

Bid on behalf of the Friends of Brook Green for S106 funding

To support the makeover of the Green's Western Lawn and Tennis Court surrounds

Introduction

Since 2010 the Friends of Brook Green (FBG) in partnership with LBHF have been pursuing a programme to maintain, renew and sensitively enhance the Green for the benefit of the large and diverse community in the Brook Green, Avonmore and Addison areas of the Borough.

The programme has been guided by the findings of an extensive Consultation exercise undertaken at the invitation of LBHF by FBG in 2010 which sought to establish a short term and long term Vision for the future of the Green.

A slightly unexpected finding of the 12 person Vision Group was the strength of association that the many people who gave us their opinions felt towards the Green, notwithstanding its slightly run down state at that time. This brought home to us the importance and value of this amenity. It is a place –perhaps the most important place in the locality where our socially, economically and culturally diverse community mixes, it provides desirable green space for everyone and is particularly valued by those who do not have gardens, it provides areas for sport and exercise (including by children from lower income backgrounds) and it offers an outdoor environment which is appreciated across the age range.

Consistent with the findings of the Vision review, FBG has been instrumental in planning, financing and executing a makeover programme, highlights of which include:

- a. the renewal and marginal expansion of the Playground in 2012
- b. the renewal and enhancement of the tennis courts in 2014;and
- c. the development of the Pavilion which provides a kiosk service and clean working (disability compliant) toilets primarily for the use of families visiting the Playground

A critical consideration in the makeover plan has been that the character of the Green should not be fundamentally changed and that it should continue to be a facility which is inclusive and serves the needs of its very diverse group of users (of all age groups).

Green Space

One of the principal findings of the Vision review was the desire of the community for more green space.

The main opportunity in this respect relates to the 4 meter wide strip of land alongside the south side of Brook Green extending from Shepherd Bush Road to the Pavilion. It is presently classified as a Highway and is surfaced with tarmac (which is repeatedly broken up by root movement of the large Plane trees which grow along this perimeter of the Western Lawn/south side of the tennis courts).

FBG has long hoped that the tarmac surface should be replaced by extending the grassed area southwards to a new walkway along the kerbside.

Helpfully officials of LBHF Highways Department have suggested that this particular ambition could be achieved as part of the Borough's SUDS programme. Assuming that this is confirmed over the coming weeks the intention would be to remove the current tarmac space altogether, to install a 180cm flexipave kerbside pathway alongside the street and to regreen the remaining tarmac area. This would increase the existing grass areas of the Western lawn and the south side of the tennis courts by approximately 350 squares metres.

Consideration is also being given to resurfacing, again in flexipave, the paths over the Green either side of the tennis courts.

Complementary measures

a. Crossing to the Green

There is no raised crossing point between Luxemburg Gardens/the south of Brook Green (road) and the Green itself (photograph A below). Pedestrians, (who include a lot of children from many schools to the North of the Green making use of the St Paul's Girls School swimming pool, as well as well children from Bute House School given its proximity in Luxemburg Gardens) are required to step down into the road and up on to the pavement on the other side. The lack of level access to the Green from this point is also an issue for the carers of persons arriving in a wheel chair or push chair.

As this crossing point is heavily used it would complement the Western Lawn, the Pavilion and the Tennis Courts if there were to be proper level pavement access at this crossing point. It would make also sense for this to be in the same style as the one that was constructed opposite the Queens Head pub to improve the access to the Playground which FBG paid for as part of that Project (photograph B on the next page). The cost of this work is estimated at £20k.



Photograph A



Photograph B

b. Western Lawn aspirations

The Western lawn has one diagonal hard surface pathway from its south west corner on Shepherds Bush Road to its northeast corner by Dunsany Road. As the path is only 1 metre wide, users complain that it is difficult to pass other oncoming pedestrians, particularly those with a wheelchair or push chair, without stepping on to the (often muddy) lawn.

It also has a heavily used informal path from the south east to the North West corners of the lawn. This path is convenient for people living on the south side of the Green as it provides more direct access to the shops on Shepherds Bush Road. The desire line is very apparent (photograph C on next page) and for a long time now the grass has been unable to survive the weight of pedestrian traffic with the result that the underlying ground has become very compacted. Although attempts have been made over the years to stop people crossing on this diagonal, these have always failed.



Subject to completion of consultation and securing funding, FBG would propose that both diagonal paths should be formalised in flexipave materials and widened to 150cms as shown in Appendix B.

The Western lawn has historically been fenced with a post and metal rail fence at about 120cms height. The fencing is reaching the end of its useful life and it is suggested that it would be better replaced by low post system as this would be more financially sustainable while still providing the Green with protection against travellers etc.

