

Committee Report

Planning Committee on 25 November, 2009

Case No.

09/3161

RECEIVED: 7 October, 2009

WARD: Willesden Green

PLANNING AREA: Willesden Consultative Forum

LOCATION: Learie Constantine Open Space, Villiers Road, London, NW2 5QA

PROPOSAL: Creation of a public park with installation of children's play equipment, sand pit, seating, associated landscaping and installation of mesh fence, brick wall and wooden board fence to perimeter of site.

APPLICANT: London Borough of Brent

CONTACT:

PLAN NO'S: Location Map
Block Plan
1 Existing
2 Proposed
3 Hard Landscaping
4 Soft Landscaping
5 Tree Survey
5 Drip Detail
6 Tree Protection
7 Boundaries

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

EXISTING

The site is on Villiers Road on the west side of the northern junction with Chaplin Road, NW2 5QA. The site adjoins the rear of Dudden Hill Lane properties at its south west side and is adjacent to no 114 Chaplin Road at its south east side. The site is not in a conservation area.

PROPOSAL

Creation of a public park with installation of children's play equipment, sand pit, seating, associated landscaping and installation of mesh fence, brick wall and wooden board fence to perimeter of site.

HISTORY

There is no direct planning history for the site since the 1970's when there are records of a day nursery.

The site has previously been used as a park but became derelict and has been so for approximately 10 years.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

UDP 2004

BE2 Townscape:Local context
BE5 Urban clarity & safety
BE6 Public realm: Landscape design

OS7 Provision of Public Open Space
OS18 Children's Play Areas

London Plan SPG: Providing for young people's play and informal recreation

"Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces" (Play England)

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Not Applicable

CONSULTATION

Neighbouring occupiers were consulted on 15th October 2009 and a site notice was posted at the site advertising the site as being of public interest on 22nd October 2009. 1 objection has been received, raising the following points:

- the site was previously a 'play area' which failed and was boarded up due to anti-social behaviour.
- repeating previous mistakes is not an appropriate expenditure of borough funds.
- the area should be considered for a project that would provide benefits such as a 'sure start' centre, this would have greater stewardship and leading to greater security.

Groundwork were commissioned by the Parks Service to carry out consultation with the Local Community between February and April 2009, involving 3 community consultation events, a trip with young people, 2 design workshops with young people and 600 questionnaires to residents in the area. Outcomes included:

- Priorities in terms of playspace equipment
- Concern of antisocial behaviour in park
- Secure fencing and locked at night
- Regular patrols from police/wardens
- Separate area for dogs
- Lighting and CCTV
- Local ownership

Internal

Environmental Health: Conditions required regarding land contamination and remediation.

Parks Service: No objections to proposal

REMARKS

The proposal is for the creation of a public park with installation of children's play equipment, sand pit, seating, associated landscaping and installation of mesh fence, brick wall and wooden board fence to perimeter of site.

Funding for the redevelopment has been awarded as part of the 'playbuilder' scheme run by the Department of Children, Schools and Families.

Principle

As indicated above the Council have commissioned consultation with the local community to try to find out who to bring the site back into use.

No use is currently made of this site and the boarding which surrounds the site for security reasons is detrimental to the local streetscene and character. This site of approximately 0.14ha would be classified as a 'pocket park' by the London Plan which recommends that these should be accessible to all residents within 400m of their homes.

Map OS1 of Brent's UDP 2004 identifies this site as falling within an area of more than 400m from public open space of more than 2ha. The Learie Constantine Open Space is far smaller than this but will nevertheless enhance local provision. It is clearly a positive step to bring this site back

into use but it is also vital to prevent the park becoming derelict as has happened in the past.

The games court on Dudden Hill Lane (which was a brownfield site with temporary permission as a play space in 1981) is in close proximity to this site but has been identified as a site specific allocation for a mixed use development. Comparatively it is in poor location with little overlooking and adjacent to a main road and neighbourhood retail shopping.

Layout and landscaping

Ground level is used to improve the visibility of the parts of the open space furthest from the street, ground level raises as distance increases from the centre front of the site. This is designed to prevent the formation of areas which feel secluded and as such become used for anti-social activities, all of the open space would be exposed to the street discouraging such uses.

