

Stantonbury Neighbourhood Plan, Reg 16 consultation responses

Rebecca Williams

c/o Rebecca Williams

Bancroft Park

I am writing in regards to the Stantonbury Neighbourhood Plan proposed changes to the area designated "Site B".

I only moved to Bancroft Park last year, but chose this location due to it's quietness (regardless of train traffic) and proximity to a dog friendly walking park. Upon seeing the proposed idea (on Monday 4th, I did not hear or see any such plan before Monday) to install a playground where the Orchard is has horrified me. My objections and considerations of this proposed change will not be articulately described in this email, but please consider them regardless:

1. Site B is a remote location, and such poses a child protection risk as well as an antisocial behaviour risk. This location cannot be viewed from anywhere else, unless you propose to rip out all the vegetation (I'll get to that later). Children play areas should not be built whereby they are sheltered from public view, mostly to prevent untoward occurrences happening there - such an isolated area would be easy pickings for a child molester or rapist but also older children and young adults that prefer to destroy things rather than build them will have a field day in such a location - unless CCTV is due to be installed and monitored.
2. This area is a peaceful area that many dog-walkers love to walk through to safely let their dogs off lead, away from the main roads and away from picnic areas or other children play areas. Many parks in MK have lakes in them which are full of (amazing) birds and waterfowl, which means many of us have to walk around those (gladly) with our dogs on lead. At Bancroft, we can let them go a little more.
3. The surrounding paths are not maintained very well, and even more traffic on these paths would create a bog. If you care about those of us that walk in this area at all then those paths would be maintained yearly. So if we are not under 8, does no one in the Parish Council care? More should be invested in encouraging dog walkers to pick up after their mess, it is a scourge on society but there are not enough dog poo bins. I'd also say that more should be done to encourage disabled people and older people to access the park. Maintaining adequate paths would go along way towards this.
4. There is only 1 road in and out of Bancroft Park. If you are proposing to increase this traffic by trying to attract people to the park with a visitors centre (not entirely happy with that either, but lesser of two evils and all that) then attracting more people to a play area will incur an even higher traffic count. And yes, people will have to drive to this park - unless you live on Bancroft Park, Site B is at least 0.5KM from any other area - even those that live on Lullingstone Drive would be walking almost 0.5KM. Which means either Constantine Way and/or Willowford would see parking on the road or verges (unacceptable) or you would need to destroy more of the park to create a car park (this would suggest having to also drive a car through the park, which is actually crazy). If people are supposed to park at the "visitors centre" car park, then why would these people not just go to the new play area on Bancroft just over the bridge. It is already almost a one lane street with residents parking on the road. This would be unfair to those of us who chose to live here BECAUSE of the lack of amenities. We don't want a shop, ANOTHER play area etc. Even the space next to the H2 bridge would be a better location (though I guess that's parks trust land, not council land).
5. If people have to drive to get to a play park, why not direct them or why would they not choose to go to Stanton Low? An impressive play area, a BMX track, an open field area and a walk to the canal and church ruins. Far more substantial and far less intrusive to this population.

6. There is a small play area on Constantine Way - why not improve that? And expand it to the grassy area adjacent to it? It would be in full view of the road area and opposite the Roman Ruins? Much safer as long as there is an adequate fence around it.
7. Bringing me to my last point, ecology. This area of Bancroft Park has stood for well over 30 years as it is. It is home to countless species, of which, have more of a right to be there than a play area. The trees provide some protection against the noise of the trains, so removing them is out of the question. The orchard itself is in a poor condition, but I would rather see the area regenerated to a quiet, reflective zone than a play park that holds inherent dangers (especially if an accident occurs and a child is unable to get to safety and/or an ambulance has to drive through the park to reach them). It would be fabulous to have a community garden, picnic zones and benches to sit at.

My issue is really that none of the proposed changes to Bancroft Park will directly enhance the lives of those of us that actually live in Bancroft Park. We already have access to a wonderful parkland, that already has a great new play area. I doubt anyone that lives on Bancroft Park would frequent the "visitor's centre" because the park is already adequate enough and people can just go home to have a cup of tea. So what will these changes actually bring, except stress? Why does the council insist on building on every square inch of land it owes? Oh wait...ah yes, money. You can't replace those garages with a play area because it means you won't get your windfall amount of money from building houses on it. But of course, you are quite happy to destroy the natural beauty of a park area to pretend you're doing something to help parents entertain their child for free. I will vote against the proposed changes to Bancroft Park, if I am afforded the opportunity.