The soil profile and drainage performance of the Western lawn are sub optimal and LBHF Parks have considered how the related issues could best be addressed. Their recommendations on this matter together with the other aspirations for improving the Western Lawn mentioned above are set out in Appendix A.

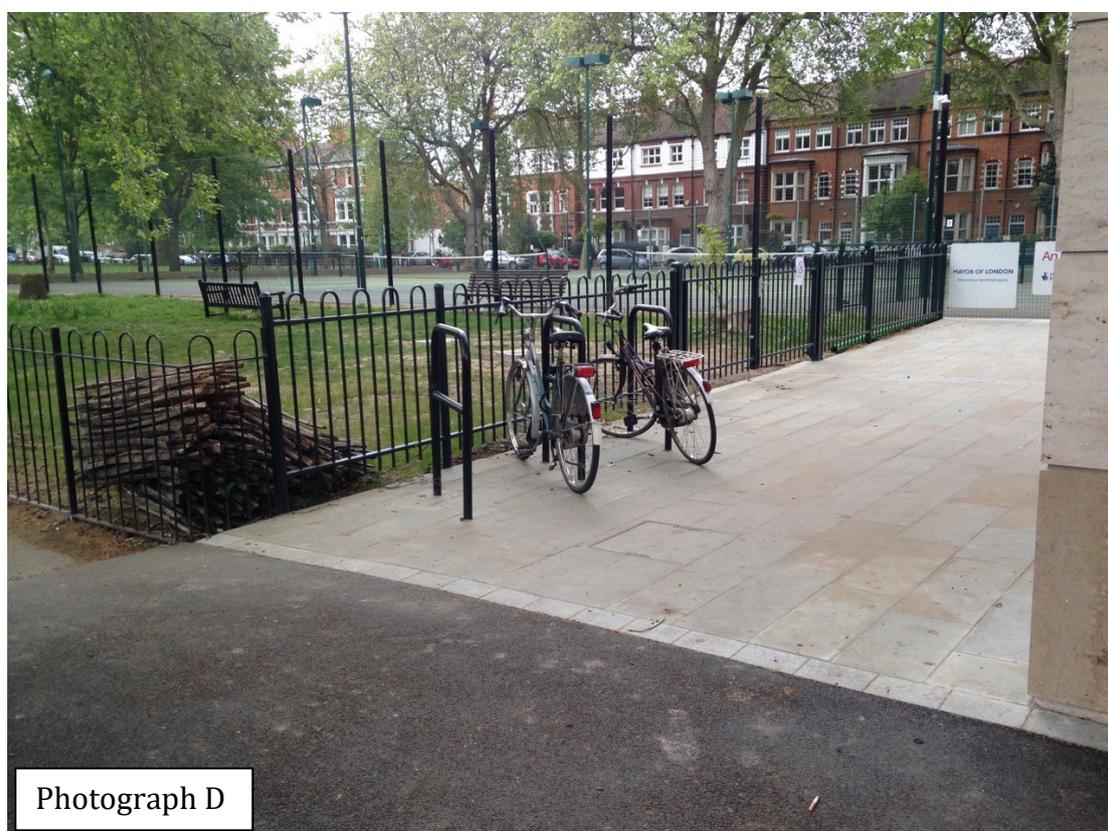
It should be noted that the related costs of these works are estimated at up to £93k.

c. South/west side of the Tennis Courts

Historically this enclosed area has been under used and somewhat neglected. FBG's master plan envisaged that it should become a quiet green area with seating for those who might want to read, watch tennis, chill perhaps with a coffee/snack purchased from the Pavilion.

As part of the Pavilion works a fence with gates has been installed between the tennis court netting down and connects with the pre-existing fence along the perimeter of the tarmac area as shown in photograph D below.

With the grassed area to be extended by 220 – 250 cm southwards the existing fence (which is close to life expired) will need to be replaced by continuing the new fencing down to the edge of the new flexipave pavement, along the pavement for the length of the tennis courts and then back over to the tennis courts' western side netting. We would propose the new fencing to be installed should be to the height and type shown in photograph D below.



FBG also propose to install an informal (36 meter long) Cedec pathway which would meander through the Quiet Area connecting the Pavilion to the Western Lawn.

On the western side of the Tennis Court surplus soil from the Pavilion works was laid to form a small bank that runs down the entire flank. Under the auspices of the FBG, a group of volunteers recently prepared and seeded the ground in the hope it will form a flower meadow with summer and autumn season flowering similar to that shown in photographs E and F.



Photograph E



Photograph F

Once the seeds are established the intention is to remove the existing fencing which runs alongside the pavement over Brook Green. This stretch of fence is life expired and is routinely bent to create entrances by kids wishing to retrieve over hit football. Going forward it is believed that the banks will provide sufficient protection against such wayward footballs causing damage to the tennis court netting and by removing the fence the process of retrieving balls will be significantly easier.

