

Heathbrook Park Management Plan 2008 – 2013

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To be approved by Wandsworth Council Environment and Leisure Committee
in May 2008

Progress against action plan to be monitored annually via the Parks Service
AQPR.

Site Description:

Site Name: Heathbrook Park

Location: Heathbrook Park is bounded to the northwest by a derelict pub in Motley Street, and an area of industrial units; to the northeast by industrial units in Portslade Road; to the southeast by the Westbury Estate (a Lambeth Council housing estate) and to the southwest by St Rule Street

Map showing location and internal layout is shown on the following page

Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ29127632

Council Ward: Queenstown Ward. Elected members for this area are:
Cllr David Walden (Conservative)
Cllr Mike Todd (Conservative)
Cllr Ms Dee Church (Conservative)

Site Area: The area of the site totals 23,279 square metres (2.3 ha / 5.75 acres).

Tenure: The site is owned by Wandsworth Borough Council and managed by the Council's Parks Service (part of the Department of Leisure and Amenity Service).

Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service.

Designations: The council has adopted planning policies, which aim to protect and enhance the quality of life, and improve economic and social opportunities. They are the basis for promoting and controlling development in the borough. The current statutory development plan for the borough comprises the Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted August 2003.

Under the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – this site is designated as “Other Larger Protected Open Space”

The gardens are designated as Canine Faeces Removal Area” under the Councils Dog Bye Laws, with all play areas designated as “Dog Ban”.

The Multiple Dog walking Bye Laws also apply to this site. This limits the number of dogs that can be walked without obtaining a licence from the Council (Parks Police).

Heathbrook Park Management Plan 2008



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	Scale:	1:1600
	Date:	08/04/08



Wandsworth Open Space Study

In 2006, the Wandsworth Planning Office carried out an Open Space Study. As part of that Study, a quality assessment of all of the open spaces in the Borough was carried out. The range and condition of facilities within each open space were assessed using a scoring criterion derived from the Civic Trust Green Flag standard assessment which is also consistent with the Greater London Authority guidance.

The criteria included the assessment of the quality of natural and landscape features, conservation of buildings and structures, provision of interpretation facilities, standards of arboricultural management, whether the space was welcoming, its accessibility and safety, signage, levels of personal security, dog-fouling, cleanliness, standards of horticultural maintenance and the overall appropriateness and quality of provision of facilities for the site.

All aspects were scored between 0 and 10, with below 5 being poor, 5-6 Fair, 7 good, 8 very good, 9 excellent and 10 exceptional.

In this assessment, Heathbrook Park had an overall average quality score of 5.4, which puts it in the "fair" rating. Suggested improvements included lighting, seating, more entrances and signs, including dog fouling signs. Also mentioned were, the need for a slightly higher degree of maintenance, including drainage to the football pitch, and the opening of permanently bolted gates.

History:

This open space is one of several in Battersea that were newly created as public parks from areas of derelict land following World War II bomb damage. The others include Dorothy Road Open Space, Montefiore Street Gardens and Shillington Street Open Space.

Other parks, namely Battersea Park, Christchurch Gardens, and Latchmere Recreation Ground, had all been laid out many years earlier. The areas that were to become Elspeth Road Open Space, Falcon Park, Harroway Road Open Space, Fred Wells Gardens and York Gardens had also suffered in the Blitz. Their transformation into open spaces followed a different path of decision making and funding.

Battersea was a target during the war due to the abundant convergence of railway connections. Parts of Battersea Park and Clapham Common were laid out as allotments during the War. Many parks were used for 'prefabs' to house those who had lost their homes. This temporary housing lasted, in many cases, well into the 1960s.

At some point during the 1960s, the London County Council (LCC), and subsequently the Greater London Council (GLC), decided to transfer the

smaller parks in their portfolio to the respective boroughs. This transfer was accomplished finally on 1 April 1971.

Pending any other use while it was cleared derelict land, the area that now forms Heathbrook Park was leased to the Metropolitan Police for vehicle storage.

LCC and GLC planners had already zoned the areas around Chalmers Street and Stainforth Street for the creation of new public open space. It was not compulsory on the Council to observe this zoning designation but they believed it was appropriate to provide parks in these areas to serve the local population. During 1970s housing competed with parks in demand for land. However, at that time housing estates were generally public housing. Unlike today there was little private development, and little opportunity for 'planning gain'. (It was a reverse of the original thinking when Battersea Park was laid out in mid 19th century, to obtain spin-off funding through residential development of adjacent streets, which formed part of the original land purchase.) By 1970s, Battersea had a history of industry, railway, small terraced housing and a relatively poor population, none of which was capable of attracting private money to the area.

