



HILLSIDE GARDENS PARK

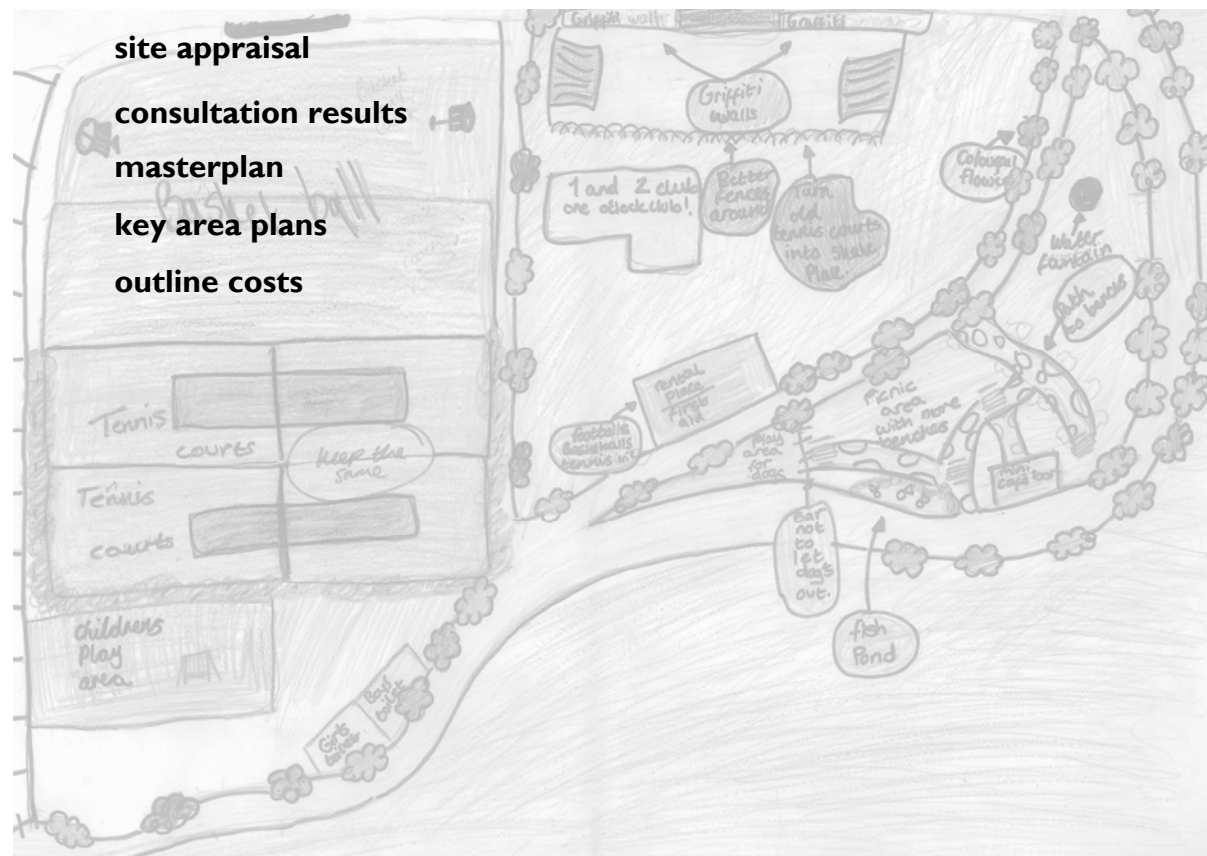
Masterplan

Report

contents

The following report is prepared by Cracknell Ferns Associates for and in conjunction with The Friend's of Hillside Gardens Park (The Friend's) and the London Borough of Lambeth. The report follows consultation by Community Innovations in 2005/06 and works completed on site 2005.

This report evaluates and provides documentation relevant to the funding and implementation of future works to the Hillside Gardens Park.




Lambeth


FRIENDS OF HILLSIDE GARDENS PARK
& PALACE ROAD NATURE GARDEN

introduction

Hillside Gardens Park is a unique open space

The brief for this Master Plan is for the park to meet the Green Flag Award criteria through identifying key future projects to aid in achieving the following:

- A Welcoming Place
- Health, Safety and Security
- Cleanliness and Good Maintenance
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Management

site appraisal

Hillside Gardens Park current pictures

Brief description of the park (1-2 Paragraphs on each)

History [FoHGP]

Size and location – including map

The park is bordered by residential houses on three sides and has the Thanet as its southern boarder.