The cost of the fencing works described in this section is estimated at £12.5k and the path work at £3.5k.

d. North side of the Tennis Court

North of the Courts on Parks land is a space covered in hard tarmac which was evidently laid many years ago. The area is approximately 230 square meters and residents of neighbouring properties on the north side of Brook Green (nos. 80 -89 Brook Green) have indicated that they would like this area to be reclaimed as green space if this can be achieved or if not to be resurfaced with Flexipave.

The cost of removing and disposing of the tarmac and resurfacing this area either as grass or with flexipave is estimated at £17.5k.

e. South of the Pavilion

The residents of Queens Mansions want FBG to place planters on the space in front of the Pavilion. They have suggested that these should be in the same style as those used outside Dunnhumby's offices adjacent to Little Brook Green. An example of one of these planters is shown in Photograph G below. The cost of two planters of the requisite length is estimated at £1.5k.



Photograph G

Summary of Bid for financial support

The Programme of works described above is estimated to cost £165k Including a c.10 per cent+ contingency broken down as follows:

Crossing from Brook Green south to the Green	£20,000
Western Lawn paths	£30,000
Western lawn soil and drainage treatment	£40,000
Western Lawn fencing	£23,000
South and West of tennis courts fencing and pathway	£16,000
North of Tennis Courts resurfacing	£17,500
Brook Green Pavilion south side planters	£1,500
Contingency	£17,000
TOTAL	£165,000

FBG could commit now to provide £15,000 towards the cost of this programme, and we may potentially be able to increase our level of commitment over the months to come.

Concluding comments

A survey undertaken by LBHF in 2008 found that Brook Green was the third most visited park in the Borough (after Bishops Park and Ravenscourt Park both of which are eight times its size).

FBG's programme of renewing and enhancing the Green in recent years has undoubtedly attracted increased number of visitors particularly to the Playground and the Tennis Courts. Moreover residential redevelopment locally eg of the Palais on Shepherds Bush Road and of Haymarket's former offices between Bute Gardens and Wolverton Gardens have also added to the pressures on Brook Green.

Increased usage leads to increased wear and tear. It is therefore strongly in the interests of the Green's many users/user groups that FBG's Programme of investing in the Green and its facilities should be sustained and that the Green's makeover should be completed as soon as possible. To do otherwise runs the risk that this hugely important amenity will continue to have a run down feel in those areas eg the Western lawn where the makeover has yet to be implemented.

Moreover, based on the experience of recent years, we believe that FBG has shown itself to be a powerful conduit in partnership with LBHF for ensuring that funds are spent well both in terms of appropriate prioritisation and of successful delivery. The greater involvement of the community has also shown that the enhanced infrastructure is more actively cared for (and appreciated) by users of the Green than perhaps was the case in former times.

Robert Jennings
Joint Chairman,
Friends of Brook Green.

APPENDIX A

Brook Green Western Lawn Aspirations

All measurements subject to margin of error.

Western lawn= 5297 square metres in total with formal path and desire line.

Existing tarmacadam path = 117 square metres

Path drainage improvements

SUDS friendly paths-

Change tarmacadam to SUDS path and widen to 1.5 metres, would be approximately 160.5 square metres.

Change desire line (approximately 117 linear metres of compacted clay) to SUDS path at 1.5 metres, would be approximately 166.5 square metres.

This would give approximately 327 square metres of path area that should allow for greater soakaway and provide for increased footfall and more wheel chair accessible.

Estimated cost= £25,000-£30,000

Western Lawn Soil Profile Improvements

The existing lawn area is approximately 5008 square metres.

The old roadway, the culverted brook and the utility tunnel under the western lawn reduce the area for soakaway. The heavy clay soils and the compacted topsoil on the lawn and the desire line path reduce the percolation of water and the quality of the lawn. The compacted soils are less beneficial to healthy tree growth.

To help to improve the top soil profile and reduce compaction, a sandy loam soil mix would be recommended to be added to the existing soil profile.

The field would require solid or hollow cure tining to varying depths, slitting, infilling with sandy loam and the lawn are to be chain harrowed and levelled with sandy loam. Following that the area should be drill seeded, fenced off for at least six weeks and irrigated to establish. Best outcomes likely from September to October.

Estimated cost = £35,000-40,000

Remove existing post and rail and replace with low posts.