Fencing is proposed around the whole frontage of the site which is a mesh wave shape, this continues around the boundary of the Learie Constantine Centre Car Park meaning that whilst these spaces are individually defined there is clear visibility between them. To retain the increase in the ground level around the site a low red brick wall is proposed with the fence above. It has been confirmed by landscape officers that the fence will range in height from 1.8m to 2.4m.

The play area is located at the centre front of the site, away from the residential properties that border the site to minimise nuisance in the form of noise. The play area is centred around a landscape feature based on a spike from a drip into water which reaches approximately 3.5m in height and play equipment is positioned around this including a slide, climbing net and climbing boxes. Away from this focal point other individual elements are proposed including a musical area (gaspipes, tambourine, drainpipe drum etc.), again located away from direct neighbours. As distance increases the play equipment is replaced with trees and some blocks for seating.

The surfacing of the majority of the play space is proposed as sand, which as well as providing some safety in terms of its impact absorbency also allows for play in itself, beyond this the area is grassed. Paths within the area are proposed as 'resin bound recycled glass' and are red.

At all boundaries with residential properties a buffer is proposed in the form of hedging/shrub planting. Trees are also proposed within the site, which when grown will provide more screening to neighbouring properties, they also have the additional interest of being 'edible fruit trees'.

Management

The reason for past failings has been the lack of management and maintenance, the revamped park will be maintained by the Parks Service. The fencing proposed allows the site to be closed to public use, this will take place at dusk 7 days a week and be reopened at 8am every morning. As such it will not be an area in which anti-social behaviour takes place after dark. It cannot be ruled out that people will may climb over the railings but it is considered that their presence and scale would act as a very effective deterrent.

Furthermore the opening and closing of the area will be undertaken by Parks staff qualified as safety inspectors for play equipment meaning that any problems, including damage, litter, vandalism etc. will be identified and dealt with immediately. This will prevent the space falling into disrepair or being unsafe for use on a daily basis. It is considered that the benefits that the park will bring to the locality firmly outweigh the concerns over possible antisocial activity.

Lighting

The proposal includes uplighters, dispersed around the outer limits of the park. It will light the seating which is away from the front of the site, all lights are also positioned below trees to limit the extent of the light. However a condition is also recommended for the provision and approval of details of the illuminance of the uplighters. The applicants have indicated that there have been discussions between the Parks service and local residents and Councillors regarding the use of

lighting. The proposed plans do include uplighters and no objections have been received to this aspect of the proposal.

The proposal is considered to be an enhancement to the visual amenity of the area and the recreation of local residents, it complies with policies contained in Brent's UDP 2004 and the London Plan SPG: Providing for young people's play and informal recreation, as such approval is recommended.

REASONS FOR CONDITIONS

RECOMMENDATION: Grant Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING

(1) The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Built Environment: in terms of the protection and enhancement of the environment
Open Space and Recreation: to protect and enhance the provision of sports, leisure and nature conservation

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

(1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) Prior to the park opening for use, a site investigation shall be carried out by competent persons to determine the nature and extent of any soil contamination present. The investigation shall be carried out in accordance with a scheme, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, that includes the results of any research and analysis undertaken as well as assessment of the risks posed by the contamination and an appraisal of remediation options required to contain, treat or remove any contamination found. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safe development and secure occupancy of the site proposed for domestic use in accordance with policy EP6 of Brent's UDP 2004.

(3) Any remediation measures required by the Local Planning Authority shall be carried out in full. A verification report (referred to in PPS23 as a validation report) that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safe development and secure occupancy of the site proposed for domestic use in accordance with policy EP6 of Brent's UDP 2004.

(4) The open space shall not be used between dusk and 8am and gates will be closed between these times.

Reason: In the interest of neighbouring residential amenity.

- (5) Details of uplighting, of a level not harming neighbouring amenity, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development. The approved details shall be fully implemented.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and convenience.

- (6) Notwithstanding the hereby approved plans the boundary fence to Villers Road and Chaplin Road will not exceed 2.4m in height from pavement level.

Reason: In the interest of the amenity of the visual appearance of the site.

- (7) Further details of the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work is commenced and the development shall be carried out and completed in all respects in accordance with the details so approved before the building(s) are occupied. Such details shall include:-

(a) Size trees to be planted in height and trunk diameter.

Reason: These details are required to ensure that a satisfactory development is achieved.

INFORMATIVES:

None Specified

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Liz Sullivan, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5377

