

Garratt Green Management Plan 2007 – 2012

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in April 2007

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

Site Description

- Site Name: Garratt Green
- Location: Garratt Green is bounded to the northeast and southeast by Aboyne Road; to the northwest by Burntwood Lane, and to the southwest by residential housing in Franche Court Road and Barnfield Close.
- Map showing location is available on request
Map showing the internal layout of Garratt Green is available on request.
- Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south corner of the site is TQ 265 722
- Council Ward: Earlsfield Ward. Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Mrs Angela Graham (Conservative)
Cllr Mr Marc Hope (Conservative)
Cllr Mr Charles McNaught-Davis (Conservative)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 3 hectares.
- Tenure: Most of 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). There is an area that is leased by WBC from a neighbouring landowner.
- Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service, with the exception of the playground, which is managed and maintained by Play Services. Lighting along a footpath is maintained by the Technical Services Department.
- 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. Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – This site is designated as "Other Larger Protected Open Space Sites".
- History: A brief history of the site will follow.

Site Features

Garratt Green consists of mown amenity grass, scattered trees, children's play equipment, and several planted areas including some planted for biodiversity value. The large open grassed area is marked out in winter with rugby pitches. The site is surrounded on three sides by metal railings and on the fourth by various hedges and fences separating it from residential properties. The green is well lit by surrounding street lights and also by lighting along the path that crosses the site from Burntwood lane to Barnfield Close.

Along the west side of the path, there is an unused prefabricated building, previously used as a scout hut. There is an area next to this planted with trees and shrubs on mounded earth, which is set back and divided from the rest of the park by a metal fence with gaps allowing access. This small open area is leased from an adjacent landowner.

Safe and secure:

The footpath leading onto the neighbouring estate is not well lit. The lamp column in this area is not directly over the path; rather it is over the ornamental planting area.

Due to the shrub bed on the left as you enter from the south, views of the park or indeed the route of the path are obscured. This does not encourage you to enter the park beyond the play areas.

The gates into the play area do not appear to be self-closing. This may allow dogs to inadvertently get into play areas and small children to easily run out of them.

The southern end of one of the biodiversity areas abuts the children's playground area and obscures views into it.

In several places old metal structures remain in the ground serving no purpose. This includes a structure by a lamp column that may have historical interest, and the stump of an old bin that requires removal.

Along the main path the lamp columns are close to the tree canopy and the leaf cover may mean that less than ideal light levels reach the path itself at times.

We do not know what the views are about security from local residents whose gardens back onto the property but they may feel that they are left vulnerable by the style of fencing used here.

The old scout hut building is regularly disfigured by graffiti. It also has a recessed doorway set back approx 1m making the true doorway completely invisible to pedestrians approaching from either direction. This recess is large enough to hide two adults. It is also used as a toilet.

The area to the west of the old scout hut, which is retained within a fence, feels insecure, as the route through and the other entrance gap are not obviously visible. In addition, the trees in this area exclude both natural and lamp light when they are in leaf. This coupled with seating in this area, encourages groups of youths to gather and in the past Parks Police have dealt with drug use, graffiti and under age drinking at this location.

On occasion, the sports pitch area has suffered from illegal parking on the grass during rugby matches.

Welcome:

There are no signs at any of the entrances to the park. There is an old (date unspecified) "brighter borough" enhancement sign within one of the biodiversity planted areas, which is due for removal. There is a cabinet style notice board which details byelaws. Despite having notices at the entrance to the play area detailing its safe and appropriate use, there are no notices welcoming you in to play.

At the main (southern) entrance is a series of lockable, removable bollards, which, while not very welcoming, provide controlled access for service vehicles. Unless left unlocked these prevent unauthorised vehicles entering the park. A fence encloses the leased area of the park with access through gaps in these fences, where gates previously hung. This has the effect of isolating this area from the main body of the park and does not feel very welcoming.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward across the bulk of this open space. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste. The trees are inspected on a regular rotation to identify any works which may be required to maintain a healthy tree stock. Areas planted for biodiversity are inspected annually and relevant works carried out. The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by the Wandsworth Parks Police, 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 area overall looks tidy and cared for. There are, however, a few areas where improvements would aid the appearance. To the left of the entrance the mixed shrub and herbaceous bed is overgrown. This bed is also surrounded by a low railing, which seems to serve no purpose and is falling apart in places. The hedge at the back of this bed demarcates the boundary of the park and responsibility for maintenance needs to be established. This area also screens view of the rest of the Green as you enter from the south.

