



Design and Access Statement

College Gardens – NW1 9NB

Full planning application for a change of pedestrian access to the existing gardens, including new heritage railings to its perimeter, and new paving to the existing island

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1 Introduction

Purpose of the Document

This statement supports the associated planning application and explains the design principles of the proposed redevelopment.

The design envisages remodeling of the existing public gardens in order to make them more accessible and to attract more people to 'walk through' and to use the space. The existing gate will be replaced by three new gates, which are positioned on all sides of the gardens, in continuation of the pedestrian movement.

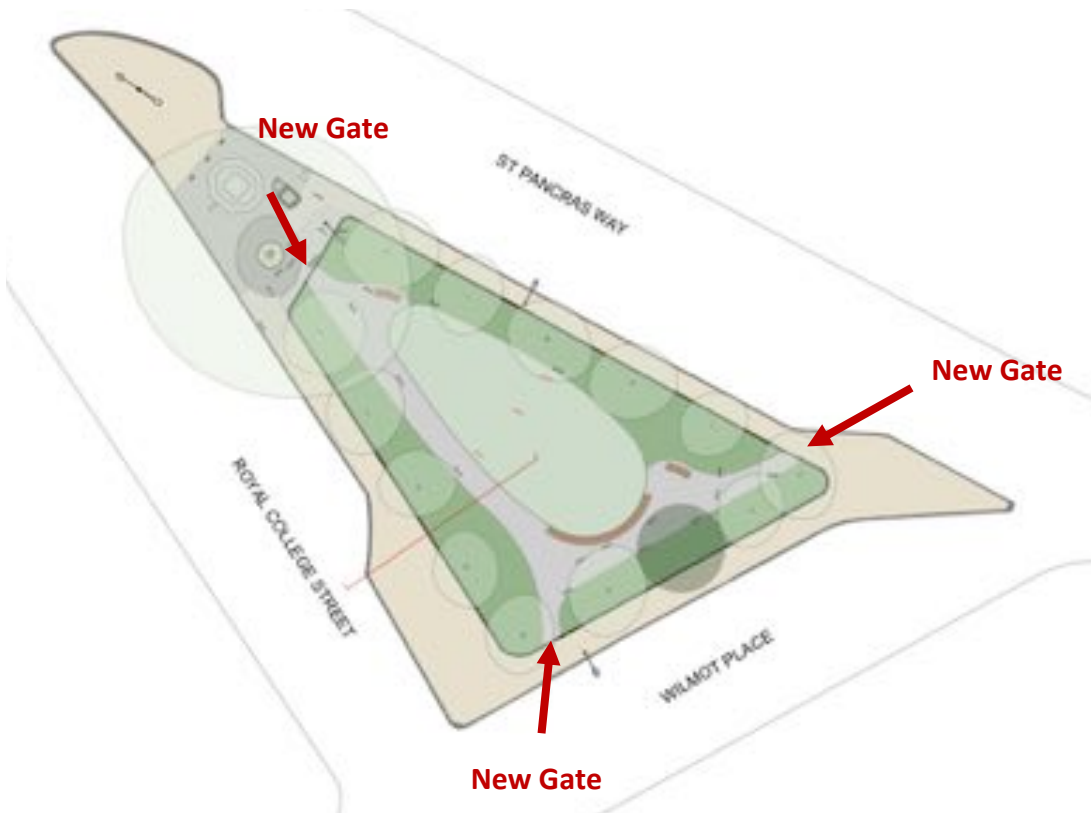


Image 1. Access amendment of College Gardens with three new gates

The proposals for the gardens will not affect the neighbouring properties nor the listed K2 phone box, the listed Salter drinking fountain or the surrounding York stone footway paving. It supports the existing heritage elements on the grade II listed terrace, Sussex Terrace, St Pancras Way and the locally listed Wilmot Place.

2 The Site: College Gardens

College Gardens is a triangular site at the junction of three roads, overlooked by C19th terraces and C20th buildings. It's located at the junction of St Pancras Way (A5202), Wilmot Place, and Royal College Street. Enclosed by railings, the small garden has grass, seats and a number of trees. A drinking fountain erected in 1876/7 in memory of Joseph Salter is located north of the garden. The residential buildings, shops and pub [now converted] on two sides of College Gardens are early 19th century. The Gardens are situated within the Jeffrey's Street Conversation Area.



