

Christchurch Gardens Management Plan 2008 – 2013

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Written for and on behalf of Wandsworth Council Parks Service by:

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To be approved by Wandsworth Council Environment and Leisure Committee
in May 2008

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

Site Description:

- Site Name: Christchurch Gardens
- Location: Christchurch Gardens is bounded to the north by Battersea Park Road; to the east by the gardens of Christ's Church / St Stephens Church; to the south by Cabul Road and to the west by a commercial one-storey building.
- 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 TQ27177618
- Council Ward: Latchmere Ward, Elected members for this area are:
Cllr Tony Belton (Labour)
Cllr Mrs Leonie Cooper (Labour)
Cllr Maurice Johnson (Labour)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 1160 square metres (0.11 ha / 0.26 acres).
- 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 gardens are designated as "Canine Faeces Removal Area" under the Councils Dog Bye Laws. The Multiple Dog walking Bye Laws also apply to this site. This limits the number of dogs that can be walked without obtaining a licence from the Council (Parks Police)

Christchurch Gardens

Information sources:

Metropolitan Public Gardens Association,
Joyce Bellamy , 348 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3ND (020-8648 9469)

The triangular open space at the junction of Battersea Park Road and Cabul Road known as Christchurch Gardens was first laid out as "an outdoors drawing room" in 1885 by the Battersea Vestry. Other public parks of this date in the Borough are Battersea Park (1858) and Vicarage Gardens, opened in 1895 as Battersea Wharf.

The Battersea area changed greatly in the nineteenth century, starting as a small Surrey Thames-side village of market gardens, with a fairly rural aspect, and ending the century as a densely populated, industrial railway town with wharves and lightermen along the river front.

The old village of Battersea had long enjoyed some notoriety north of the river as a place of petty crimes and criminals, viz 'Pickpocket Lane', an earlier name for York Road. On the far side of the village, Battersea Fields had seen the famous duel involving the Duke of Wellington. This plus the location and reputation of the 'Red House' pub led towards a move to improve the area. (A Royal Commission investigating the condition of London's housing led to the creation of three large public parks at Hackney, Kennington, and Battersea. Battersea Park was laid out in 1850s with a margin of land earmarked for development to fund it. The margins to the park failed to attract investment and the park was put under the control of the Board of Works and then the London County Council.)

Christchurch Gardens are adjacent to Christ and St Stephen Church and churchyard, built in 1849 to cater for the expanding needs of the growing Battersea village. The original Christ Church was demolished by a direct bomb hit in 1944, to be rebuilt in 1959. Inside the picturesque shelter was a bronze plaque dedicated to the memory of the civilian war dead of Battersea. This plaque was stolen (probably for scrap metal) in 2007 and replaced by a granite memorial courtesy of a local Co-op Funeral parlour.

Outside the gardens on Cabul Road is a Metropolitan Drinking Trough.

Site Features:

Christchurch Gardens is a small, enclosed area with grass, rose beds and trees. Formal hedges and original ornamental railings enclose the site. An original feature is a large, semi-circular, brick built shelter, with built in seating. A memorial plaque on the shelter, stolen in 2007, has been replaced by local businesses. This commemorates those Battersea residents who died in the Second World War.

The two, pedestrian only, entrances are both in Cabul Street.

A tarmac footpath leads around the park.

There are 2 free standing park seats, as well as seating for twelve people in the shelter. There are 5 litter bins (of three different types) and a dog "Poop-Scoop" bin.

The site is fairly well lit by surrounding street lights.

Safe & Secure:

All areas of the gardens are visible once users are through the entrances, with the exception of a small area behind the shelter. This area, however, is visible from Battersea Park Road.

Those sitting in the shelter are not easily visible from Battersea Park Road, and, as Cabul Road is used less by pedestrians, the shelter has been used by street drinkers, rough sleepers and others on occasion.

Only one of the two gates is in use, which may mean users feeling trapped if a threatening situation arose. It is also perhaps less than ideal that there is no gate on the Battersea Park Road side of the park.

Welcome:

There is one cabinet style sign at the (currently permanently) locked entrance to the park. This is in poor condition and is of an older style. Two small signs, fixed to entrance pillars, are very faded and virtually illegible.

The gate currently being unlocked daily has two leaves, with only one being swung back in the opened position when the park is unlocked. This provides a very narrow access into the park.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Rose beds are weeded regularly, and hedges trimmed two or three times a year. There is a regular litter collection programme for both general litter and dog waste.

