games on the larger green, too, often with their dogs.

3. Another defining feature is that all three greens are Local in Character - the triangles of grass and trees are each surrounded on all sides by roads. The larger two greens have fencing and gates, the smaller commonland triangle has landscaping to delineate it, so all three are self-contained, though the third green is still likely to be swallowed up by Mount Anvil's development if they are allowed to stop up the spur road (another outrage to the community).

Given all the above points, we believe we have demonstrated that our greens meet the criteria of LGS and we ask that they be appropriately designated in your new local plan.

Yours sincerely,

Juliet McDonald

Founder and secretary of Friends of Friars Garden

[Redacted signature]

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