Image 2. College Gardens and its surrounding [Google Earth Pro, 13 January 2019]



Image 3. Street view of College Gardens – corner Royal College Street / Wilmot Place showing the recently established new cycle path



Image 4. Street view of College Gardens – corner Wilmot Place / St Pancras Way

3 The Existing Condition of the Gardens

Access: There is currently one entrance to the gardens, in the centre of the 'short side', on Wilmot Place.
(please refer to image 05).

Perimeter Fence: The original railings [if existed] have been replaced at least six times; the evidence of three sets of railings can be seen embedded in the London Plane and two different sets of concrete post foundations. In the 1950s the Gardens were surrounded by a wire link fence, in the 80s by short railings set on a London stock brick wall, in the late 1990s by extending the height of the same railings and setting them in a rail. The condition of the existing railings is poor and rusted, partly railing segments inconsistently connected.

Perimeter bed/Planting: The existing perimeter bed follows the shape of the footway/Gardens/railings. It contains 14 trees, poor quality soil which has not supported plants/flowers for over 10 years and the concrete footings of at least three sets of railings.

Including those is one mature London Plane tree, taller and projecting significantly wider at the North West site of the gardens, located just outside the railing.

Existing Gate



Image 5. Bird view of College Gardens (before introducing the traffic amendments)



Image 6. College Gardens new traffic scheme including new cycle path and amended car parking [2017]

Pathway: runs parallel with the railings and the tree beds – constructed in (at least) 35-year-old black tarmac. Within the pathway is a grassed lawn area. Three cast-iron supported timber benches are provided for visitors located on two sides and the apex of the site facing into the grassed area.

The general condition of the gardens has suffered from overuse of the site by dog owners in the past, as well as reduced maintenance budgets.

At the northern apex of the triangle, outside the Garden fencing is the grade II listed K2 phone box (Giles Gilbert Scott), the grade II listed Salter drinking fountain (erected after 1876).

The operating times of the College Gardens are between 7.30am till dusk, the park is currently managed under a flexible locking regime and is not regularly locked at night.



Image 7. College Gardens Proposed Layout

4 The proposed changes to the Gardens

The public gardens have been redesigned in order to reclaim them for all – to make them more accessible and to attract more people to ‘walk through’ and to use the space.

In addition, the green area has been enlarged, especially towards the inner edges of the gardens, and the existing perimeter fence will be made good.

