

# **Dorothy Road Open Space Management Plan 2008 – 2013**

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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: Dorothy Road Open Space  
It is also known as Lavender Gardens
- Location: Dorothy Road Open Space is bounded to the north by the flank wall of number 37 Dorothy Road; to the east by Dorothy Road; to the south by the flank wall of number 17 Dorothy Road. Part of the western perimeter is bounded by ASDA supermarket and part by a private playgroup.
- 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 TQ27637561
- Council Ward: Shaftsbury Ward, Elected members for this area are:  
Cllr Guy Senior (Conservative)  
Cllr James Cousins (Conservative)  
Cllr Paul Ellis (Conservative)
- Site Area: The area of the site totals 1300 square metres  
(0.13 ha /  $\frac{1}{3}$  of an acre).
- 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 Services).
- Management: The site is managed and maintained by Wandsworth Borough Council, with responsibility for the site taken by the Parks Service, with the exception of the playground, which is managed and maintained by the Childrens Services Department.
- Designations: The gardens are designated as "No Dogs" under the Councils Dog Bye Laws.

## **Wandsworth Open Space Study**

In 2006, the Wandsworth Planning Office carried out an Open Space Study. As part of that Study, a quality assessment of all of the open spaces in the Borough was carried out. The range and condition of facilities within each open space were assessed using a scoring criterion derived from the Civic Trust Green Flag standard assessment, which is also consistent with the GLA guidance.

The criteria included the assessment of the quality of natural and landscape features, conservation of buildings and structures, provision of interpretation facilities, standards of arboricultural management, whether the space was welcoming, its accessibility and safety, signage, levels of personal security, dog-fouling, cleanliness, standards of horticultural maintenance and the overall appropriateness and quality of provision of facilities for the site.

All aspects were scored between 0 and 10, with below 5 being poor, 5-6 Fair, 7 good, 8 very good, 9 excellent and 10 exceptional.

In this assessment, Dorothy Road Open Space had an overall quality average score of **7.4**, which puts it in the 'good' rating. Suggested improvements included minor works to paths and planting, plus additional seats.

Wandsworth Parks Service

Historic notes towards Dorothy Road Open Space

This open space is one of several in Battersea that were newly created as public parks from areas of derelict land following World War II bomb damage. Others include: Heathbrook Park, Montefiore Street Gardens, Queenstown Road Open Space, and Shillington Street Open Space

Some public parks, namely Battersea Park, Christchurch Gardens, and Latchmere Recreation Ground, had all been laid out many years earlier. The areas that were to become Elspeth Road Open Space, Falcon Park, Harroway Road Open Space, Fred Wells Gardens and York Gardens had also suffered in the Blitz. Their transformation into open spaces followed a different path of decision making and funding.

Battersea was a target during the war due to the abundant convergence of railway connections. Parts of Battersea Park and Clapham Common were laid out as allotments during the War. Many parks were used for 'prefabs' to house those who had lost their homes. This temporary housing lasted in many cases well into the 1960s.

A scattering of bombs had demolished several small areas around Dorothy Road and Kathleen Road. Several of these were filled with prefabs for many years, at least into the 1970s. However, as part of the development of the supermarket and car park off Lavender Hill, it enabled provision of a passageway from Latchmere Road through to Kathleen Road and Dorothy Road. Others of these small areas were sold for private residential housing. One area on Dorothy Road was maintained as the open space.

**Site Features:**

Dorothy Road Open Space is a small, enclosed area of mown amenity grass, several mature trees, children's play equipment, and planted areas around boundaries. One of the principal uses of the site is as a pedestrian access route to the ASDA superstore, during park opening times. It also provides welcome relief in an otherwise very built up area

A tarmac footpath, with paved seating areas at each side, leads from Dorothy Road to a side entrance of ASDA superstore.

There are 4 free - standing seats and 2 narrow curved seats fixed to the outside of the low wall at the entrance gate in Dorothy Road. There is also 1 picnic table and 2 litter bins.

Boundaries are planted with tall mature shrubs.

There is no internal lighting and streetlights in Dorothy Road do not appear to help illuminate the area.

The grass area and picnic table are enclosed by the playground fencing and are not accessible except by walking through the playground.

The overall impression of the site is of a footpath to ASDA, rather than as a park in it's own right.

**Safe & Secure:**

The footpath leading to the Asda supermarket is not well lit. Visibility from Dorothy Road is good during the day, and has been improved by the recent removal of some shrubs.