The play area is surrounded by an insecure fence, which wobbles and also traps litter at its base.

The dog waste bin close to the cabinet sign has been damaged and requires repair or replacement. Overall the appearance of the area may be improved by the installation of more bins, as there are “hot spots” of litter.

In the area adjacent to the old scout hut, there are several logs of dead wood lying around. These would be of more benefit to biodiversity and would look better if they were piled together and allowed to rot down. Alternatively they should be removed from the site.

Health and well-being:

Garratt Green has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children. There is formal sports use of the large grassed area and in addition local teenagers play informal ball games.

Community involvement:

There is no known organised community involvement currently.

Service delivery:

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

Structural maintenance of buildings and paths is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department.

Playground maintenance is the responsibility of the Play Services section of Leisure and Amenities department.

Staff skills and knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site currently include basic horticultural maintenance such as knowledge of mowing & strimming machinery and shrub & herbaceous planting maintenance. There is also a need for arboricultural skills to inspect the trees on site. Staff with knowledge of the maintenance of play equipment are also required.

Sustainable approach:

Sustainability issues here will depend upon type of machinery used to maintain the area and what happens to any arisings (grass cuttings and branches from any tree work) once they are removed from the site.

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 Play Services budgets

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 GLA 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, Garratt Green had an overall quality average score of 7.8, which puts it just under the 'very good' rating. Suggested improvements included the provision of more seating in the open areas, the provision of a walking route around the edge of the Park, and improved planting, seating and landscaping in the garden area.

Current Management

Horticultural 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 e.g. the maintenance of park furniture, is carried out under additional works programmes by order with the main contractor or outside contractors depending on the scope of the work entailed.

Play equipment:

The Councils Playgrounds Officer manages the facility and the associated fencing and gates.

Gates:

There are no gates to the green, apart from playground gates already mentioned.

Future Management

Safe and secure:

A risk assessment should be carried out on the safety of the footpath that leads onto the neighbouring estate. This pathway is narrow and currently unlit.

The gates into the play area do not appear to be self-closing. This may allow dogs to inadvertently get into play areas and small children to easily run out of them. A self-closing mechanism should be installed on each external gate. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of creating a new gateway directly into the toddlers play area.

In several places old metal structures remain in the ground serving no obvious purpose. This includes a structure by lamp column that may have historical interest. Research should be carried out and if appropriate a small information notice erected nearby. There is also the stump of an old bin that requires removal.

Consideration should be given to modifying the boundary of the biodiversity area where it joins the children's playground to ensure that views in and out are not obscured.

Along the main path the lamp columns are close to the tree canopy and the leaf cover may mean that less than ideal light levels reach the path itself. This should be borne in mind when deciding upon appropriate tree works following the next inspection.

The views of residents whose properties back onto the Green should be sought when considering alterations to the area to the south west of the Green. This is to ensure that they do not feel concerned about security.

A steel shutter or gate should be affixed to the outer wall of the old scout hut, to eliminate the dangers posed by the recessed doorway, by preventing its use as by persons with a criminal intent or indeed its use as a toilet.

A review of the options for enhancement of the area on the southwest side next to the old scout hut needs to be undertaken. Due to the partial fencing and the shading, this area is greatly underused. The seating is used by groups of youths, often engaged in antisocial activities, further dissuade other users from entering the area. The review should look at access arrangements, whether there is a need for the fencing, vegetation management (removal or replacement), and issues of seating and bins.

Welcome:

Signs should be placed at each entrance detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. The brighter borough sign should be removed. Notices could be placed at the main entrance to the play areas, welcoming people in.

A review of the southern entrance should be undertaken to see if a better way of allowing access while preventing unwanted vehicles could be identified.

Clean and well maintained:

The area overall looks tidy and cared for, however there are a few areas where improvements would aid the appearance and ease ongoing maintenance. To the left of the entrance the mixed shrub and herbaceous bed is becoming overgrown. This bed is also surrounded by a low railing, which seems to serve no purpose and is falling apart in places. The hedge at the back of this bed demarcates the boundary of the park and responsibility for maintenance needs to be established. This whole area should be replanted with a more welcoming, easily maintained mix of planting. Removal of the low railing should be considered, and responsibility established for maintenance of the boundary hedge.

The play area is surrounded by an insecure fence that wobbles. Also despite weeds having been treated around this boundary the dead growth has been left which is unsightly and traps litter. The fencing should be repaired or replaced – if the latter occurs the style of fencing should be carefully considered to ensure that the base of it does not trap litter.

