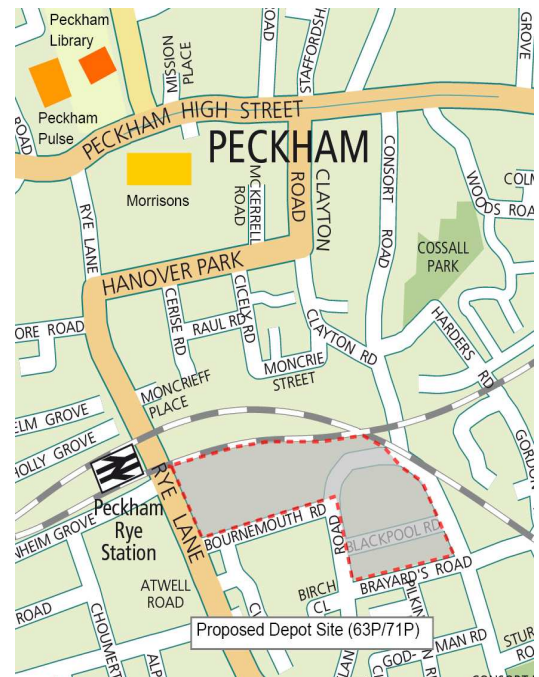


Peckham Vision comments on Southwark Council's Vision Paper 'Future Peckham' in the Peckham Area Action Plan (PAAP)

Inclusion of site 63P/71P in the PAAP Issues and Options paper

The PAAP Issues and Options paper needs to include the issues and options for site 71P, previously 63P in the UDP, for these reasons:

- If the tram depot is located on this site, its layout and its perimeter need to be designed and agreed. Some of the issues and options arising from this need to be covered in the PAAP.
- The UDP safeguarding designation is already causing blight and degeneration which is likely to continue for many years before a decision is finally taken. The PAAP discussions need to deal with what will happen to this important strategic site in the heart of the town centre in the years leading up to a decision about the depot, to minimise the blight during the continuing uncertainty about the locations for the Cross River Tram depots.



The PAAP map in the 'Future Peckham' paper which shows the development/opportunity sites, should therefore be revised to identify the boundaries of the site 63P/71P

Moreover, the site is only **safeguarded** in the UDP for the tram depot. The tram depot might yet be located somewhere else. The PAAP discussions must therefore cover what the issues and options might be if the depot were to be located somewhere else. This should feature the potential major contribution that site 63P/71P can make to the effective long term regeneration of Peckham Town Centre, and also to greater Peckham as a whole. This is a strategic site in the heart of Peckham town centre, and a major Opportunity Site which needs to be considered as such in the PAAP, at least as part of a Contingency Plan.

An alternative vision for Rye Lane Central

It often appears that the town centre is conceived only as a long narrow linear shopping street, with relatively isolated opportunity/development sites. But there is the potential for viewing this area around Rye Lane Central in a very different way - as an integrated matrix with old and new buildings interlinked with open pedestrian spaces.

Open Spaces – Peckham Rye Station

This is already evident in the recent agreement between all key stakeholders to examine the feasibility of opening up the piazza in front of Peckham Rye Station.