The topography of the park generally slopes from west to the east. The ten foot slope in the southern section of the park and the dog free area in the northern section of the park to help create flat areas for the two tennis courts.

Approximate total park area is approximately 15,427m²

Approximate 60% - 40% sort –hard landscape

The 2 main roads running parallel to Hillside Gardens are Hillside Road which runs to the west and Kingsmead Road which provides pedestrian only access into the park from the east.

Key Facts:

- Total crime in the borough fell by 7.4 per cent this year official figures showing a decrease in burglaries, robberies, criminal damage, assault and sex offences.
- Healthy Lifestyles is a partnership between the London Borough of Lambeth and the Lambeth Primary Care Trust. The Healthy Lifestyle team aims to improve the activity levels of the local population with the overall aim of improving health and to have a positive impact on many medical conditions.



Distribution of Major Parks

Brockwell Park 0.9miles East

Tooting Bec Common 1.1miles South West

Clapham Common 1.9miles North West

Proximity to Local and District Centres

Access, transport and links

Tulse Hill rail station 0.5miles East

Streatham Hill Station 0.6miles South West

consultation results

Consultation Feedback to the Friends of Hillside Gardens Park

This document reports on the consultation strand of the Hillside Gardens Park Master Plan work, carried out on behalf of and in collaboration with the Friends of Hillside Gardens Park. It includes responses collected during the Fun Day held in the Park on 2005 (please see 5.3) but largely focuses on work carried out between January and April 2006. With regard to both local groups and individuals care was taken to ensure that both current Park users and non-users views were sought but as might be expected the majority of those responded are already Park users.

Notes:

1. In accordance with the brief, and in cooperation with Cracknell Fern Associates this document is set out in such a way as to allow it to be edited and slotted into the final Master Plan document. Most headings correspond with those of the Masterplan headings agreed at the December 2005 steering sub group.

2. In view of note 1 and to save copious reading material the following documents, (which form the basis of the material below) are also provided for reference:

- i) Consultation contact and response log (including meeting notes)
- ii) Full notes on the work produced by Streatham Wells Primary School
- iii) Consultation poster used in the Park, Dr Roberts Surgery on Palace Road, local schools and the convenience shops and launderette on Amesbury Avenue.
- iv) Many of those who identified general problems like graffiti or loitering youths were usually asked to say when they had last noticed the problem. In most cases it became clear that the problem had improved or that they had not been to the park for sometime and were not sure if the problem persisted. This is not pointed out in any spirit of criticism, as you may be aware this is a common scenario. Local people understandably have long memories for unpleasant things in their local area which may override better recent examples. This suggests that events like the Funday are essential in allowing residents who have 'written the park off' to 'update' themselves.

5.1 Introduction

Parks are public space and will better used and fit the needs of their users if, as far as is possible, local people design the environment and the services. The Friends of Hillside Gardens Park are keen to ensure that the Park feels like a place that all members of the local community want to use for a range of sports and leisure pursuits and quiet recreation. Therefore the views and aspirations of as many local people and organisations as possible were sought in order to inform the direction of this Master Plan. In addition, to ensure that piecemeal development gives way to more co-ordinated refurbishment, the views and future plans of Lambeth Council Departments whose activities touch on the Park were sought.

A variety of modes of outreach were employed in the hope of ensuring that as many people as possible were aware that their views and ideas would be welcomed. These included posters, email, telephone, one-to-one surveying, informal focus groups and random park visits. A key intention was to ensure that the work carried out in 2006 formed the more qualitative partner to the quantitative surveying completed at the 2005 Funday.

5.2 Face to face meetings

Hillside Gardens One O'clock Club

The One O'clock club is not only an important Park user group but is a key reason for local people to seek the Park out. One mother on her way to the One O'clock club for the first time said, "I've lived just round the corner for four years and had no idea this was here... it's lovely".