Occasionally, drugs paraphernalia is found in some parks. A system has been devised to ensure safe removal and recording of each incident. This helps to 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. Drugs paraphernalia has been found at Christchurch Gardens and action has been taken to deal with this problem. Footpaths are in good condition.

Entrance signs are poor and need replacement.

There is evidence of recently repaired damage to the seating in the shelter.

This site contains predominantly semi-mature trees. There is a mix of native and non-native tree species. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. There is no significant Pest or Disease problem and no evidence of recent vandalism.

Health and well-being

Christchurch Gardens is essentially a small “sitting out” area, and provides a destination to walk to. Passive use of the area also contributes to users well being.

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 buildings 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. Building and engineering skills are required to maintain structures, 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 and three young saplings. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were in general good health at their last inspection.

Ornamental planting:

Privet hedges, climbing plants at the shelter and three ornamental rose beds are pruned or trimmed as required.

Seats:

There are two freestanding seats within this park. These are constructed of horizontal wooden planks, painted dark green, with a steel frame.

Bins:

There are five litterbins, placed around the site. Two are constructed of timber slats surrounding a steel liner, manufactured and supplied by Lister Lutyens Ltd. Two bins are of concrete construction with decorative exposed aggregate finish (model from the "Braunton" range, manufactured and supplied by Townscape Products Ltd. One bin is of steel with a rubberised lid, model HG 66 manufactured and supplied by Earth Anchors plc The colour is dark green (RAL 6005) Fixed in conjunction with this bin is one dog bin, identical except for colour, being red.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths are surfaced with black tarmac.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park.

Fencing:

An original, decorative, iron-railing fence forms the boundary on three sides. The fourth, western, side is bounded by a 3 metre high wooden palisade style fence. This fence is the responsibility of the owner of the adjacent building. There are two gated entrances to the park. One is routinely accessible by users. There is no separate service gate.

Services:

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

Future Management:

Safe & Secure:

Reduce height of perimeter hedge by approximately 30 cm to improve sight-lines across the site. Consider further reduction at entrances

Routinely prune shrubs and trim hedges to maintain views through the site.

Only one gate is currently being unlocked daily with only one leaf of the gate being pushed open. Contact Parks Police to ascertain the reason for this / correct this

A review of the northern boundary should be undertaken to see if a new gate could be installed to allow ready access from that side. This might alleviate any sense of being trapped if a threatening situation arose.

Welcome:

Install new sign, to be placed at one of the entrances, detailing the features within the park and relevant contacts. This would give a greater sense of place and a better welcome. Remove faded signs at entrance pillars

Include, in any review of a new gate on the northern boundary, the advantage that this would also allow use by people waiting at the adjacent bus stop.

Clean & well maintained:

Five litter bins are unnecessary at a site this size, and contribute a sense of clutter. Remove the four older litter bins and replace as necessary with Earth Anchors style bin/s

The area overall looks tidy and cared for, with minimal work to the seating in the shelter being needed. Some work may be required to the roof of the shelter.

Ensure area out of sight, behind shelter, is not neglected

Replace those trees that have to be removed and review the species and age class diversity. Additional tree or shrub planting along the western boundary could help screen the adjacent building.

Health and well being:

Improvements listed above should help increase use of the gardens and make an additional contribution to the wellbeing of residents. Consider cycle parking racks.

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.

Christchurch Gardens Park Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
CcG101	To make Christchurch Gardens a place where people feel safe and secure	Ensure users can readily see all areas	Reduce height of perimeter hedge by approximately 30cm	??	Parks Service
CcG102		Ensure users have ready access and egress	Investigate possibility of additional gate at Battersea Park Road boundary		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
CcG103			Investigate reason for one of existing gates being kept locked. Remedy if possible		Parks Service Parks Police
CcG201	To make Christchurch Gardens welcoming and define a sense of place	To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances.	Replace sign at entrance to the park. Provide additional signs as needed	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics
CcG301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Remove obsolete litter bins and replace with one or more new.	Order new bin/s		Parks Service
CcG302		Improve tree stock	Remove, replace, protect as needed.		

Christchurch Gardens Park Management Plan 2007

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
CcG401	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
CcG501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Christchurch Gardens.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Contact any local groups	Ongoing	Parks Service