

Commonplace case study

Mosaic Place, Purley

Customer

Thornsett

Engagement

Housing and community facilities

Background

Developer, Thornsett, together with the Purley Baptist Church presented plans that complied with planning guidelines but met stiff initial local opposition.

Challenges

Demonstrating the benefits of the development - how these offset the objection to a new tower in a low-rise area.

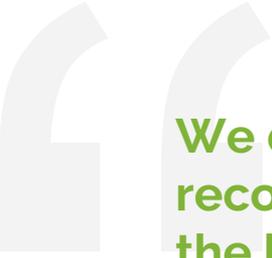
Engagement to achieve agreement on a controversial scheme

Various proposals had previously generated strong local opposition, due to the height of the building.

Before plans had been published, the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate had launched a petition against the project with 4,000 signatures.

Commonplace worked with Thornsett to create an open dialogue about the plans, and to help mobilise beneficiaries of the proposals.

Croydon Council planning committee **resolved to grant planning permission** subject to a Section 106 legal agreement.



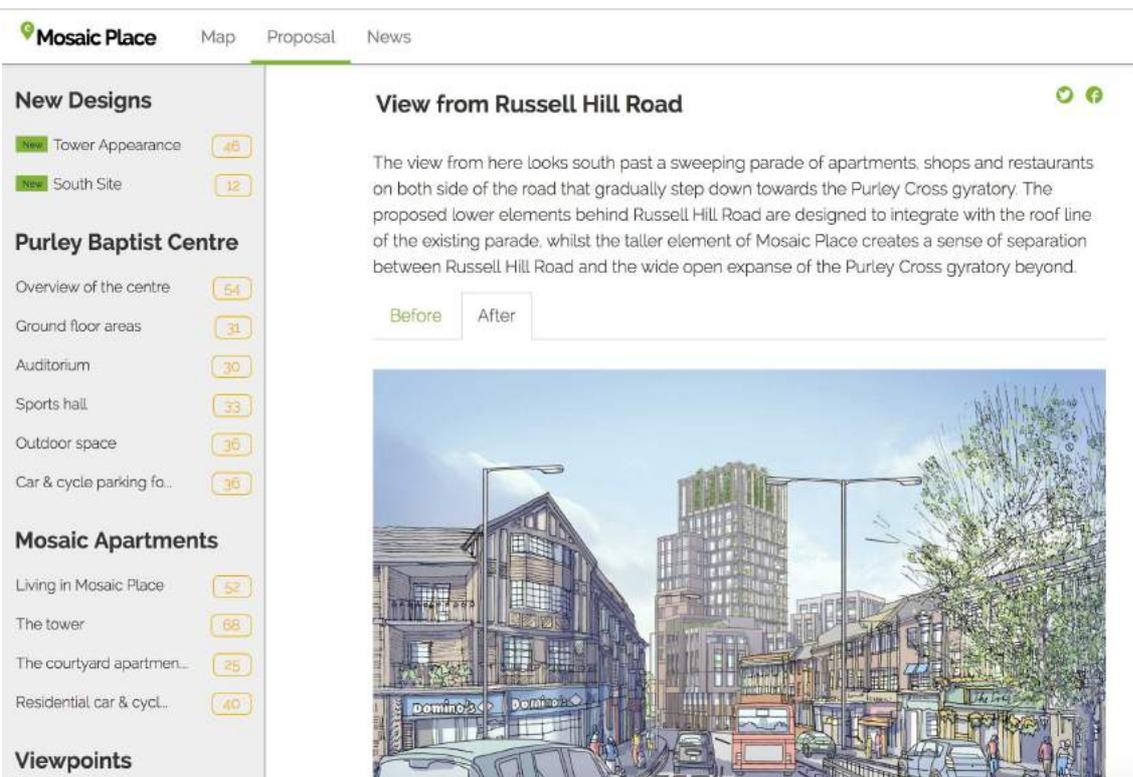
We decided to use Commonplace because we recognised that high quality, open engagement was the best way to reduce our planning risks. Commonplace delivered this very successfully.