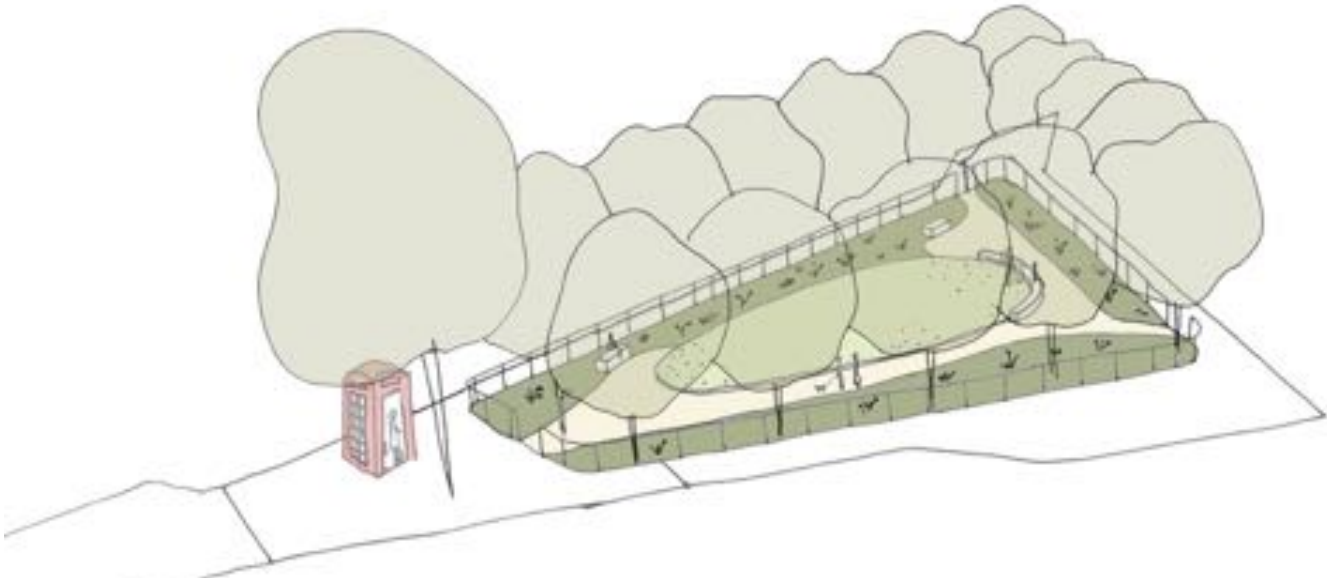


Image 8. College Gardens, artists impression of the proposed design, 2018

Access

The existing gate from the Wilmot Place (please refer to image 3 and 5), is the only entry point to College Gardens. It is not related to any desire line and therefore proposed to be closed.

Three gates are proposed in new positions to encourage ‘walk through’. (Please refer to image 1 and 7). They will be 1200mm wide, to allow wheelchair access and maintenance-friendly access for a mower. The proposed new access is designed allowing intuitive pedestrian access, i.e. a natural continuation of the pedestrian circulation in the surrounding area. This is to be visually accentuated by introducing a different paving surface in front of the proposed gates, and at the position of the crossings (Please refer to image 7). It is suggested to

Perimeter Fence/Railings

Arguments of safety and security were discussed. Some residents expressed strong views in favor of new railings and that a fenceless area would attract antisocial behavior.





Image 10: Option 2 of the College Gardens Design proposal presented to the public in 2011: Central path leading to two large bended benches (layout with railings)



Image 11. Option 3 of the College Gardens Design proposal presented to the public in 2011: Multiple landscaped areas accessible from all side, gardens and left without railings

Following this public engagement there was intention to provide new railings to match the adjoining properties with railing bars individually lead caulked into new reconstituted Portland stone plinths. However, because of budget limitations the existing railings are to be kept, made good, missing parts replaced and old foundations from previous sets of railings removed. The proposed gates will be 1200mm wide and will be made same as the existing steel railings, painted in black, providing wheelchair access.

The railings at the northern apex of the gardens are proposed to be pushed back slightly to give more space to the new north entry gate and the large London plane, creating an attractive access. Without this realignment an entrance at this end of the site would not be possible due to the crowded nature of items in this area. Reference will be made to the original park line by means of pavement materials and colors (see attached design drawings).

Perimeter bed/Planting

It follows the shape of the footway/Gardens/railings. It contains 14 individual trees. Trees have been assessed during a survey (see attached document by Treework Environmental Practice, 26 October 2018). Trees are located within the site boundary or located outside of the site boundary but are close enough to potentially

influence or be influenced by the proposal.

Trees, tree groups and hedges have been assigned according to the BS5837 categorisation process:

1 tree (T9) has been assessed as **Category A** 'trees of high quality', 10 (T2-T4, T6, T7, T10-T14) trees have been assessed as **Category B** 'trees of moderate quality', and as such are likely to be considered by the local planning authority as posing a significant material constraint and 3 (T1, T5 and T8) trees have been assessed as **Category C** 'trees of low quality', and whilst still a 'material consideration' are likely to be considered by the local planning authority as posing a minimal constraint. None of the trees have been assessed as **Category U** 'those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained' regardless of land use and as such pose no



Image 12. Historical Image inside the gardens - circa 1960

constraint on development.

The perimeter bed soil is in poor quality, which has not supported plants/flowers for over 10 years and the concrete footings of at least three sets of railings. Grass only emerged since Camden introduced a pruning scheme and smaller tree crowns allowed more daylight in.

Pathway

New York Stone paving has been laid around the triangular site perimeter with smaller granite sets around the fountain, the phone kiosk and at the crossings. The paving area around the mature London Plan tree outside the gardens is in golden Flexi-pave, allowing natural watering of the roots. 25mm Flexi-pave is laid on top of 35mm gravel, around the tree perimeter, incorporating a line of small granite set edging. Inside the gardens, the new pedestrian path is proposed in resin-bound gravel.