Two meetings took place between the Friends of Hillside Gardens and staff and a committee member of the One O'clock Club and ideas were exchanged principally around the issue of building refurbishment. At present the Club is poorly accommodated in cramped conditions. If funds can be raised for a new building one of the aspirations for the Park is to refurbish an existing building, it is envisaged that this will not exceed existing Park building 'footprints' and will be accessible when the Park is closed. The One O'clock Club are enthusiastic about the idea of a multipurpose space that can be used by other groups at other times. While small, the current site has the benefit of excellent sunlight and a good view of the rest of the Park allowing parents with other older children to watch them play. However the possibility of new accommodation visible and accessible from the road was felt to be a huge advantage for current and future children's services. In addition one mother commented that outside space at the current site is mostly concrete and therefore not ideal for young children, she also felt that a site with some shelter from the sun would be an advantage.

Lambeth Council Parks Department

Parks Department Officers and members of the Friends of Hillside Gardens Park met together to establish existing commitments and plans relating to Hillside Gardens. Lambeth Council are committed to maintain the current boundaries of the Park and the present cleaning contract will continue in its current form until 2008. The need for ongoing links with other Council departments with jurisdiction over the Park was identified in order to gain consensus regarding future refurbishment plans. Initial contact has been made in the hope of establishing ongoing dialogue.

5.3 User survey analysis

In October 2005 82 local people took the time to complete a questionnaire on their use, views and hopes for Hillside Gardens Park. All were users of the Park though their frequency varied widely from less than four times a month to over twenty. Children's play, sport and making use of the nearest green space were respondents' most common reasons to use the Park. Other common reasons included meeting friends and simply as a space to relax. The Funday attendees identified the lack of toilets, ugly buildings and the absence of a café as key reasons why they don't visit the Park more frequently. The questionnaire invited Park users to identify Park features that were most important to them. A Park keeper and a youth club scored most highly but the narrow range between the lowest and highest scoring features suggest that individuals found many to have roughly equal importance. With regard to improving the Park, respondents are most keen to see removal or refurbishment of derelict buildings including the provision of toilets, a cafe and a new One O'clock club facility. Of those questioned the overwhelming majority felt that access to the Park is not difficult.

Community Innovation's PowerPoint report providing tabulated representations of this data is available for use as an appendix.

5.5 Targeted surveys – schools

The children from Streatham Wells Primary School conducted a survey among 8 staff and 216 pupils^[1]. The teachers surveyed rarely use the Park during time school time and cite the absence of Park personnel (especially a first aider), the need for a covered area and toilet facilities as key reasons for this. Streatham Wells children have contributed wealth of views and ideas too numerous to list here.

However the key issues that were raised by many were:

- a working water fountain

- toilets

- 98% of the children would like a café

- a “rent shop” was a popular suggestion where Park visitors would be able to hire footballs, basket balls and tennis rackets.

- ‘The kids playground is great and looks like fun’

- higher slides for older children

- skate park and/or ramps for bikes

- less tennis courts so that the space might be used for other activities

- more flowers

- ‘One other thing our class agreed on is the bars at the entrance don't look very inviting’

In addition many of the children drew pictures showing what they feel the Park is like and what they would like to see.

Pictures sent to Cracknell Fern for inclusion.

Students from both Dunraven Lower and Upper Schools agreed to give up some of their lunchtime to discuss their experience of the Park and ideas about its development.

The Lower school students who participated largely spent time in the Park meeting with friends after school, participating in organised sports activities or accompanying younger members of their family to the play area. The girls were positive about the new children's playground area even though it doesn't suit their needs, "it's a bit too babyish". Separate areas for over 10s and under 10s were suggested and the need for 'much more adventurous things' was identified. A sandpit was suggested for little children.

Dog's mess was felt to be a major problem and some of the male students were reluctant to use the Park having found drug users there in the past. However the girls appeared to feel unequivocal about the fact that they feel safe in Hillside Gardens. General support was expressed for the refurbishment of the toilets and a park-keeper-type presence in the Park: "if there was, like the police or something walking down there checking things out then I'd go".

Students from Dunraven Upper School who gave their views also identified dog's mess as a problem. They largely thought the Park is "fine as it is" but this may be connected to their general pessimism that improvements will be vandalised. The students appeared to feel generally safe in the Park. All of the Dunraven students said they were unlikely to use a café but would rather save money and return home to get a drink. One Lower School student thought that free ice cream would be a popular idea!