Residents have reported problems of drug taking and youths causing a nuisance in the evenings. Seats and shrubs in the park, adjacent to the boundary of the house, have recently been relocated / severely reduced to help control this problem. At night, youths gain access by climbing the relatively low railings using the low wall as a step.

There is some evidence of street drinkers using the site during the day. A worn track through one of the shrub beds suggests that this is being used to hide behind, possibly to urinate.

The gates into the play area are not self-closing. This may allow dogs to inadvertently get into play areas and small children to get out.

The whole of the site are designated as "No Dogs" under current byelaws. Signs to this effect are fixed to both external gates.

Welcome:

Signs at entrances to the park are limited to detailing restrictions to the use of the playground and dog ban bye laws. The play sign is in poor condition and contains out of date contact telephone numbers.

The name Dorothy Road Open Space could be considered rather cumbersome and unattractive, and the alternative in use by some, Lavender Gardens, could be confusing, as there is a road to the far side of Lavender Hill with the same name.

Steps at the ASDA entrance restrict access to wheelchair users and are not ideal for those with prams and buggies, but do prevent supermarket trolleys being dumped in the gardens.

The grass area, including the picnic table is not accessible without walking through the playground.

Planted areas provide little colour and the former sitting area is untidy.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. Shrub beds are weeded regularly and pruned routinely in winter. There is a regular litter collection programme for general litter. The site suffers from occasional fly-tipping of garden waste and small amounts of builders waste. This is dealt with as required.

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. No drugs paraphernalia has been found at Dorothy Road Open Space in recent months.

This site contains a mixture of native and non-native trees. There is good age class diversity with trees ranging from young to over mature. The routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. There is a large Ash tree to the north of the site with extensive trunk decay and a limited Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE). There is no recent vandalism although old bark wounds suggest this may have been an issue in the past.

The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by the Wandsworth Parks Police, weekly recorded inspections by Council staff and quarterly safety inspections made by technical staff. There is, in addition, an annual inspection of all Council owned playgrounds carried out by an independent inspector.

Works have recently taken place to replace two items of play equipment suitable for toddlers, including renovation of associated safety surface. The gardens overall look tidy and cared for, but with some areas tired and worn.

Health and well being

Dorothy Road Open Space has a play area, which provides for play and exercise of children. Passive use of the picnic area and ornamental area also contribute, although this area is currently enclosed as part of the playground.

Community involvement:

There is no known organised community involvement currently.

Service delivery:

Landscape maintenance is carried out by contractor and monitored by the Parks Operational team based at Wandsworth Common.

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

Playground maintenance is the responsibility of the Childrens Services 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 structures and equipment such as paths, railings and the playground.

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. Playground maintenance is carried out through the Childrens Services budgets.

**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.

Play equipment:

The Councils Playgrounds Officer manages the facility and the associated fencing and gates.

Trees:

There are 7 large mature trees and several smaller 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 areas of ornamental planting around all boundaries. These are weeded regularly and pruned as required. The planting in these areas is characterised by tall growing shrubs, which, for the most part, have been kept pruned at a low level to address security issues.

Seats:

There are 4 seats within this park including 3 in the play area. These are wooden and the same style as those used by the Department of Technical Services on streets in Wandsworth. They are sound but with poor surface condition to the wood. There are 2 wooden, bench type seats, fixed outside the external gate and facing Dorothy Road. These are fairly sound but with some loose boards.

There is 1 wooden picnic table, with metal frame, in the grass area. This is also sound but with poor surface condition to the wood.

Bins:

There are 2 litterbins, with wooden slats to the outside, which match the seats. These are in very poor condition. Litterbins are placed in association with benches. There are no dog bins as the whole site is designated dog free.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths and hard surface areas are surfaced with black tarmac, with seating areas bordered in brick. These surfaces look sound but tired. There are two tiers of brick steps installed to provide access to ASDA. The play area has safety surfacing installed under individual pieces of equipment.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park and street lighting has little effect due to the dense tree canopy.

Fencing:

1.5 metre high metal railings, on a low brick wall, with one pedestrian entrance double gate, form the Dorothy Road (eastern) boundary.

1.8 metre high chain-link fencing forms the northern and most of the western boundaries. As part of the provision of an entrance to the ASDA superstore, this has been replaced with 1.8 metre high railings and pedestrian double gates at the section that forms the boundary with ASDA.