The dog waste bin close to the cabinet sign has been damaged and requires repair or replacement. Overall the appearance of the area may be improved by the installation of additional bins, as there are “hot spots” of litter.

In the area beside the old scout hut, there are several logs of dead wood lying around. These would be of more benefit to biodiversity and would look better if they were piled together and allowed to rot down. Alternatively they should be removed from this area and could be placed into the biodiversity areas or taken completely away from the site.

Health and well being:

Garratt Green has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children. Local teenagers play informal games such as football. The main grass area is used for rugby during the winter sports season - and this enables strong links between this park and the local Battersea Ironsides sports club. This park would be suitable for weekday outdoor activities such as tai chi or children’s music groups. Should providers come forward, this park should be recommended to them.

Arising from the Open Spaces Strategy there is a demand for additional cycle parking in areas such as Garratt Green to enable those who visit by bike to leave it securely whilst on site.

Staff skills and knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site currently include basic horticultural maintenance such as knowledge of mowing & strimming machinery and shrub maintenance. There is also a need for arboricultural skills to inspect the trees on site. Specialist knowledge of ecological management is required for 2

large areas of planting on the northeast side. Staff with knowledge of the maintenance of play equipment are also required.

Community involvement:

A picnic bench is situated within the play area to encourage family use. There is involvement from Battersea Ironsides in use of the sports pitches.

Sustainable approach:

There are a couple of historical features within this site if one includes the boot scraper by lamp column 4. In addition to this there is an old LCC boundary marker situated to the southwest of the main path, half way along. To ensure the ongoing presence of these features, information should be provided to visitors about their history and relevance.

There is biodiversity value in the 2 specifically created small woodland areas, which include a mixture of native small trees and shrubs. These are managed on an irregular coppice & thinning cycle to maintain light to the floor.

Service delivery:

It is standard / national practice to enable independent entry to toddler and junior play areas as well as to include a gate between the two. This play area does not comply with this and a review of the overall fencing of this play space and the location of gated entrances is required.

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / Task	Target Date	Who
GGA101	To make Garratt Green a park in which people feel safe and secure	To identify any risks to people accessing the Green from neighbouring estate	Carry out risk assessment on footpath to estate.		Parks service Parks Police
			Seek to address any risks identified in GGA101		Parks Service
GGA102		To enable the playground areas to be accessed in an appropriate way	Fix self closer to play area gates.		Playground Officer
GGA103			Investigate feasibility of new gate directly into toddler's play area.		Playground Officer
GGA104			Following feasibility – install new gate if appropriate.		Playground Officer
GGA105		To highlight possible tripping hazards.	Research history of metal structures		Parks Service

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / Task	Target Date	Who
			If appropriate install information notice to bring them to public attention		Parks Service
			If artefacts are of no historical interest, remove them.		Parks Service
GGA106		To improve visibility along main pathway.	Prune tree canopy back from around lamp columns along main path		Arboriculture service
GGA107			Replace bulbs in lamp columns if appropriate		Technical Services Dept
GGA108		To enable visibility into and out of the playground	Modify planting at the boundary of the biodiversity area		Parks service
GGA109		To reduce incidents of mis-use.	Review area to the south-west and devise enhancement plan		Parks Service
GGA110		To eliminate dangers around the old scout hut	Investigate potential uses		Parks Service Borough Valuer
GGA201	To make Garratt Green welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide good clear signage to the Green.	Install welcome sign at each entrance		Parks service Graphics

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / Task	Target Date	Who
GGA202			Review southern entrance to find a more welcoming solution whilst preventing general vehicle access.		Parks service
GGA203			Identify funding sources to implement new solution		Parks service
			Implement new solution		Parks service
GGA301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park		Review planting within bed at south entrance, inc establishing responsibility for boundary.		Parks service
			Repair or remove the low railing boundary to this border		Parks service
GGA302			Repair or replace fencing to play areas.		Premises management services

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / Task	Target Date	Who
GGA303			Inspect all existing bins, repair or replace where necessary. Install additional bins in litter hot spots.		Parks service
GGA304			Organise dead wood within area to the south-west		Parks service
GGA401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well being of all who use it.		Propose Garratt Green as a location to external providers of appropriate activities e.g. tai chi.	As opportunities arise	Parks service
GGA402		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
GGA501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Garratt Park.	Seek to build on links created during the consultation process to ensure an ongoing dialogue and with site users and the local community.			
		Consult with neighbours when planning changes to area to the south west – see also GGA 108			