It is notable that the pupils from both schools suggested (unprompted) activities and changes to the Park that would benefit children from other age groups than their own. In addition, while there were some ambitious suggestions such as a swimming pool and a Pizza Hut, many of the students appeared very thoughtful about what was possible: 'We don't know what your budget is but we're hoping that you can do at least some of our changes'.

5.6 Outreach consultation

The Friends of Hillside Gardens Park are keen for all those with an interest in the Park to contribute their aspirations for the kind of place they would like their local green space to be. Many others not included in the above categories were kind enough to give their time to participate in this consultation. It is not possible to list all of the responses in their entirety but we have tried to include as many of the key issues, thoughts and ideas as possible. Most of the contributions came from those already using the Park but some questioned did not know it existed or were unclear exactly where it is.

Aside from local schools other organisations see the Park as key to their activities. The church of St Simon's and St Jude were unequivocal in their support of the Park and keen to stress its importance both to the Church as a whole and to individual members of the congregation.

Cllr Fewtrell fed back the views she has received from her constituents, identifying general support for the continuation of the One O'clock Club and a widespread call for better signage. Graffiti is also a key concern but one where recent progress is evident. Those who had contacted Cllr Fewtrell rarely said that they feel unsafe in the Park. However, among other respondents it was clear that some young male teenagers feel intimidated by older young people in the Park and this was also a key concern for elderly Park visitors. Another uniting issue for all ages was support for refurbishment of the toilets, it is clear that this is one of the key reasons that those using the Park shorten their visit. Almost all those who took part in the consultation raised the need for toilet facilities. Another area of strong consensus is support for a Park keeper or official presence. While many felt that this would prove too expensive they were concerned that local Wardens do not have the "clout" to deal with problems. One father suggested that closed circuit television be established and monitored from the Wardens Office. Another mother of young children, who while very keen on the Park, only went if meeting friends or accompanied by her partner. She suggested having fixed times when a warden or keeper is on duty, not necessarily for long periods just regularly.

Quite a few respondents referred to dogs in the Park. Some feel uneasy about dogs that are not on leads and many mention dog mess as an ongoing problem. One dog walker described in detail her concern that instead of a 'dog free' penned off area, the majority of the Park should be dog free with the penned area available for dogs to run free in. This respondent was concerned that her large dogs, though gentle, appear intimidating and she stressed that the Park should be for everybody to relax in. However it is clear that dogs also contribute positively to the Park's atmosphere more than one person commented on the importance of dog-walkers as "essential to the life of the Park" as they use it regularly and make others feel there are "people around".

The notion of establishing a café has met with a mixed response. Many feel that it would prove unsustainable in a small park where most of the users can pop home quickly for drinks and snacks. However older residents felt that it would be a reason to visit the Park. In addition, quite a few mothers with young children were very keen on a café selling tea, cakes and sandwiches etc. This group appeared to use the Park very regularly in the summer and were evidently very pleased with the new children's area.

Many were very positive about the Park using phrases such as “much improved” to describe it. Some of these responses were evident not just from the things people said: one girl visiting the Park on her way home from school with her mother was clearly delighted at the sight of the children's play area as her face lit up. Other children made their views clear by their reluctance to leave the Park when home time had been declared.

5.8 Conclusion

Among the wealth of ideas there are clearly some issues where it would be difficult to please all of the people all of the time but there were also strong areas of consensus. The majority of those who responded would like to see toilets, an official presence and a clear policy relating to dogs in the Park. In addition, while many already using the Park are clearly very fond of it and keen to contribute good ideas to make it better, others literally don't know that it is there. Areas like Streatham have a degree of transience and those new to the area are less likely to be aware of its local services. This is likely to be a particular risk for those without children who not seeking out services and facilities for young people.