The flank wall of the adjacent property forms the southern boundary.

There are 2 pedestrian gated entrances to the park (with no separate service gate).

1.6 metre high metal railings separate the sitting area and ASDA access from the playground and grass area.

Low knee rails enclose the planted areas.

Services:

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

## **Future Management:**

### Safe & Secure:

Continue discussions with residents and Parks Police to attempt to alleviate problems of youths causing nuisance.

Consider removing the remaining seat from outside the play area. Seats and a picnic table were recently moved from the seating area immediately adjacent to number 37 Dorothy Road, following complaints of nuisance, but the remaining seat may still be close enough to continue to cause youths to congregate. Renovate fixed seats outside Dorothy Road gate to provide an alternative if this seat is removed (although there is seating in ASDA if this is considered inappropriate).

Routinely prune shrubs to maintain views through the site. Consider replacing taller growing shrubs with alternative lower growing planting if funds allow.

It may not be feasible to install a self-closing mechanism to the current playground gate, as this is a double gate. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of creating a new gateway directly into the play area.

Along Dorothy Road the street lamp columns are close to the tree canopy in the park. The dense leaf canopy means that less than ideal light levels reach the park itself. This should be borne in mind when deciding upon appropriate tree works following the next inspection.

### Welcome:

Design and install more welcoming entrance signs containing more positive information about the park and relevant contacts. Investigate renaming the site. As there are currently no entrance signs to specify a name, this may be relatively straightforward to achieve. Dorothy Gardens may be a suitable choice. Three redundant signposts should be removed or reused. An improved replacement for the old playground sign, currently fixed at Dorothy Road entrance gate, should be located to the gate of the playground itself. Investigate the realignment of the playground railings to allow adult access to the grass area and picnic table.

Tidy the former sitting area, adding plants for colour and interest.

### Clean & well maintained:

Replace or renovate seats and replace litter bins. Consider if more seats or bins are needed. Renovate or replace the picnic table

Investigate the possibility of cleaning or improving the existing tarmac surfaces, or remove sections now redundant and replace with ornamental planting.

Maintain monitoring of dog exclusion byelaws.

Consider removal of the low knee rails surrounding the shrub areas, as shrubs are now mature. This would help reduce any sense of clutter. It would be helpful, however, to retain these if shrub areas were to be replanted with lower growing plants. If this were the case these rails should be painted.

Continue to replace those trees that have to be removed with the aim of improving the species mix. If vandalism occurs, apply tree protection measures to the prominent trees.

Health and well being:

Investigate additional features that could be installed to encourage activity. Realign internal railings, if possible, to promote easier access to the grass area and picnic table

Community involvement:

Install new cabinet sign to include area for temporary notices and community group contact information.  
Contact adjacent childrens nursery and any other interested parties to discuss improving community involvement.

Sustainable approach:

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

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**ACTION PLAN**

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
DORd101	To make Dorothy Road Open Space a place where people feel safe and secure	Reduce incidents of nuisance caused by youths in seating area.	Monitor effect of moving seats	July 08	Parks Service Parks Police
DORd 102			Maintain program of pruning shrubs.	Ongoing	Parks Service
DORd 103		Provide alternative seats to those moved	Renovate fixed seats outside Dorothy Road gates	June 08	Parks Service Premises Management
DORd 201	To make Dorothy Road Open Space welcoming and define a sense of place	Improve visual appearance at entrances	Remove redundant or inappropriate signs and posts	May 08	Parks Service
DORd 202			Investigate renaming of site		
DORd 203			Replacing paved seating area with low planting	June 08	Parks Service
DORd 204		To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances	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

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	who
DORd 205		Improve appearance of (now redundant) seating area	Replace paved seating area with low planting	June 08	Parks Service
DORd 301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Improve condition of seating and litter bins.	Clean existing seats or order new. Install 2 new bins (by gate and picnic table		Parks Service
DORd 302		Improve tree stock	Remove, replace, protect as needed	Ongoing	
DORd 401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and wellbeing of all who use it.	Increase use of the area	Consider any other features which could be provided	Following consultation (see DORd501 )	Parks Service
DORd 402			Investigate realigning of play fencing to open up grass area		Parks Service Play Services
DORd 403		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
DORd 501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Dorothy Road Open Space.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Establish links to residents, adjacent nursery and local schools	Ongoing	Parks Service