Furniture

Smaller curved new timber benches are proposed at the entrances in continuation of the current use of the park. A larger, inviting bench is proposed towards Wilmot Place. The informal central lawn will invite the use of the bench from both sides, allowing outward and inward-looking.

The existing St Pancras bollards have been removed and positioned closer to the fountain, supporting the new entrance. An attempt will be made to persuade BT to stabilize their phone box and if possible, to turn it through 90 degrees to enable better access and better security oversight by neighbors.

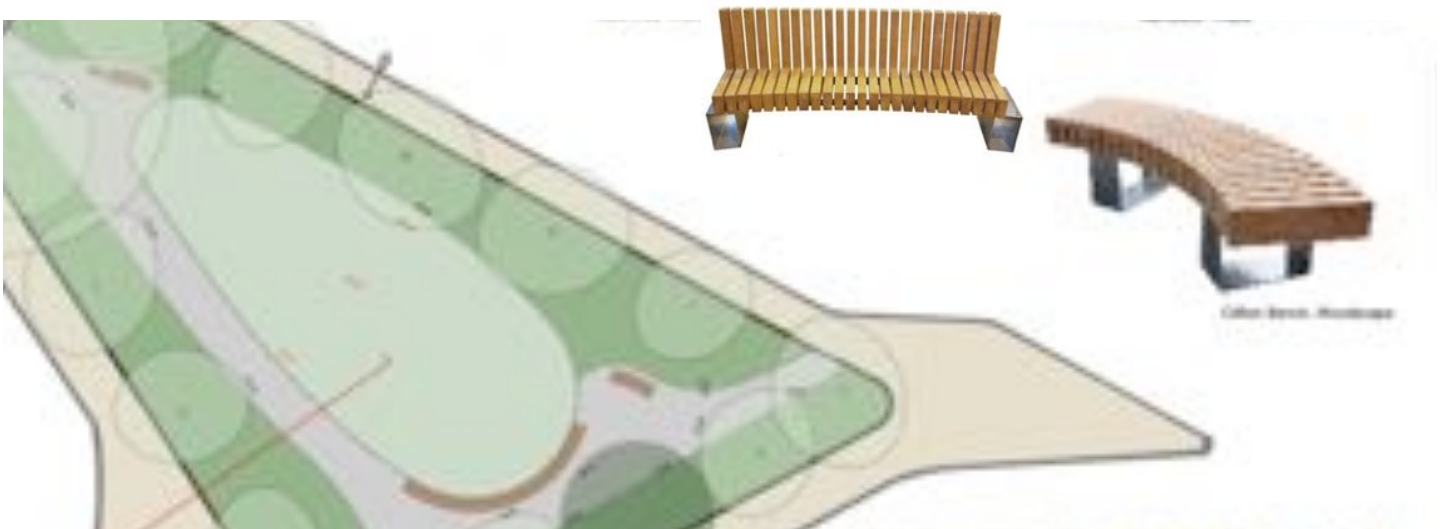


Image 13. College Gardens, benches of the proposed design, 2018

Street Lighting

A new street light is proposed on the norther Kentish Town access improving security and the experience. Installation is to be managed by the highways lighting team as a separate project.

5 Policies Considered

The following LB Camden policies have been considered:

- Unitary Development Plan - Core Strategy, 2010, Chapter 24 (Design) and Policies 7.4 (Local Character) and 7.6 Architecture of the London Plan 2011
- The London Plan 2011, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London Chapter 7, London's Living Spaces and Places
- Local Development Framework

Regarding the heritage of the gardens, following sites have been used

- London Parks & Gardens Trust Inventory (www.londongardensonline.org.uk)
- <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/>

6 Summary

The following points describe in short the outlined proposal:

- Improved access to the gardens by introducing new gates on all three sides
- Maximizing the green lawn area
- Make good the current railings
- Using eco-friendly, modern materials to improve the experience in the gardens, while keeping and maintaining the existing landscaping (Flexi-pave around the mature London Plane tree, replacing asphalt by resin-bound pedestrian footpaths)
- Improved security and experience