The following list of organisations and groups were invited to give their views:

LBL Youth and Play	LBL Parks
LBL Housing	Cllr June Fewtrell
Cllr Ashley Lumsden	Cllr Jeremy Clyne
Leigham Court Estate Stock Transfer Residents Panel	LBL Sports
Streatham Town Centre	One O'clock Club
Streatham Community Safety Officer	Lambeth Life
Lambeth Community Empowerment Network	Streatham Society
LBL Statistics Division	Streatham Community Rangers
LBL Resident Participation Officer	Dunraven School
Customers and staff of the John Company Public House	Local Youth
St Margaret the Queen Church	Streatham Wells Primary School
St Martin Senior Citizens Club	South Lambeth Friendship Club
Leigham Court Derby and Joan Club	Age Concern Lambeth
Patients of Dr Roberts Surgery, Palace Road	St Simon's and St Jude's Church
Patrons of the convenience shops and launderette on Amesbury Avenue	LBL Assets

Feedback from residents and organisations requiring responses and/or action:

1. Questions from both staff and pupils at Streatham Wells:

‘Would we be involved in the project and would we help with it?’

How much does it cost to hire a tennis court and who do you pay?

Why are the rangers never actually in the Park?

Why are the rangers’ lodges not used properly?

Why are there no times on the notice boards?

What are all the things on the boards for?

‘If the Park will be improved how long would it take to finish it?’

‘How much money will be spent on the Park?’

Why are the toilets always shut?

Why are all the fences broken, it is meant to be a no dogs area and dogs can get in?*

2. The Streatham Community Safety Co-ordinator, Neil Thurlow gave a detailed, interested and prompt reply to my questions and asks to be kept informed of developments:

nthurlow@lambeth.gov.uk or 7926 5901.

3. Dunraven Lower School

Monkey bars wobble in the children’s play area

Dunraven Upper School

One pupil referred to a bench that smelt of urine and was used by a couple of drug users/street drinkers. She was asked to say where it was and said it was opposite the first sports cage, but that the problem is much better than it was.

General feeling that the Park was closing a long time before the sun sets.

Rebecca Gibbs

Regeneration, community outreach and social policy

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[1] The school, very kindly, undertook this exercise themselves in response to an email setting out general questions that might be covered during a consultation visit. They have designed their own questionnaire, which uses some leading questions. Therefore it’s worth being a little cautious about how we use the work’s conclusions.

Colour plan of whole park with detail areas with key

Masterplan



Key Areas

1. Circular Path
2. One O'clock Club renovations
3. Entrances
4. Sports lighting
5. Horticulture project behind existing toilets
6. Informal kick about area
7. Dog Area
8. New Building
9. Playground
10. Sports Pitches

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

The main circular path runs for 370m around the perimeter of the park. This path is between 2-3m in width to allow push chairs, wheel chairs and wide berths for dog walkers. In addition there are alternative/extended routes to the south of the sports pitches and playground and a central path through the park to allow various alternative routes.

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances

Sports lighting

Horticulture project behind existing toilets

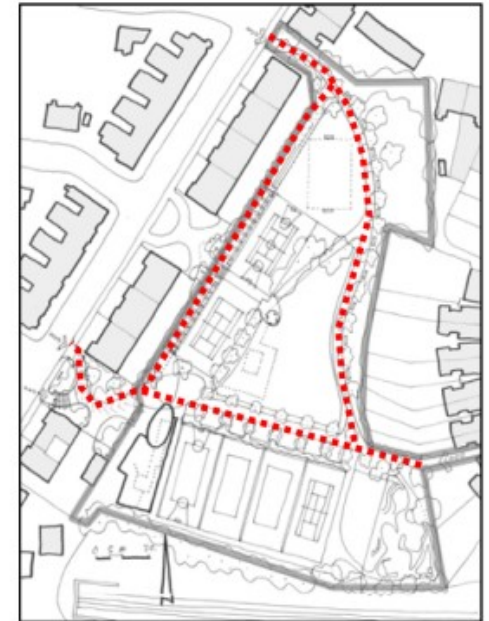
Informal kick about area

Dog Area

New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan



Hillside Gardens View

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Initial renovations to the existing One O'clock Club are expected to be temporary renovations creating a safe environment in the interim while funding is being sort to create a new onsite development.

The new community building is set to replace the existing toilet block and is designed to become a multi use building, catering for the One O'clock club and a local community centre for other organisations.

