

Fountain Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007 – 2012

Index
Timetable
Site description
Wandsworth Open Space Study
Current management
Future management
Action plan

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in April 2007

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

Site Description:

Site Name: Fountain Road Recreation Ground

It is also known by the synonym Fountain Road Rec

Location: Fountain Road Rec is bounded to the north-east by Alston Road; to the south-east by Fountain Road; to the south-west by the rear of Blackshaw Road and to the north-west by Bertal Road.

Map showing location is available on request
Map showing the internal layout is available on request.

Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ 266 714

Council Ward: Tooting Ward. Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Dr Nick Bowes (Labour)
Cllr Alex Jacob (Conservative)
Cllr Mrs Susan John-Richards (Conservative)

Site Area: The area of the site totals 0.6Ha (1.5 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, with the exception of the playground, which is managed and maintained by Play Services.

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:

The recreation ground is adjacent to Anderson House, a block of Council flats, and was laid out as part of this development in 1932 as part of the Council's slum clearance programme in Tooting. Unlike other sites, this was not originally intended and was never used as 'detached gardens' for individual flats.

Rev JHA Anderson, was rector of Tooting and independent member of the Council and an LCC councillor. He was Mayor of Wandsworth in 1904-05.

The site had earlier served as a clay quarry for brickworks. Nearby there is a new road, Kiln Mews, and there were larger brickworks on the Merton side of the railway line. In 1898 the quarry was replaced by the Council's 'dust destructor', a scheme for disposing of all the Borough's rubbish by incineration. This occupied the site until its demolition on 30 October 1930. The chimney was 153ft high, 32 years old, and weighed 800 tons. In the 1890s, "The committee entrusted by our Board of Works with its buildings went about England to see how other municipalities were meeting the difficulties we were setting out to remedy . . . As the outcome of our schemes, which, though always on the small size owing to our economical habit, gave great satisfaction as an official reducer of the town's garbage." Extract from a letter to "SN" from Sir Walter Essex, engineer, commenting after the demolition. It had ceased being used for rubbish incineration some years earlier.

Fountain Road playground "was constructed on the site of a disused clinker dump. The surface was levelled, covered with 6" layer of ashes, treated with Terolas and sealed with Colas, blinded with granite dust."

Work to build the recreation ground was part of the scheme for the relief of unemployment. A portion was laid down to grass and the remainder paved and equipped with swings and see-saws. In December 1929, the Highways Committee handed over the dust destructor site to the Parks and Open Spaces Committee in order to fit in with the scheme and to allow the levelling and laying clinker to settle, before the paving began. This area coincides with the hard-surface ball-games area.

* * *

Corporal Foster, Wandsworth Regiment's winner of the Victoria Cross in 1917, lived in Fountain Road, Tooting. He was a dustman and returned after the First World War to become a dust inspector for the Council. It seems somehow sadly appropriate that he lived on the road between the old Tooting slop shoot and the Council's dust destructor.

Site features:

The site comprises of an open grass area, a small play area and a hard surfaced ball games area with various markings and basketball hoops and football goal posts. Mature trees and shrubs are planted around the outer boundaries. The site is partially overlooked on three sides by residential housing and totally overlooked on the fourth side.

Safe and secure:

There is secure boundary fencing to all sides with two entrances at opposite ends of the site; double traffic gates at the end of a driveway from Alston road and a single pedestrian gate to the rear of Anderson House flats on Fountain Road.

The park does not benefit from internal lighting but enjoys residual lighting from surrounding housing. There is also a light on the rear of Anderson House, which lights the pedestrian gate and the semi circular centre immediately outside it.

Some of the shrub beds are well established, and in areas large gaps exist between the plants and the rear fences of the neighbouring properties. This could be considered insecure as it would allow people to hide from view.

Welcome:

The pedestrian entrance is demarcated by a gate, which is in good condition. However, the traffic gate is situated down an alleyway, which is not surfaced, and which only has a very small finger post opposite, showing the way to the park.

There is a cabinet style notice board at the pedestrian entrance, however the key piece of information shows bye-laws; there is no general welcome sign. At the other entrance there is no sign at all.

Clean and well maintained:

In general this park is well maintained, and free from litter.

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward across the park. 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. 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 shrub beds around the edges are very mature and in places require replacement planting to fill in gaps. The plants are regularly maintained, however some of them have grown to heights which totally obscure the feature behind, e.g. children's play area.

Health and well being:

The hard surfaced area in the centre is used by local teenagers for informal ball games such as basketball and football. There is a play area, which provides for play and exercise of children. The Recreation Ground provides an outdoor space for those people in the neighbouring housing estate who do not have any open space associated with their properties.

Community involvement:

There is no known community involvement currently. The play areas are well used by local families. There is the opportunity for picnicking on the amenity grass areas.

Service delivery:

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

Structural maintenance of fencing 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 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:

The site is generally managed without the use of pesticides or watering. The weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate on the hard surfaces.

