

Queenstown Road Open Space Management Plan 2008 – 2013

Index
Timetable
Site description
Wandsworth Open Space Study
Current management
Future management
Action plan

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in May 2008

Progress against action plan to be monitored annually via the Parks Service
AQPR.

Site Description:

- Site Name: Queenstown Road Open Space
- Location: Queenstown Road Open Space is bounded to the north by the flank wall of number 149 Queenstown Road; to the east by Queenstown Road itself; to the south by the flank wall of number 139 Queenstown Road and to the west by the rear gardens walls of numbers 41 to 51 Ingelow Street
- Map showing location is available on request.
Map showing internal layout is available on request
- Grid reference: The grid reference of the bottom south west corner of the site is TQ28617626
- Council Ward: Queenstown Ward. Elected members for this area are:
Cllr David Walden (Conservative)
Cllr Mike Todd (Conservative)
Cllr Ms Dee Church (Conservative)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 0.05 ha (558 square metres / 667 square yards).
- Tenure: The site is owned by Wandsworth Borough Council and managed by the Council's Parks Service (part of the Department of Leisure and Amenity Service).
- Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service.
- Designations: The site is designated as "Canine Faeces Removal Area" under the Councils Dog Bye Laws.

History:

The site of this open space was formerly two more houses in the terrace that continues on either side. During World War Two a bomb landed and effectively demolished the two missing houses.

The Abercrombie plan for post-war development included proposals for extended parkland. Many bombsites were used immediately as sites for pre-fabs to ease the housing shortage, or allotment sites to assist the war effort, where appropriate. A number of sites such as this were retained as open spaces and public gardens, in part to honour the memory of those killed in the bombing raids.

Site Features:

Queenstown Road Openspace is a small, enclosed area of mown amenity grass, planted beds and mature trees. A tarmac footpath leads to a small paved seating area at the rear. It is surrounded on 3 sides by housing, with ornamental railings to the road frontage.

There is one pedestrian entrance in Queenstown Road. There is no separate service gate

There are 4 free standing wooden park seats with 2 concrete litter bins and a dog "Poop-Scoop" bin.

There is no internal lighting although the site is reasonably well lit by surrounding street lights.

The park is locked at night.

The overall impression is of a worn area with limited appeal.

Safe & Secure:

All areas of the gardens are visible from both outside and inside the site, although some shrubs and the mounded grass area mask the seating area to some extent. The single gate may mean that users feel trapped or uncomfortable with no escape route.

The relatively low wall to the boundary with houses in Ingelow Road has caused concern to residents in those houses for some time.

Welcome:

There are no signs on the site, apart from that on the "poop scoop" dog bin. Although the site is designated as "Poop Scoop" under current bye laws, there are no signs to this effect except for on the single dog bin to the rear.

Evidence on site suggests several users are not complying with the bye law.

The single gate is not immediately obvious from the roadside and is stiff to open. A self closing mechanism on the gate is broken.

The enclosed nature of the site, and it's worn appearance, detracts from a sense of welcome.

The name of the site could be considered cumbersome.

Fairly dense shade, caused by the tree canopy and surrounding buildings, also adds to a lack of welcome.

Planted areas provide little colour or interest.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Shrub beds are weeded regularly. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste, although not all dog waste is being placed in the bins.

Occasionally drugs paraphernalia is found in some parks. A system is in place to ensure safe removal and recording of each incident by trained staff. This helps ensure staff and park users are protected, and Metropolitan and Parks Police informed. Steps to minimise drug use in parks can then be undertaken using this information. No drugs paraphernalia has been found at Queenstown Road Open Space to date.

The few trees on this site are principally semi-mature Sorbus and Cherry. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. There is a history of tree failure due to a combination of vandalism and soil compaction. No significant Pest or Disease problems have been recorded. The existing vegetation offers no screening of the adjacent buildings.

The site generally looks tidy and fairly well cared for, although worn and rather featureless. Shrubs at the entrance have been removed because of vandalism, leaving an empty shrub bed. The very thin grass cover is partly as a result of regular use by dogs, compounded by a heavy soil with poor drainage.

Health and well-being

Queenstown Road Openspace is essentially a small "sitting out" area, allowing people respite from a busy area.

Community involvement:

There is no known organised community involvement currently.

Service delivery:

Landscape maintenance, including maintenance of seats and bins, is carried out by contractor and monitored by the Parks Operational team based at Wandsworth Common.

Structural maintenance of paths and railings is the responsibility of the Premises section of the Leisure and Amenity Department.

Staff skills & knowledge:

Skills required to manage this site include basic horticultural maintenance including the use of mowing and strimming machinery. A higher level of knowledge is required for maintenance of trees. General building and engineering skills are required to maintain paths and railings.

Sustainable approach:

The site is generally managed without the use of pesticides or watering. Weeds are occasionally controlled with glyphosate.

Organic material, collected from all sites during maintenance operations, is composted and used, when suitable, for mulching and soil improvement of ornamental planted areas.