Entrances

Sports lighting

Horticulture project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

New Building

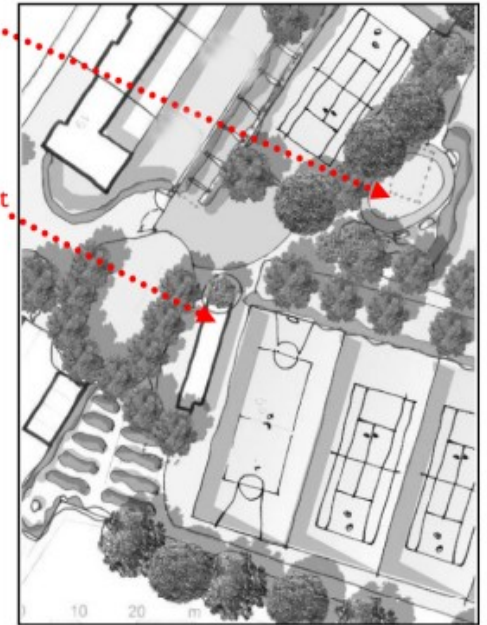
Playground

Sports Pitches

Existing One O'clock Club

Redevelopment

Proposed Development



Proposed Building Development

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

There are three main entrances to the park:

- The West Entry has two access points and vehicle access into the park
- The North Entry is a pedestrian only entry
- The South Entry is a pedestrian only access through a short alley way

Sports lighting

Horticulture project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

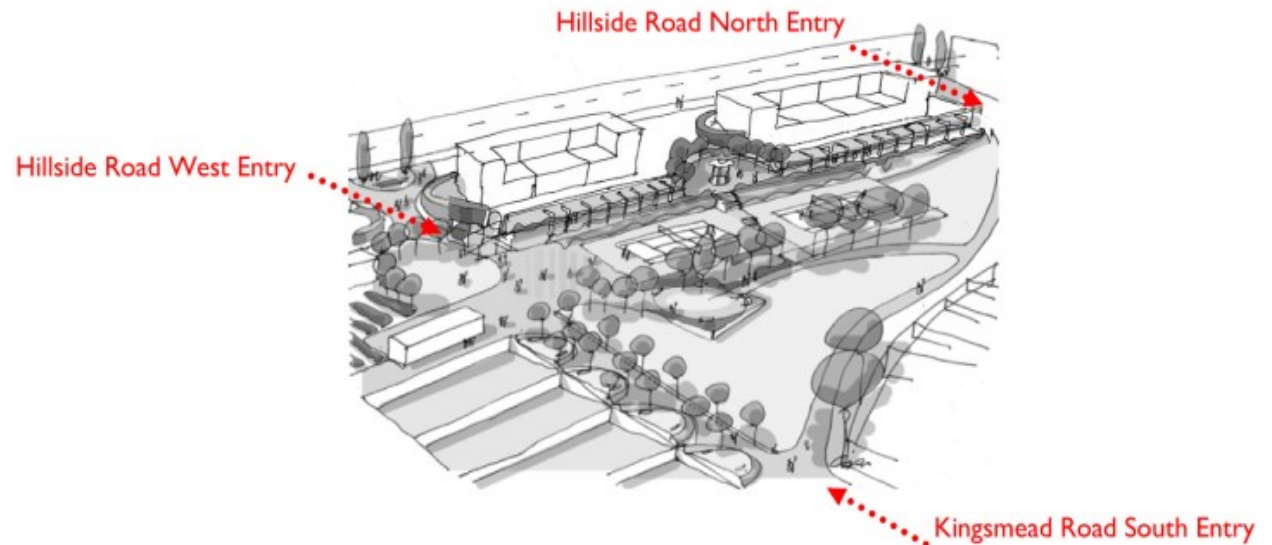
New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan



key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances

Sports lighting

Lighting to specific hard court sporting areas directly overlooked by the proposed community building will enable extended use of the sporting facilities shortened daylight hours.