New vision for Peckham Rye station,
with an open public square



Peckham Rye station,
as it is today

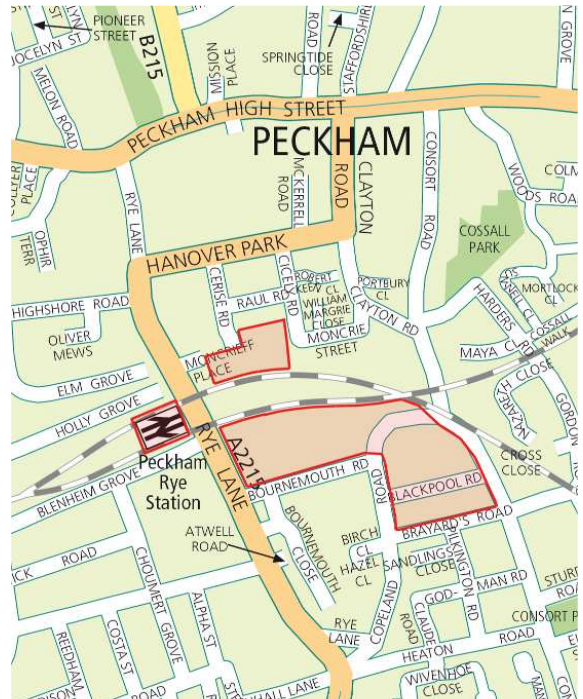
This would create an open public space in the central part of Rye Lane, changing radically the nature of the town centre space there. No longer would it be experienced as a long narrow crowded shopping space, but would transform the area into one of open spaces linked to other parts of the town centre currently hidden from view on the west side of Rye Lane - the historic station itself, recently listed as a Grade 2 building by English Heritage, and the access routes into the Holly Grove residential area, and the naturally evolving cultural area along Blenheim Grove.

Open Spaces – central Rye Lane east

Right across the road on the east side of Rye Lane are three sites with the same potential to transform the central part of Rye Lane:

- the multi-storey car park area,
- site 63P/71P ‘safeguarded’ for the tram depot, both identified in the UDP as ‘development sites’,
- the area between the railway lines, which lies between the two ‘development sites’.

The links that these three sites already have with Rye Lane, and with each other, could also be opened up in imaginative developments to create a new cultural and business quarter in this central part of Rye Lane. The sites could be interconnected through the pedestrian open spaces leading to rehabilitated historic buildings integrated with new modern buildings. These developments would be encouraged by the planning policy set out in the PAAP and emerge from the organic developments already occurring in and around site 63P/71P and Blenheim Grove.



Rye Lane Central - an integrated matrix: old and new buildings interlinked with open pedestrian spaces

Site 63P/71P already has a significant role in the organic growth of Peckham Town Centre. The site is an active and interesting contributor to the economic, social and cultural life of Peckham. This positive change has been occurring organically and naturally (despite the blight of the UDP designation for the tram depot). It is possible because the site is characterised by a mixture of commercial and industrial buildings, with scope for additional new developments, including office, housing and retail. It is a natural place for Peckham to expand into and develop for mixed uses, building on the commercial and cultural presence on the site. As another part of the strategic vision that would open up the space in front of the magnificent Station buildings, this would transform the central part of Rye Lane.



Some sketches of future possibilities
Benedict O’Looney, architect

This huge site 63P/71P could provide the flexible kinds of spaces that Peckham needs in the changing times over the next 50 years. Without it, Peckham would be seriously short of spaces for creative industries in their wide variety of forms to expand, from mainstream artists and post-modern artists, to creative training and leisure projects for young people, together with new forms of entertainment, leisure and business facilities. The space offers exciting potential to re-vision central Rye Lane away from the present long narrow linear crowded shopping street well past its heyday, to a wider town centre with a busy shopping area intermixed with a cultural, residential and business facilities quarter with open pedestrian spaces.

Creative Developments - Re-using old buildings



Some of the creative new uses in the Bussey building

Creative new uses in these historic buildings are already taking place, led naturally by the local property market meeting emerging new demands for accommodation. In September 2007, in the annual all-London Open House weekend, Peckham Vision arranged three walks to show what is already happening. This revealed to all present the immense scope and opportunities there are for reusing the historic industrial and commercial buildings in Rye Lane Central in modern developments for creative 21st century uses. Over 140 people came from across London and locally to take the walks led by The Peckham Society. Everyone enjoyed the magnificent views of Peckham and central London from the roof of the Bussey building, the refreshments in the CLF Arts Café and the Peckham Vision exhibition showing the latest information about the tram, and ideas for new opportunities for this central area of Peckham if the tram depot is not located there. There was significant support and enthusiasm for revising this part of Peckham town centre to enable its potential to be realised. There was much demand for further tours, indicating that these kinds of developments could attract visitors to Peckham, who would not visit a tram depot.

It is essential that the Council's Issues and Options paper includes these topics to enable an informed and adequate public consultation about the future of Peckham town centre.



The Bussey Building today
Photo: Nick Stevens