Heathbrook Park was laid out and opened in 1978. The one o'clock centre and youth club followed a few years later. Originally, the park was provided with a lake and café, and there was an aviary. Sadly, none of this survived the vandalism and destruction documented in the 1980's. It was an area that had been so long deprived of any facilities that it did not take 'ownership' when they were provided. Only a small playground survived from the original features and continues in use.

Site Features:

Heathbrook Park is a large, enclosed area of mown amenity grass, with a Trim Trail, playground, One o'clock Centre, Youth Club and fenced ball games area. There are mature trees, hedges and planted beds. A tarmac footpath leads around the park. Railings separate the park from a large housing estate on one side and from housing in St Rule Street on another with industrial areas on the two remaining sides.

There are four entrances, although two are currently bolted shut. One entrance, from a Lambeth housing estate in Westbury Street, provides access for service vehicles. The One o'clock Centre and the youth centre each have entrances in St Rule Street, separate from the park, although both also have rear access, directly into the park.

Because of continuing vandalism there are no seats. There are 5 litter bins, including 2 in the playground, and 3 dog waste bins.

There is no internal lighting and the park is locked at night.

The overall aspect of the park is of a worn, underused area, with extensive problems of vandalism and misuse.

Safe & Secure:

Most areas of the park are visible from both outside and inside the site, although shrubs and play buildings mask areas to some extent. Two entrances in St Rule Street, one bolted shut, are enclosed by fences, shrubs and trees and form grim entrances to the park. With two gates permanently bolted shut, ease of escape from any threatening situation is restricted.

The lack of separation between vehicles and pedestrians at the single service gate could be regarded as a potential threat to users. There is no control of vehicle access, although there are no reports of this being abused. The lack of control at this gate, and the gate in St Rule Street, leaves the park vulnerable to fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and illegal access by joy-riders.

The existing access for service vehicles involves vehicles driving through the congested narrow roads in the adjacent Westbury Estate.

Potholes and damage from tree roots are a potential trip hazard on several sections of footpaths. Heavy shade from trees in several areas adds to a sense of unease. The site suffers from continual vandalism.

Welcome:

Entrance signs are either missing or in very poor condition. Within the playground two signs, in good condition, are limited to detailing restrictions on the use of the playground. To prevent them being vandalised, these are fixed approximately 2.5 metres from the ground, rather negating their usefulness. Signs at each section of the "Trim Trail", detailing use and appropriate exercises, are in reasonable condition although slightly faded. All entrances are poorly defined and extremely unwelcoming. Railings are utilitarian and shabby, and paving is in poor condition at several points. All this detracts from a sense of welcome.

Areas of densely planted trees cause heavy shade, resulting in extensive areas of bare earth or poor shrub growth, and a very uninviting appearance.

Planted areas provide little colour or interest.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward across the bulk of this open space. Shrub and rose beds are weeded regularly and pruned as needed. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste.

Occasionally, drugs paraphernalia is found in some parks. A system has been devised to ensure safe removal and recording of each incident. This helps to ensure staff and park users are protected, and Metropolitan and Parks Police informed. Steps to minimise drug use in parks can then be undertaken using this information. Drugs paraphernalia has occasionally

been found at Heathbrook Park, and action has been taken to deal with this problem.

The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by the staff on site, weekly recorded inspections by Council staff and quarterly safety inspections made by technical staff. There is, in addition an annual inspection of all Council owned playgrounds carried out by an independent inspector. The ball games area is inspected by Parks Police.

Two full sized football goalposts, installed some years ago by the youth club, have not been maintained and may be unsafe. The club has not used the football pitch for some time, apart from the goal nearest the club building. The goalmouth at this point is badly eroded and floods after rain.

Grass at path edges have been damaged by service vehicles.

A section of footpath at the St Rule Street entrance is in very poor condition, with the surface breaking up. A section near the Portslade Road entrance has suffered damage from tree roots. Areas of concrete paving slabs, where seats have been removed, are uneven. Two litterbins in the play area are a different style to those in the park and are not in good condition. One litterbin and one dog bin are in poor condition.

External railings and gates are in reasonable condition but would benefit from painting

This large park contains a wide mixture of natives and non-native tree species. There is a Lime tree avenue running from east to west along the southern pathway, and a large group of semi-mature Poplar trees are growing along the northwest boundary. The other trees are planted sporadically across the site leaving an area in the middle free from trees. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. No significant pest or disease problems have been recorded. There is extensive vandalism to trees near the two entrances on the west boundary, indicating use to train potentially aggressive dogs.