Horticulture project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

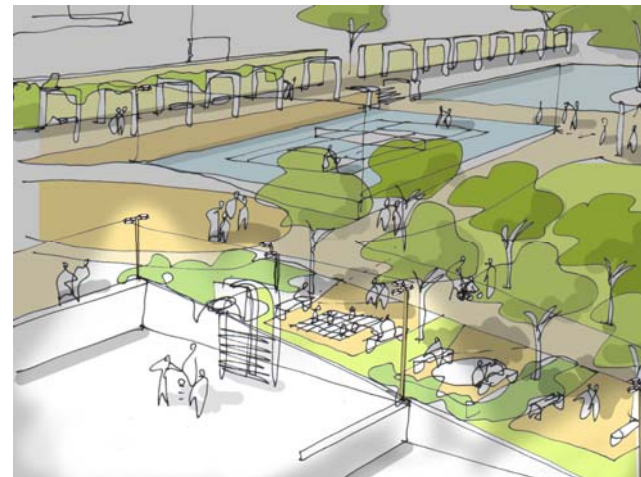
New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan



key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

A currently derelict piece of land that will be regenerated to create a horticultural centre point of the park. With

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

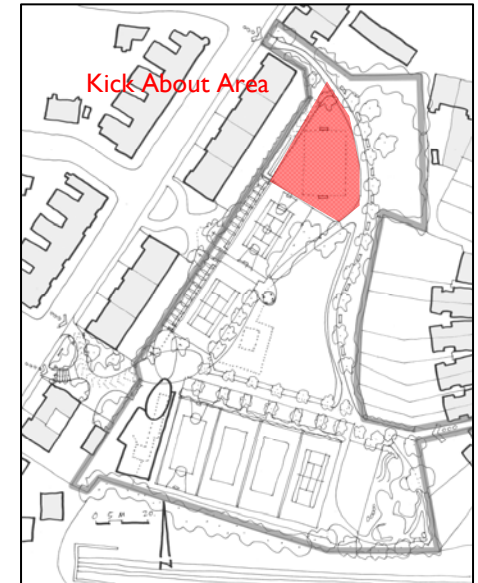
This open Level grass area is left free of planting, paving and street furniture to encourage informal sports, e.g. volleyball, mini-rounder's, Frisbee & cricket, etc; for all ages. The above walkway may have tiered steps down to grass level to encourage flow through the space and provide multi use steps and seating.

Dog Area

New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

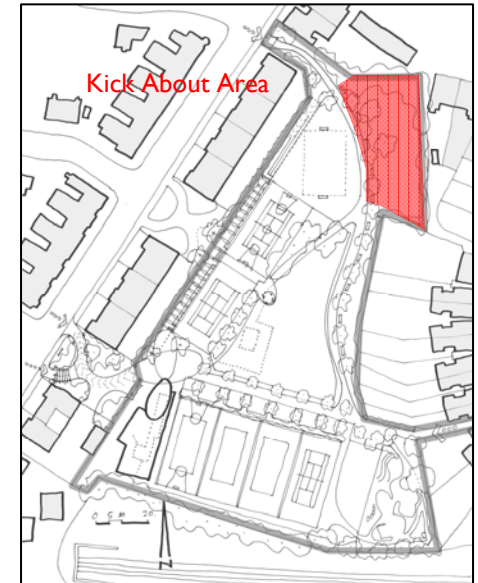
Dog Area

An allocated 'unfenced' area where dog walkers can run/walk freely with their pets. This area is proposed to remain unfenced so as not to completely segregate the area from the park. Owners will continue to be responsible for all their pets actions.

New Building

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

New Community Building

The new community building Development is proposed to meet the highest level of sustainability and become a focal point for the community. Incorporating a café, one O'C club, Gym, changing facilities, etc.

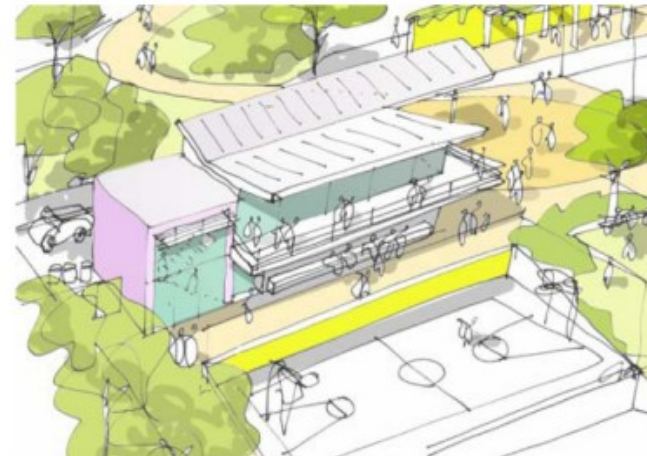
This community building is designed to encourage usage that enhances the parks vision for encourages a safe and healthy community while becoming a base for various community groups and a meeting point within the community.