Tony Pritchard, Development Manager, Thornsett

Making the proposal clear for local people

Credibility and trust through clarity

Commonplace helped Thornsett present the proposals in a way that was clear and credible, which increased trust amongst the community. This was important to ensure the community didn't feel the height of the building was being hidden, which could have discredited the whole proposal.



The masterplan was split into **themes and schemes** which respondents could comment on individually. This helped to identify which specific elements residents supported and which needed improvement.

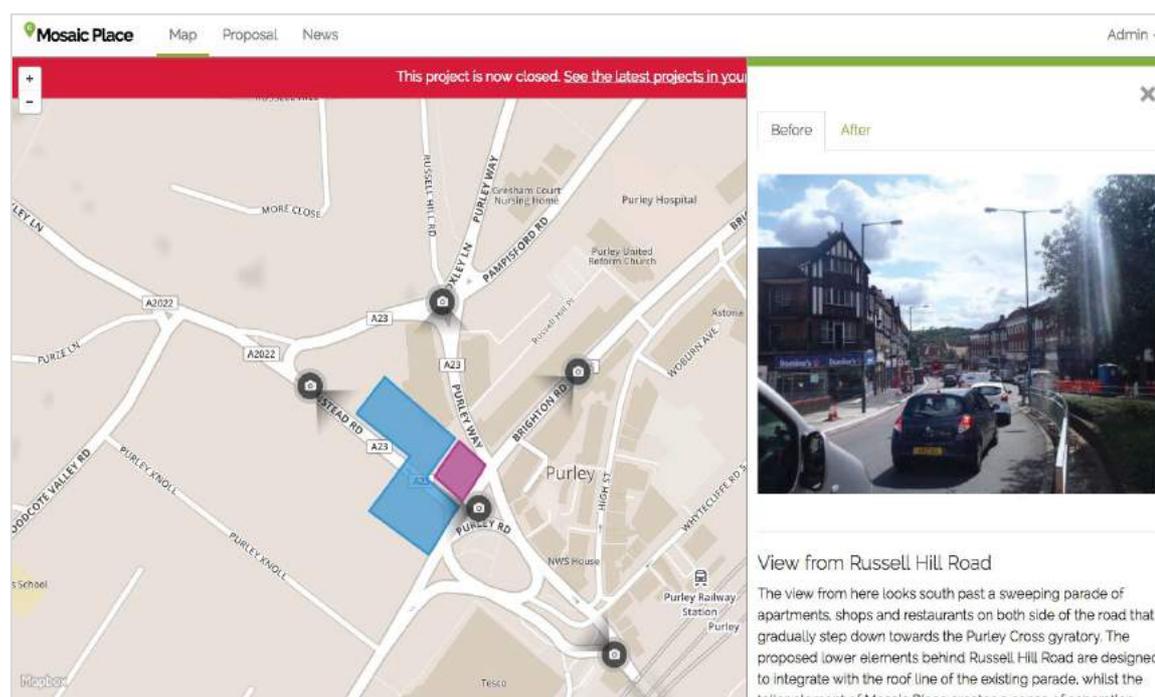
The Commonplace **before and after** feature is a simple but effective way to bring a proposal to life in an area.

The public can see from the same viewpoint what the area looks like now compared to a completed project visualisation.

Screenshots of proposal page on Commonplace showing the **before and after** feature.

Viewpoints can also be added to an interactive map to show where these views are taken from.

The **interactive map** also shows the boundaries of the schemes.



View from Russell Hill Road

The view from here looks south past a sweeping parade of apartments, shops and restaurants on both side of the road that gradually step down towards the Purley Cross gyratory. The proposed lower elements behind Russell Hill Road are designed to integrate with the roof line of the existing parade, whilst the taller element of Mosaic Place creates a sense of separation between Russell Hill Road and the wide open expanse of the Purley Cross gyratory beyond.

Revising designs to respond to community concerns

Responding to community concerns

An important Commonplace feature was the ability to update plans during the process. This enabled Thornsett to be clear about how they responded to community feedback through their design whilst collecting comments on the new designs.