Health and well being

Heathbrook Park has both a toddler and junior play area with limited equipment, a One o'clock Centre for children under five and a youth club. There is also a fenced ball games area attached to the youth club. This provides for play and exercise of children. Childrens Services have proposed the extension of the play area and the outside area to the One o'clock Centre. A "Trim Trail" provides opportunities for exercise of young people and adults, although this is not in good condition. There is informal use of the large grassed area, and dog walkers also use the park.

Community involvement:

Groups of residents in both Wandsworth and Lambeth have been contacted recently by Groundwork London, working on behalf of the Council. Local schools have also been contacted separately. Other than a good initial response from schools, little interest has been shown.

Service delivery:

Landscape maintenance is carried out by contractor and monitored by the Parks Operational team based at Wandsworth Common.

Structural maintenance of the ball games area, paths and external railings is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department.

Playground maintenance, including maintenance of the One o'clock Centre and youth club buildings and equipment, is the responsibility of the Childrens Services Department.

Staff skills & knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site include basic horticultural maintenance including the use of mowing and strimming machinery. A higher level of knowledge is required for maintenance of trees. Building and engineering skills are required to maintain structures and equipment such as paths, railings and the playground.

Sustainable approach:

The site is generally managed without the use of pesticides or watering.

Weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate.

Organic material, collected from all sites during maintenance operations, is composted and used, when suitable, for mulching and soil improvement of ornamental planted areas.

Finance:

Maintenance costs are met from Parks budgets covering all small parks.

There is no separate budget for this site within the Parks Service. Playground maintenance is carried out through the Childrens Services Department budgets.

Current Management:

All horticultural maintenance and litter clearance is as specified in the Parks Service Horticultural Maintenance contract, which includes all routine grass cutting, litter collection, weed clearance, shrub pruning and other routine horticultural tasks. All work that does not fall under this contract is carried out under additional works programmes by order with the main contractor or outside contractors depending on the scope of the work entailed.

Playground, One o'clock Centre and Youth Club:

The Childrens Services Department manage this facility and the associated fencing and gates.

Ball Games Area

This is adjacent to the Youth Club, used exclusively by them, but maintained by Parks Services. Routine inspections are carried out by Parks Police.

Trees:

There are several hundred trees on the site. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were structurally in good condition at their last inspection. This is apart from damage to the tree bark of a large number of trees on the site, which has subsequently been caused by dogs since the last inspection.

Ornamental planting:

Boundary hedges, shrub and rose beds are pruned and trimmed as required.

Seats:

Following extensive vandalism, there are no seats in the park or playground.

Bins:

There are three litterbins supplied by Earth Anchors Ltd bin, model HG66 finished in dark green (RAL 6005). One of these is in poor condition. There are two additional bins, of differing types and in poor condition, in the play area. In addition large wire basket style containers are installed during the summer only. There are three dog waste bins supplied by Earth Anchors Ltd, model HG66 in red finish (RAL3003). One of these is in poor condition.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are surfaced in black tarmac with brick edging. Sections need repair including removal of weeds at the brick edges. Where seats have been removed, concrete paving slabs are uneven.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

Iron railings, in need of painting, form three boundaries at Portslade Road, St Rule Street and at the Westbury Estate to the southeast. There are four gated entrances, two of which are bolted shut. There is no separate service gate, with all four gates just wide enough to allow vehicle access.

Services:

There are water, electric and telephone supplies to the play buildings in the park.

There are no watering points or other services in the park itself.

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Continue to trim and prune hedges and shrubs to maintain sightlines. Where appropriate, prune lower branches to provide views through large shrubs. Alternatively, replace large shrubs with low growing plants.

Review all entrances, and the areas immediately inside, with a view to improving open access to the main part of the park and preventing unauthorised vehicle access. Consider this in any future refurbishment of the playground and One o'clock Centre, especially in relation to the position of playground fencing. Review the shared pedestrian and vehicle access at the

gates by Westbury Estate. Consider opening the closed gate at Portslade Road to use this for service vehicles, thereby avoiding driving through the Westbury Estate. Consider whether additional gates for pedestrian access would be appropriate.

Liaise with Leisure and Amenities Premises section to ensure repairs to footpaths are carried out as soon as possible.

Survey areas of dense tree planting and prepare a programme of pruning or removal to alleviate the heavy shade caused.

Consider the likelihood of vandalism when carrying out any improvement works, adjusting designs and materials accordingly. Consider whether a substantial part of the site could be better used as allotments or for some other use.

Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming signs at each entrance, detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. These should contain positive information about features of the site. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome.

A review of all entrances should be undertaken to see what improvements could be made to their appearance. Railings should be painted and paths repaired.