Playground

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan



Proposed Building Development

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

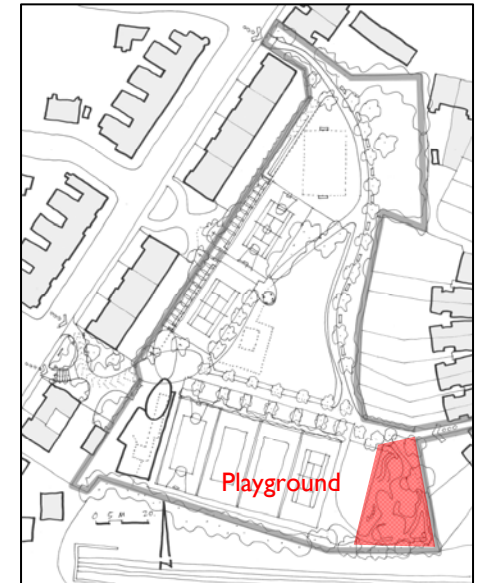
Dog Area

New Building

Playground

The new playground was completed in 2005 and is an essential part of the park catering for ages from toddlers to 12year olds. The design of the area naturally encourages children to tend towards equipment which challenges according to their ability. This equipment has been located within the playground to separate older and younger children.

Sports Pitches



Hillside Gardens Plan



New Playground

key area plans

Details plans and 3D views of key areas identifying proposals

Circular Path

One O'clock Club renovations

Entrances:

Sports lighting

Horticultural project behind existing toilets

Informal kick about area

Dog Area

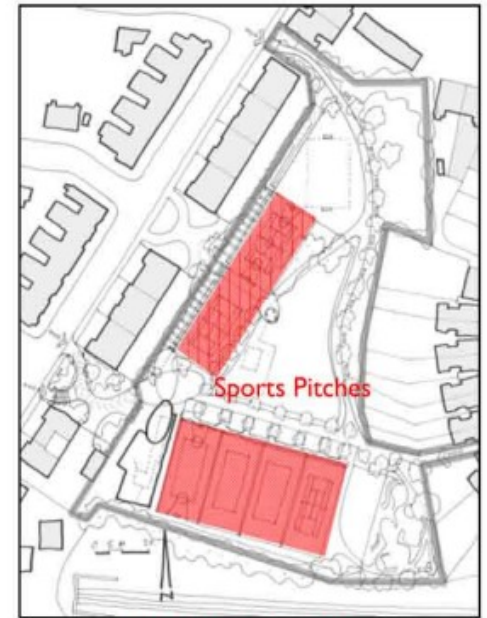
New Building

Playground

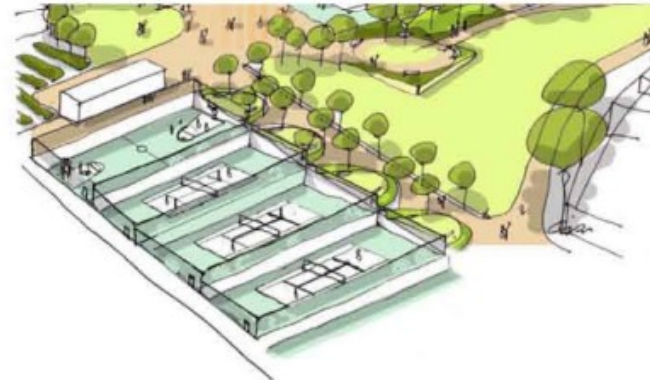
Sports Pitches

6 separate sporting pitches make up the formal sports area. These fenced tarmac areas sit in the central northern part of the park and terraced into the south eastern bank of the park and are large enough to cater for basketball, netball and tennis.

Further terraced into the lower south eastern bank is a formal kick about area which caters for younger park users providing children's basketball, hopscotch, and football.



Hillside Gardens Plan



Sports Pitches