

Design Statement for Planning Application

Fleming park paddling pool and play areas

July 2024

Project Overview

This planning application seeks permission for specific elements of the proposed landscape works at Fleming Park Paddling Pool, Passfield Avenue, which include mounding works and the relocation of the existing vehicular access gate. The project aims to provide an improved setting for the paddling pool, enhance the natural play value, soften the existing, excessively hard urban character of the play areas and improve the functionality of the site, contributing positively to the local environment and community.

Scope of Work Requiring Planning Permission

- **Play Area and Paddling Pool:**

Works requiring planning permission:

- **Mound creation within the paddling pool and play areas:**
 - Creation of new earth mounds and strategic planting to enhance the landscape, some of which are located in flood zone 3 and will require compensatory storage. Not all the work requires planning permission, only the fill volumes over and above that allowed under permitted development rights are within the 'red line' area.
- **Relocation of Vehicular Access Gates:**
 - Moving the access gates and installing a new drop kerb to highway specifications.

Other works which do not require planning permission, details provided to give context of the whole project:

- **Demolition of Existing Sunshades:**
 - Demolition and disposal of the existing steel sunshades that are at the end of their life.
- **Commissioning New Shading Structures:**
 - Commissioning new shading structures through public art to replace the existing ones, funded through public art s.106.
 - Planning condition sought if the structures are going to be over 4m in height.
- **Replacement Shading/Increased Shade:**
 - Tree planting to increase shaded areas and improve the setting.
- **Removal of Tarmac:**
 - Removal of some damaged and unnecessary tarmac areas.

- **New banks, tree and shrub planting along Passfield Avenue and in the vicinity of the paddling pool:**
 - Creation of new earth mounds over existing grass and excavated tarmac areas.
 - Landscape works to include grass and tree and shrub planting.
- **Junior Skate Area:**
 - Potential removal of the existing half pipe
 - Procurement and installation of new skate ramps/ tracks for a junior skate park/trail.
 - Removal of the two existing skate ramps and surface replacement.

Design elements and aims

The design approach is centred on functionality, sustainability, aesthetic enhancement, and community benefit. Key elements include:

- **Functionality:** Improved access grass seating areas for the paddling pool and circulation within the site, providing natural play opportunities and practical benefits for users and visitors. New embankments and level changes within the paddling pool area. These will create a beach-style south facing sitting slope to the north of the play area and slightly raised levels to the west side to improve views of the paddling pool. Mitigation of atmospheric pollution from Passfield Avenue through raised banking and planting.
- Banks and planting will also help mitigate noise from the paddling pool and play areas that might affect neighbouring residents. They will also deliver valuable natural play opportunities.
- **Sustainability:** The project enhances biodiversity through tree and shrub planting and utilises inert subsoil and topsoil imported from other development sites that would otherwise be sent to landfill.
- **Visual Harmony:** The design integrates with the existing site features, enhancing the overall appearance. while retaining the existing natural assets.

Other impacts on Local Community

The proposed works are expected to have a positive impact on the local community and environment:

- **Visual Improvement:** The mounding works and planting will create an attractive landscape feature that enhances the visual appeal of the site, offering some screening. The tallest mound will be mostly screened from the road by tree and tall native shrub planting.
- **Safety and Access:** Relocating the access gate will improve safety and accessibility for the delivery of pool chemicals.

Detailed descriptions of items requiring Planning Permission

New highway access details- refer also to main layout plan

This is required to enable the safe expansion of the area for older children's play and to improve the ease of access. Delivery drivers find the existing entrance difficult because the built-out on the opposite side of the road reduces the road width.

There is also a large oak tree within the edge of the visibility splay of the existing entrance. Whilst there is an existing hawthorn tree with the splay for the proposed new entrance, this hawthorn is only a small fraction of the diameter of the oak. The hawthorn is only thought to have a short remaining lifespan (say 10 years) and will not be replaced because of newly planted trees nearby within the park. Whilst the oak in the existing access splay is in its 'stag-headed' final life stage, this could still last for many decades and, due to its importance, would be replaced when it dies or becomes unsafe. Visibility in the new access area will be improved marginally immediately and further improved when the hawthorn tree dies in the medium term.

The pedestrian access and build-out at the existing entrance will be retained. The new access is within the canopy of a mature tree and the new access will be designed using as far as possible a no-dig process, using a proprietary plastic grid approved by the EBC tree officer to spread the vehicle load laterally. Other details of the construction will be to HCC highway standards. Substantial areas of existing tarmac within the rooting area of the tree will also be removed as part of the project which will improve the tree roots' access to water, oxygen and nutrients in these areas.

Flood zone compensation storage

We have received a 'Flood risk assessment data' study in relation to this project from the Environment Agency, a copy of which is included as Appendix A. The EA require compensatory flood water storage for any introduced fill within the Flood zone 3 plus an allowance for climate change.

Almost all of the imported fill within this zone is within the slightly raised area between the paddling pool and the railings along the western side. By agreement with Mr Robert Waite of the EA we have taken point 3 on the plan on page 22 of this study as correlating most closely with this above area. Please note that we have commissioned a topographical survey, and the levels are shown on our detailed mounds layout plan and sections. The actual levels in this area are substantially higher than identified on the EA's Flood risk assessment data' study. Nevertheless, the principles still apply.

Mr Waite has recommended a margin for climate change of 8cm (as identified against point 3 of the table on p.22 of their study. We have identified the level at which the boundary of the Flood Zone 3 sits at point 3 (see flood areas plan) as 12.48 AOD. Adding the 8cm to this gives a height of 12.53 AOD. We have used this level to calculate the volume of flood storage displaced. The areas and calculations are shown on the flood areas plan, together with the calculations. We have also produced a number of cross-sections to further illustrate the flood storage calculation and general mounding design approach.

The EA recommend a method of calculation using 'slices' though a cross section. We have used this method, but in order to increase accuracy, have broken the cross-sectional slices

down into sections. These are referred to on our plan as 'slice sections'. The slice sections relate to specific cross sections drawn through the proposed site at areas of interest to the EA.

The relevant cross sections have been calculated using CAD measurements. In summary we calculate the flood storage displaced as being 7.5 M3. In order to allow a margin for error we are proposing that this be re-provided by means of 8 M3 provided by a new elongated shallow depression to the north of the existing railings and outside the Flood Zone 3 (+cc). This would be around 3m wide and mostly 200mm deep- rising to 300mm depending on the adjacent levels. This is likely to be dry for the vast majority of the time.

Consultation and Community Engagement

Informal consultations amongst paddling pool users were carried out ahead of an earlier phase of this development. Local stakeholders have also been engaged with the design process. Further informal consultation and community engagement will be carried out over this summer period while the paddling pool is open, both with users and nearby residents to ensure that the proposed works align with local needs and preferences. Consultation and community engagement will also be carried out on the public art element of the project.

Conclusion

This planning application outlines the careful consideration and thoughtful design applied to the mounding works and relocation of the access gate. The proposed changes will enhance the site's functionality, aesthetic value, and environmental sustainability. We respectfully request the approval of this application to proceed with the planned improvements.

APPENDIX A

Flood risk assessment data: a report by the Environment agency.