Finance:

Maintenance costs are met from Parks budgets covering all small parks. There is no separate budget for this site within the Parks Service.

Current Management:

All horticultural maintenance and litter clearance is as specified in the Parks Service Horticultural Maintenance contract, which includes all routine grass cutting, litter collection, weed clearance, shrub pruning and other routine horticultural tasks. All work that does not fall under this contract is carried out under additional works programmes by order with the main contractor or outside contractors depending on the scope of the work entailed.

Trees:

There are six mature trees on the site. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were in general good health at their last inspection.

Ornamental planting:

There are several planted areas that are weeded regularly and pruned as required. The planting is characterised by medium to tall growing shrubs that, for the most part, have been kept pruned at a low level to maintain site lines across the site. A large climbing plant, to the garden boundary of number 149 Queenstown Road, is allowed to grow to 2 metres so as to form some protection to residents at number 149. There is no planting to the bare flank walls of the houses to either side. One bed, at the entrance, is completely empty with the stump of a small tree evident at ground level.

Seats:

There are 4 freestanding seats. These are constructed of horizontal wooden planks on a metal frame. Seats are sound but with poor surface condition to the wood.

Bins:

There are 2 litterbins, placed at either side of the entrance. These are of concrete construction with decorative exposed aggregate finish (model from the "Braunton" range, manufactured and supplied by Townscape Products Ltd. The single dog bin is of red painted steel with a rubberised lid, model HG 33 manufactured and supplied by Earth Anchors plc. All 3 bins are in poor condition.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are surfaced in black tarmac with brick edging. The seating area is paved with 50 cm concrete paving slabs and brick, with another separate single seat set in an area of brick. All are relatively sound except for an area of tarmac footpath at the entrance that has been damaged by tree roots. All paving has a fine film of soil washed off surrounding grass and planted areas during a recent prolonged period heavy rain.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

An iron-railing fence, in need of painting, forms the boundary to the front of the site on Queenstown Road. There is one gated entrance. There is no separate service gate.

The entrance gate is stiff to open or close with a self closing mechanism that is not in working order.

Services:

There is no water, electricity, gas or telephone supply to the park.

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Routinely prune shrubs to maintain views through the site. Use low growing plants in any future replanting. Consider reduction in the height of the grass mound. Replace shrubs to front of seating area with low growing plants. Consider if a second gate is feasible. This might alleviate any sense of being trapped if a threatening situation arose. Alternatively, remove the railings completely. This could change the way the site is used by dog owners to the advantage of other potential users.

Welcome:

Install a new sign detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. Include details of dog bye laws.

Fit a small "PUSH" sign to the gate to help make it more visible. Remedy stiffness in opening the gate and investigate whether the self closing mechanism can be repaired.

Consider whether removal of the railings would encourage greater use. Consider changing the name of the site to something more attractive, such as Queenstown Green.

Alleviate shade from trees by selecting suitable species when replacing current trees and by selective pruning where suitable.

Clean & well maintained:

Replace litter bins and dog bin with Earth Anchors style bins.

Increase monitoring of dog bye laws to ensure all dog waste is placed in the bin provided.

Paint railings to Queenstown Road front if these are to be retained.

Replant empty shrub bed or grass over.

Carry out thorough cleaning of paved and grass areas to remove soil and dog waste.

Continue to replace those trees that have to be removed. Provide tree protection to avoid further damage to existing trees. Improve the age class diversity and species mix by planting additional trees. North and south boundaries would benefit from screening of the adjacent buildings. Provide appropriate tree protection to ensure new trees establish.

Health and well being:

There is limited scope to provide additional features.

Community involvement:

Install replacement cabinet sign to include area for temporary notices and community group contact information.

Sustainable approach:

Maintain restriction on use of chemicals. Use composted materials for mulching planted areas. Use recycled plastic seats etc where possible.

Queenstown Road Open Space Park Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
QOS101	To make Queenstown Road Openspace a place where people feel safe and secure	Ensure users can readily see all areas	Investigate feasibility of reducing height of grass mound		
QOS102			Replace shrubs to front of seating area with low growing plants		
QOS103			Consider if a second gate is feasible.		
QOS201	To make Queenstown Road Openspace welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide information on facilities within the park	Design and install new signs at each of the entrances to the park	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics
QOS202		Ensure users have ready access and egress	Order adjustment to stiff gate and investigate repair / replacement of self closing mechanism		
QOS203		Consider change of name	Consult ???		
QOS204		Consider removal of railings	Consult???		

Queenstown Road Open Space Park Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
QOS301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Increase use of dog and litter bins	Replace old bins. Include dog bye law signs fixed to dog bin and gate		Parks Service Parks Police
QOS302			Liaise with Parks Police to increase compliance with dog bye law		Parks Service
QOS303		Improve visual appearance	Paint railings	2008	
QOS304			Replant empty bed or grass over	???	
QOS305			Carry out thorough cleaning of grass and paved areas including seats	April 08	
QOS401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.	To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services
QOS501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Queenstown Road Openspace.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Find any local groups	Ongoing	Parks Service