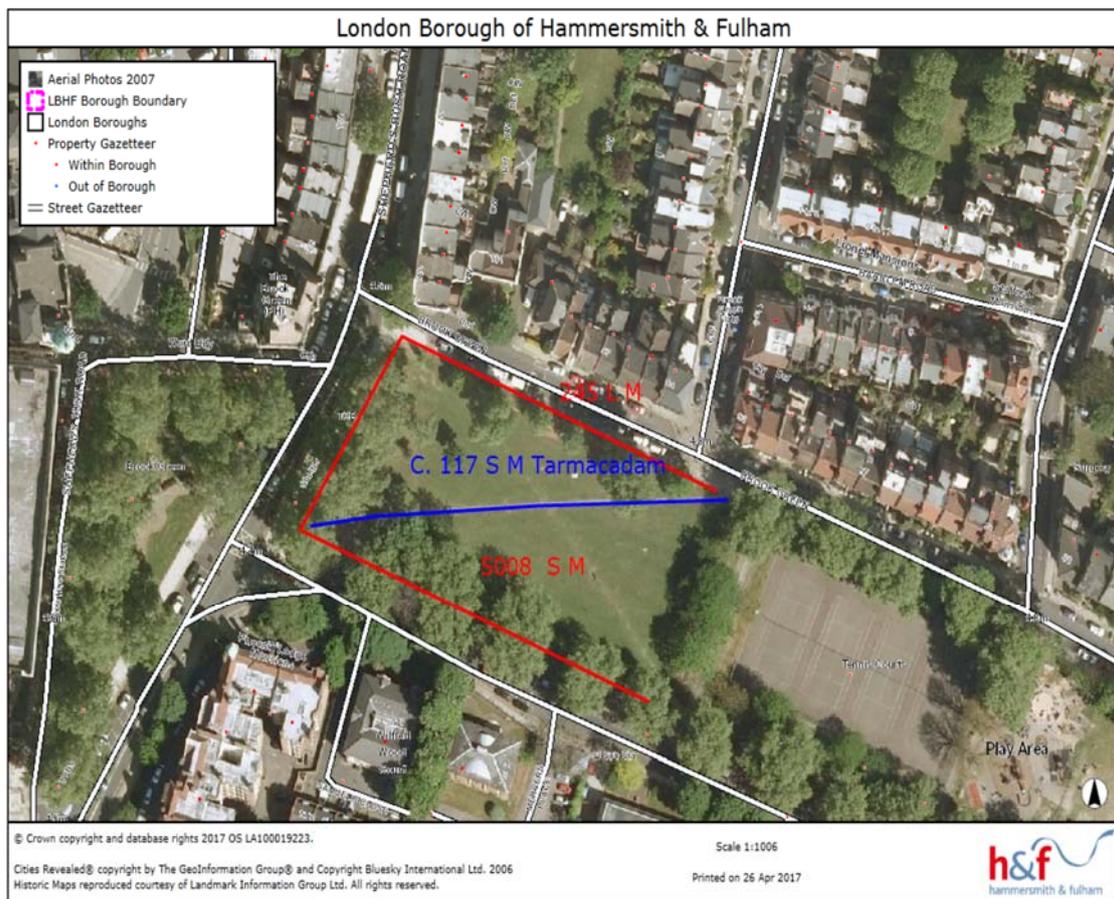
The existing post and rail is not in good repair throughout and has been subject to weathering and damage.

The original post and rail was approximately 245 linear metres.

The rail is frequently damaged or removed/ stolen in places.

If it were requested to reinstate a boundary of sorts, then a low post system may be more suitable and financially sustainable.

Estimated costs= £23,000



APPENDIX B

Brook Green Western Lawn Plan

BMD.210.DR.201 Strategic Masterplan



A Location of new pavilion and associated public realm, day time seating, paving, lighting and cycle stands create a robust functional space characterised by the use of high quality materials. Stainless steel planters to southern facade of pavilion

B New informal path links from pavilion across to the west. Asphalt surface dressed aggregate path to complement colour of paving in pavilion area

C Extension of grass and relocation of fencing to the south to create a narrower 1.8m footpath, subject to agreement with highways authority. New lawns would incorporate the existing trees and root plates, reducing tarmac/ paving heave.

D Upgrade the northern edge of the tennis courts with either grass or flexipave surface.

E The current pedestrian cycle route is upgraded to an asphalt surface dressed aggregate path, consolidating the existing contrasting surfacing around the park and contributing to a new formal core.

F Site won topsoil has been used to create a buffer to tennis court & a new edge to western lawn. This has been seeded to form a flower meadow.

G New 1.5m wide formal hard flexipave surfaced pedestrian route across the Western Lawn.

H Proposal to narrow the existing 4m wide path along southern boundary to 1.8m wide flexipave surface. Area below existing trees to be grassed.

I Expansion of existing 1m wide tarmac path to 1.5m wide flexipave surface.