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, Fountain Rec had an overall quality average score of 7.7, which puts it just under the 'very good' rating. Suggested improvements included cosmetic improvement to the play 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 two gates giving access to the Park. These are currently locked and unlocked daily by Parks Police.

Future Management:

Safe and secure:

The entrance from Alston Road is via a driveway which is bounded by high walls. As this opens into the park itself there is a blind right hand return into the corner of the park. This corner should be filled completely with dense, spiky shrubs to prevent people hiding from view of users entering or leaving the park at this point.

The area devoted to shrub beds around all perimeters should be reviewed. If there is a demand for additional facilities in this open space, then consideration should be given to using the space the shrub borders currently occupy. This would remove the possibility in some areas of the space between the shrubs and the back gardens being vulnerable to misuse.

Around the perimeter of the children's play area, shrubs have grown to a height where parts of the area are partially obscured by them. These shrubs should be reduced in height to allow views in and out.

A risk assessment should be done on the effects of the dead end caused by locked gates at the pedestrian entrance. If this is found to be a real risk, consideration should be given to resolving this by moving the gate to the southern side of the tunnel under Anderson House.

Welcome:

Signage both to, and at, this site needs improvement. The finger post which is in place is functional but gives no indication that this is a publicly accessible open space. Consideration should be given to erecting a sign (such as "Fountain Road Recreation Ground") over the top of the vehicle entrance to make it welcoming and to "give permission" to people to access the park in this way. It would also be beneficial to surface the access road or to make good an area to serve as a path for pedestrians.

A section of the park boundary by the traffic entrance is formed by a poorly finished garden wall. This could be visually improved by cladding, with the permission of the owner.

Signs are also needed to encourage people in from Fountain Road, through the entrance to the estate, to find the park. A sign detailing what is available inside would be beneficial at each entrance to further encourage people to use the space.

Clean and well maintained:

If the shrub borders are not being misused, a phased programme of replanting is required to fill in gaps and replace over mature plants. Careful thought will be required to identify species of year-round interest, which will thrive in the shady conditions which prevail at the edges of this site.

Despite the numerous benches within the centre of the Rec, some seating areas may be welcomed closer to the planted areas or for picnicking in the grassed areas.

Health and well being:

The hard surfaced area provides an important opportunity for exercise, especially for young people. Use of this facility should be further researched to identify patterns of usage. If this facility is not being used to its full potential, wider use should be encouraged through joint working with the council's sports services and possibly via local youth groups.

Community involvement:

There is capacity for greatly increased community involvement at this site. Better links may be established amongst neighbours of the park. There are also opportunities to link to local families through the play facilities at this site. Local youth groups could be encouraged to make greater use of the hard surfaced area.

Staff skills and knowledge:

Some knowledge of planting design and selection would be beneficial if the shrub borders are to be replanted. Youth and sports work skills may be necessary if the hard surfaced area is to be better used.

Fountain Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN;

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FR101	To make Fountain Road Rec a place where people feel safe and secure	Address the issue of the possible dead-end from Anderson House.	Carry out risk assessment of current pedestrian entrance		Parks service Parks Police
FR102			If found to be necessary, alter fence line		Premises management service Housing dept
FR103		Remove the potential for hiding in the right hand / north east corner of the park	Plant dense shrubs in the area to the right of the driveway		Parks service
FR104		Allow visibility into and out of the children's play area.	Reduce height of shrubs around children's play area		Parks service
FR201	To make Fountain Road Rec welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide good clear signage to the park	Review existing finger post to make sure it reaches current best practice standards for waymarking.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks service Graphics Highways

Fountain Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
			If it does not reach these standards, replace it with one that does.		Parks service Graphics Highways
FR202			Install finger post from Fountain Road showing route to park through Anderson estate.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks service Graphics Housing dept
FR203		To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances.	Install name sign across vehicle entrance	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks service Graphics
FR204			Replace or provide new signs at each of the entrances to the park.	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks service Graphics

Fountain Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FR205		Ensure ease of access through good surfaces.	Re-surface pedestrian access along joint entrance route.		Parks service Premises management services
FR206		Improve visually at Alston Road gate	Discuss possible cladding with resident in adjacent property		Parks service Premises Management services
FR301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	To maintain defined and well kept planting areas	Maintain a phased programme of replanting shrub borders.		Parks service
FR302		Provide additional seating.	Audit use of existing benches and demand for new		Parks service
			Identify funding sources to implement new seating if required		Parks service
FR401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.	Understand and make best use of the ball court area	Identify usage patterns of hard surfaced area.		Parks service Sports development service
FR402			Subject to this research, encourage more use of this area for informal ball sports.		Parks service Sports development service

Fountain Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
FR403		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
FR501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Fountain Road Rec.	To build on links created during consultation to ensure an ongoing dialogue with park users & the local community.		Ongoing	Parks service