

Committee(s):	Date(s):	
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	8 th July 2013	
Subject: Progress Report on the Enhancement of the Landscaping Works to the Bull Path and Surrounding Area at Parliament Hill Fields	Public	
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion	
<u>Summary</u> This report informs members on the progress of the landscape enhancement works to the Bull Path and surrounding areas. The works was undertaken by the keeping staff at Parliament Hill supported by Heath's tractor driving team. The report updates members on the future works planned for Winter/Spring 2013/14. Recommendation That the Consultative Committee note the successful implementation of the landscape enhancement scheme and provide their views on the future works for 2013/14 as set out in the report.		

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation has a duty under the foundation legislation, the Hampstead Heath Act 1871 to maintain the natural aspect of the Heath. An aspirational goal set in the Hampstead Heath Management Plan 2007-2017 for the Parliament Hill Triangle is to:

"Improve the natural appearance of this area and enhance it as the major gateway to the Heath. This will include the entrances from Highgate Road, Gordon House Road, Savernake Road and Nassington Road".

Reducing the Municipal Appearance

2. As part of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid in 2007, a master plan for the Parliament Hill Triangle was agreed by the Management Committee. Although the bid was unsuccessful, the master plan provided a blue print for the future management of this important gateway to the southern part of Hampstead Heath. Up to this point, the development of the Parliament Hill Triangle had been undertaken on an ad-hoc basis with individual projects being implemented with little consideration to the overall impact on the area.
3. This has led to the area having a very different feel to the remainder of the Heath, characterised by municipal fencing, ornamental shrub plantings and entrances with no obvious connection to the wider Heath. There is no genuine

sense of arrival and welcome for visitors to an open space of such historical importance.

4. During the past six years the following works have been implemented as projects approved in the annual work plan for the Parliament Hill Triangle:
 - Removal of the mixed planted ornamental shrub border in front of the café together with dismantling of the chestnut wooded fencing and creating grass meadow area.
 - Planting of native hedging whips (buckthorn, blackthorn, hawthorn, rose species etc. in the cricket enclosure to screen the new William Ellis School building and provide a habitat for invertebrates and nesting birds
 - Relaxation of the mowing regime and the encouragement of longer growing areas which are now managed as part of the Heaths overall grass land management policy.
 - Spray tar and chip gravel of the tarmac paths in front of the café and Gordon House Road entrance.
 - Introduction of three wild flower meadows, above the athletics track, Dukes Field and the Parliament Hill Bandstand.
 - Landscape enhancement works at Gordon House Road entrance and in front of the education centre.

Current Position

5. The Bull Path, as it is known locally, is one of five major entrances into the Parliament Hill Fields area of Hampstead Heath. The pathway had a municipal appearance, with a densely planted ornamental shrub border; an unwelcoming entrance off Highgate Road and a “tunneling effect” created by metal railings and hawthorn hedge either side of the path – Photographs 1 and 3.
6. In order to take the concepts of the Parliament Hill Triangle master-plan forward, a detailed vision for the Bull Path and surrounding areas, including proposals, plans and interpretation boards was produced by DCLA Limited and Manor Creative, appendices 1-3. The overall driver was to bring the rural character of the Heath into the Parliament Hill area and reducing its municipal appearance.
7. Work began in February 2013 to clear the non-indigenous shrub border leaving the large oak tree, selected smaller trees and native shrubs. All plant material was shredded on site and disposed of by taking to London Borough of Islington, Hornsey Road, off Holloway Road recycling depot. 150 linear meters of 1m high black metal fencing has been removed and is in the process of being recycled.
8. The following works were undertaken and finished in late Spring 2013, for a comprehensive plant list see appendix 4:

- To provide privacy to William Ellis School, a 1.3m high woven screen was erected along the boundary – this was agreed in advance with the school principle.
- 196 linear meters of native hedging was planted along the William Ellis School boundary.
- 296 m² of native planting has been planted at the Bull Path entrance adjacent to William Ellis School.
- 1000 m² of new turf has been laid. This will be left to grow long with a small strip of mown grass at the front.
- 45 linear meters of native hedge and 30m² native plants has been planted at the Keepers Lodge Garden at Highgate Road Entrance. The hedge has been planted close to the metal fence so that it will eventually grow through and soften the metal structure.
- 144 liners meters of native hedge have been planted around tennis courts 5-10.

The hawthorn hedge on Highgate Road and around the Bowling Green has been reduced by 20% in order to encourage new basal growth and thicken the base of the hedge.

9. The landscaping works were completed in late spring 2013 – photographs 2 and 4. There were two constructive comments received on the project, however, the vast majority of the public welcomed the rural change and passed on their appreciated verbal comments to keeping staff on duty. One member of the public sent positive email – appendix 5.

Photograph 1 – Before Landscape Works (view 1)



Photograph 2 – After Landscape Works (View 1)



Photograph 3 – Before landscape works (View 2)



Photograph 4 – Completed landscape works (View 2)



Future Works

10. The following phase of works is proposed to be implemented in the winter and spring of 2013/14:
- Removal of hawthorn edge along the Bull Path to open up the petanque lawn area.
 - Planting a community orchard with British native trees.
 - Repositioning of the tennis hut to open the views up Parliament Hill towards the Stone of Free Speech.
 - Removal of metal barriers and enhancement to the Highgate Road entrance, including Keepers Lodge – appendix 6.
 - Installation of 6 bicycle stands and granite sets in front of the poplar trees by the entrance to William Ellis School playground and farmers marked. These will be similar in design to the stands installed in Golders Hill Park in spring 2013– photograph 4.

Proposed Bicycle Stands



Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The landscape enhancement works supports several of the City Together Strategy - The heart of World Class City 2008-2014 themes, including: *... supports our communities ... protects, promotes and enhances our environment ... is vibrant and culturally rich.*
12. The landscape design also shares the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2012-2015 aims & objectives: *"Deliver sustainable working practice to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for future generations .. Manage, develop and empower a capable and motivated work force to achieve high standards of safety and performance".*

13. The native plants used in the design supports the Overriding Policy D1 in the Hampstead Heath Management Plan Part 1 – Towards a Plan for the Heath 2007-2017, *“Conserve and enhance the historic and planned elements of the Heath’s designed landscapes, while improving their appearance and public facilities”*.

Financial and Risk Implications

14. The costs associated with the implementation of the landscape enhancement works have been met from the Superintendents local risk budget.
15. There are no legal, property implications or human resource implications.

Conclusion

16. The landscape enhancement scheme has been successful in transforming the municipal appearance.
17. The works have been welcomed by the general public and has improved their sense of arrival to one of the main southern gateways onto Hampstead Heath.
18. Parliament Hill keepers and the Heath tractor team have been extremely motivated in carrying out the project works despite the extremely cold winter and have welcomed to the rural landscaping change.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Plan Highgate Road Entrances, Parliament Hill
Appendix 2	Approach View 1
Appendix 3	Approach View 2
Appendix 4	Planting List
Appendix 5	Email from member of public
Appendix 6	Highgate Road Entrance sketch

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