



# Judd Street Open Space New Park Entrance **Design & Access Statement**



1706.03.d1 v3  
03 April 2018

## Introduction

This application, submitted on behalf of LB Camden Parks, is for construction of a second pedestrian entrance into Judd Street Open Space from the adjacent Judd Street pavement. In conjunction with provision of more benches and a new path, this entrance can capture some of the (very high) footfall on Judd Street which with only occasion exceptions pass the place by. With improved visibility into the park, and a more convenient route into and around a renovated green with benches to sit on, visitor numbers should increase. Having more people in the park more often will have a beneficial effect: while the park's play areas and dog run are used by local residents, the space can be empty much of the day and this can lead to anti-social misuse.

The new gate onto a public Highway that is the subject of this application is part of a wider renovation scheduled for later this year. Items included in the renovation - the path and seating mentioned above, shifting the swing location, installing exercise bars, removing vegetation to improve visibility – are shown in plan on the next page for reference only, as Camden's Green Space Development Department (referred to in this document as 'LBC Parks') considers these to be permitted development.

Results of a series of public engagements with local residents undertaken by Shape (landscape architects for the renovations) are in the reports included with this application; these show nearly unanimous support for the second entrance and path, and for the swing relocation required in order to make the Judd Street end of the park into a seating area with broad appeal.

## Site Description

This small (0.4ha) park is located in the Kings Cross Ward (WC1H 8JS), adjacent Camden Housing's Bramber and Glynde Reach tower blocks. The space became available after Second World War bomb damage and for many years was in Camden Housing's jurisdiction, known locally as Bramber Green.

The park is generally a gated, treed lawn, surrounded on three sides by 10 storey housing blocks, the latter separated from the park by railings. There is a significant tree cover including a large central Plane and two large flowering Cherry trees at Judd Street, and in the main the park is shaded. In addition to several small lawns, the park provides local residents with amenity and play space:

- dog run (used in part by people with guide dogs visiting the nearby Royal Institute for the Blind)
- toddler swings, timber animals
- climbing rock for older children and young people
- benches.

A maintenance hut located in the park's southeast corner, at the end of Wakefield Street, is in poor condition but staffed intermittently each day when IdeVerde gardeners work in the park.

There is a low but regular level of park use, primarily people walking through and or walking their dogs; in good weather it does benefit from more extended stays, including picnickers. Census data for the area suggests the local population is of very mixed ethnicity and age; this is not wholly reflected in park use. As at many open spaces around Kings Cross, there are rough sleepers and anti-social behaviour; residents are wary of fouling by dogs, teen congregating, street drinking, drug sales, and the open use of hard drugs.

The primary circulation is diagonally across the park, between the Judd Street frontage and access onto nearby Regent Square. Another access point adjacent Holy Cross Church (Listed, but not affected by this application), leads to Cromer Street and is used by parents with children going to and from the local primary school. There are no paths allowing circulation around the park, though dog walkers will often trace a route around the perimeter. Each day hundreds of people walk along Judd Street right past the park; the one entrance from here into the park is narrow, and the view to it impeded by recycling bins.



*fig. 1: Judd Street Open Space, view toward Judd Street.*



Judd Street- Existing Plan





*fig. 2: View of current park entrance, from Judd Street pavement.*



*fig. 3: View along Judd Street pavement; proposed new entrance is at the tall evergreen shrub, near right.*

## Design Development / Community Engagement

Proposals for potential changes to the park were discussed with residents in a two stage engagement, based on person to person discussions both on site and at open day events. Seventy people were interviewed in the first stage, which established community priorities for the budget spend; a smaller number (30) of responses were obtained at the second stage - looking at specific proposals based on the outcomes of the first engagement- but these were sufficient to establish clear trends. Reports on engagement results are included with this application.

Initial discussions with residents and park users established the following priorities for investment:

- better visibility into and out of the park
- more places to sit
- more opportunities for play
- address concerns about drug use & sales.

Based on Shape's own observations and conversations with residents, the initial survey included a question asking their opinion about a possible 2nd entrance at Judd Street and new route into the park - allowing people walking along Judd Street to conveniently enter and leave, with many new benches easily reached from the street. There was considerable support for this.

There were few objections to a related proposal to move the swings so a large panel of lawn could be provided at the Judd Street end of the park- one of its few sunny areas.

Support for the 2nd gate (and for associated proposals of benches to the sides of a new open lawn) was confirmed in the second set of interviews, during which firmer proposals were reviewed. Support for moving the swings was very strong this time- given though with the caveat that the



Judd Street- Proposed Plan





*fig. 4: Google Streetmap view of park's existing Judd Street frontage (current gate just left of picture, the dog run's lawn at right).*



*fig. 5: View of frontage showing new gate increasing visibility into park and providing easy, central access.*

play area needed to still be visible from the Bramber flats, or not so close to the Glynde Close flats as to cause nuisance. The Proposed Plan on the previous page is the arrangement Shape recommended to Camden Parks in response to the community engagement; the 2nd gate location that is the subject of this application is shown on this plan.