Improve growth of grass and shrubs under trees by thinning branches of some of the trees to reduce shade. Complete removal of some trees may be appropriate, as many have been seriously damaged by dogs and have no long term future. Alternatively removal of shrubs and replanting elsewhere might be appropriate. Replacement planting should be selected to provide more colour and interest.

Clean & well maintained:

Dismantle goalposts and remove for repair. Check for corrosion, carry out any repairs needed and repaint. Liaise with Childrens Services to establish whether a football pitch is required or whether a single goal just outside the Youth Club would be more appropriate. Carry out repairs to the goalmouth and relieve the flooding at this point.

Consider measures to prevent vehicle damage to grass areas at path edges.

Programme repairs to paths and seat bases. It may be appropriate to remove the concrete slab seat bases. Install replacement seats, litterbins and dog bins as necessary. Programme repainting of railings and gates. Paint colour to be Juniper Green BS12B29 as at other recently renovated park railings. This will help establish a Parks style

Remove the vandalised trees and replant if necessary. Replacement trees should be located to improve the site lines through the park and to diversify the species mix and age. Protect selected trees with tree guards to ensure their long-term retention. Address vandalism problem through improved education and policing.

Health and well being:

Liaise with Childrens Services to extend the current playground and the outside area of the One o'clock Centre. Improve or replace the Trim Trail. Consider other features that would contribute. Consider cycle parking racks.

Community involvement:

Install new cabinet signs to include area for temporary notices and any community group contact information. Maintain contact with residents established by Groundwork.

Sustainable approach:

Maintain restriction on use of chemicals. Use composted materials for mulching planted areas. Use recycled plastic seats etc where possible.

Heathbrook Park DRAFT Park Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
HP1O1	To make Heathbrook Park a place where people feel safe and secure	Maintain and improve views through the park.	Continue routine pruning or replacement of shrubs and trees	Ongoing	Parks Service
HP1O2			Locate new play fencing to comply with this objective		
HP103		Improve pedestrian safety at entrances	Assess potential improvements at entrances		Parks Service
HP104			Review currently closed gates and current service access		Parks Service Parks Police
HP105			Assess potential for additional gates		Parks Service
HP106		Improve path surfaces	Inspect and programme works		Parks Service Premises Management
HP107		Reduce heavy shade from trees	Survey trees to assess thinning, reduction or removal. Order works as appropriate		Parks Service Tree section
HP108		Monitor vandalism and reduce where possible	Liaise with Parks Police and Metropolitan Police		Parks Services Parks and Met Police
			Use more robust plants and materials when replanting / renovating		
HP109			Consider alternative uses of part of the site		
HP2O1	To make Heathbrook Park welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances.	Install new signs at each of the entrances to the park.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics

Heathbrook Park DRAFT Park Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
HP202			Install name sign at all entrances including the vehicle entrance	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics
HP203		Improve visual appearance at entrances and within park	Carry out review of planting, paths and fences. Replace, remove or repair as necessary		Parks Service Premises Management
HP204			Paint railings & repair paths	See HP106	Parks Service
HP205		Improve plant growth under trees.	Survey trees and shrubs Order pruning or removal works as appropriate.	See HP 107	Parks Service Tree section
HP 206		Improve range of plants	Select new plants for colour and interest		
HP301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	To include Youth Club metal goals in Parks annual maintenance programme	Dismantle and repair goals. Store at Parks depot. Establish whether needed by Youth Club		Parks Service Childrens Services
HP302		Relieve compaction and flooding at goalmouth	Order decompaction, re-soiling and seeding		Parks Service
HP303		Prevent damage to grass edges by vehicles	Investigate measures to achieve this		Parks Service
HP304		Improve condition of footpaths and railings.	Agree programme of repairs and painting with Premises section		Parks Service Premises Management
HP305		Improve condition of litter and dog waste bins. Replace missing seating.	Install new seats and bins.		Parks Service
HP306		Improve appearance of railings	Contact Premises section to agree timetable for painting		Parks Service Premises Management

Heathbrook Park DRAFT Park Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
HP307		Improve tree stock	Remove, replace and protect as necessary	Ongoing	Parks Service Tree section Parks Police
HP401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.	Increase facilities in the park	Agree layout for extended playground and One o'clock Centre outside area		Parks Service Childrens Services Dept
HP402			Install new Trim Trail		Parks Service Childrens Services Dept
HP403			Assess what other features could be installed		Parks Service
HP404		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking at play facilities		Parks Service Childrens Services Dept
HP501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Heathbrook Park.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Continue contact with local residents associations and schools etc		Parks Service