The feedback challenged the architects to identify what people love about Purley and how that might become a part of a landmark building. The **revised design** (right) is more elegant and slender - avoiding a 'corporate' or 'office-like' look.



Stop Purley Skyscraper

Stop Purley Skyscraper

A planning application has been submitted to build a 17 floor skyscraper in the centre of Purley, on the site with the grey hoardings on Purley Cross.

The owner of the site had wanted to build a much smaller building which included community facilities. However, Croydon Council has made various demands (including a £2m cash payment to the council and a significant social housing component which requires a subsidy) meaning that the only way the scheme is financially viable is to build 17 floors. The council apparently even threatened a compulsory purchase of the site if the owner did not co-operate with the skyscraper plans. The council has indicated in Pre-Application hearings that it is minded to approve the planning application for the 17 floor Skyscraper.

Chris Philip MP and many other local campaigners (including 7 local Residents Associations) believe that a 17 floor skyscraper is totally out of keeping with a peaceful town like Purley, and there is a danger that other developers will later try to use it as a precedent to build more skyscrapers in Purley. There are also only 37 parking spaces for 220 flats, which will add to the existing parking problems in Purley.

The site does need redeveloping but a much smaller scheme would be more suitable.

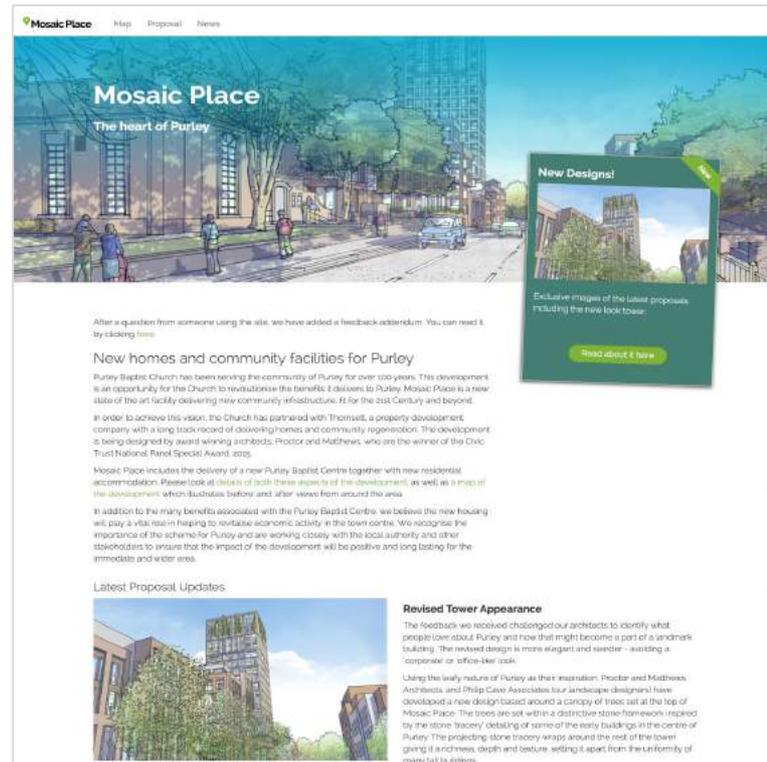
Successful planning application despite an opposing petition with 4,000 signatures

On December 15th 2016 Croydon Council's planning committee voted in favour of the development being approved by six votes to four.

Achieving a successful planning resolution

Quality of engagement was key

Croydon Council use a staged pre-planning application process, which encourages, amongst other things, evidence of strong community engagement. In using Commonplace and the evidence it produced, Thornsett made a strong case of listening to the community.



A screenshot of the Mosaic Place Commonplace site, showing the updated plans feature

Although the height of the tower is a concern, I believe more housing will benefit a large number of people and positively impact Purley economically.

Commonplace respondent



Learn more about Mosaic Place and the Purley Baptist Centre

Consultation site

<https://purleycentre.commonplace.is>

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Commonplace

<http://commonplace.is>