It was clear from discussions with people in the community, that they understood the link between having more people constructively using the park- sitting, relaxing, chatting, eating, making phone calls- and getting better surveillance that in turn might lead to less of the misbehaviour that made residents, and the students and workers in the area, disinclined to go into the park.

## Access / Safety Considerations

A 2nd Judd Street gate (Fig. 5) would both open the park up visually and connect the park directly to well used adjacent pavement - at a central location from which its lawn, benches, dog run and Cromer Street can all be easily accessed.

The toddlers swings currently are surrounded by fencing; moving the swings away from Judd Street (see Proposed Plan) puts it in a slightly quieter location, more closely linked with other play items.

Like the existing, the proposed gate is 6m in back of the kerb, and not self closing. The level of risk associated with people cycling or running from the park, across this wide pavement, and without thinking into the vehicle lane where a car collides with them, would on the face of it appear low; traffic volume and typical vehicle speeds on Judd Street are not excessive and visibility in both directions very good (parking is prohibited).

However, the local convenience store is at Leigh Street opposite the park, this is an east-west walking route, and the pedestrian priority crossing is inconveniently located 20m to the north; TfL's London Collision Maps show a minor accident occurring on Judd Street near Leigh Street nearly every year. Therefore Shape have recommended to Camden Parks that a guardrail (shown in fig 5) or a traffic refuge be installed by Highways should permission for the gate be granted, and this discussion is underway.

Ideally the new gate, like the existing, would be set to an open position, to optimise the possibility of park use; easy access improves the likelihood of the park benefitting from an increased level of use and activation- as well as more people benefitting from the health and well being effects of park use.

A new Judd Street gate adjacent the dog run may increase dog owners' use of this facility, reduce the incidence of unwanted interaction with dogs, or sharing of space with them; this is not an unwarranted consideration given the area's large number of children and its high percentage of Muslim residents (some of whom may observe religious strictures against contact with dogs).

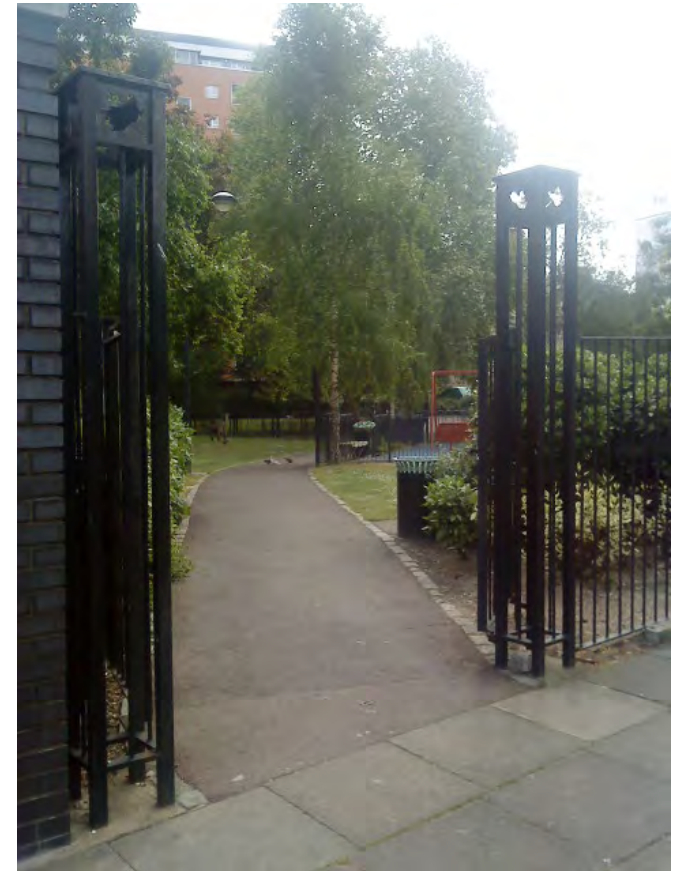
## Materials and Finishes

The proposed gate would be identical in form, material and finish (mild steel, galvanised, prepped and painted medium gloss black) to the existing shown in Figure 6. The piers are near 2.4m in height and the gates (matching the adjacent perimeter railing in appearance) are at 1.75m height.

## Management / Operations

LB Parks has confirmed Judd Street is to remain on its list of sites locked by IdeVerde personnel every day at dusk and at 9:30pm in mid-summer.

The gates and boundary fence will receive regular visual inspections by maintenance staff, and repaired as required.



*fig. 6: Existing decorative piers and gates (same height and appearance as railing).*



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