

Montifiore Gardens Management Plan 2008 – 2013

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in May 2008

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

Site Description:

- Site Name: Montifiore Gardens
- Location: Montifiore Gardens is bounded to the north by the flank walls of number 85 Tennyson Street and number 8 Montifiore Street. Montifiore Street itself forms over half of the eastern boundary, with the back garden fences of numbers 20 to 26 Montifiore Street enclosing the remainder. The southern boundary is bounded by the flank wall of number 100 Tennyson Street and the western boundary by Tennyson Street itself.
- 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 TQ28737610
- 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 2200 square metres (0.2 ha /0.5 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 "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, Montifiore Gardens had an overall quality average score of **7.4**, which puts it in the 'good' rating. Suggested improvements were the installation of more seats and litter bins.

History:

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 Dorothy Road Open Space, Heathbrook Park, Queenstown Road Open Space, and Shillington Street Open Space.

Other 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.

At some point during the 1960s, the LCC and subsequently the GLC decided to transfer the smaller parks in their portfolio to the respective boroughs. This transfer was accomplished finally on 1 April 1971.

The bombsite on Montefiore Street and Tennyson Street was cleared of prefabs and laid out as Montefiore Gardens. A social services day nursery was built in one quarter with the intention of returning this quarter back to the gardens, if so needed. In fact, when the nursery was finally shut in 1995 the land sold for development of a row of houses.

Montefiore Street and Tennyson Street form part of the 'diamond' estate around Queenstown Road, developed in the late nineteenth century. Queenstown Road was built as a route from Clapham and the Common down to Battersea Park.

Site Features:

Montifiore Gardens is a small, enclosed area of mown amenity grass, childrens play equipment, trees and several planted areas. Adjacent housing and ornamental railings enclose the site. Part of the eastern boundary is enclosed by chain-link fencing at the rear of numbers 20 to 26 Montifiore Street. Wooden panel fencing has been erected to the rear of these properties leaving a thin strip of weedy land sandwiched between the 2 fences. This strip and the chain-link fence is the property of the individual house owners.

There are two, pedestrian only, entrances in Tennyson Street and one, pedestrian only, entrance in Montifiore Street.

A tarmac footpath provides access from Montifiore Street to Tennyson Street during opening hours of the gardens.

There are 4 free standing park seats, 1 junior sized recycled plastic picnic table and 3 litterbins (of two different types).

The site is well lit by surrounding street lights, although there is no lighting internally.

Although internal fencing encloses the toddlers play area, the junior area is not separately enclosed.

The overall impression is of a rather bland open space serving as an extension to a playground.

The park is locked at night.

Safe & Secure:

Most areas of the gardens are visible from the entrances and from within, with low growing plants being used or larger plants regularly pruned to maintain views.

Local residents have complained of youths and children causing a nuisance. Parks Police report padlocks being stolen and stones being thrown at houses in Montifiore Street. As a provisional measure one of the two gates in Tennyson Street is currently being kept locked, in an attempt to deal with this problem. The junior section of the playground is not separately fenced. With no separate service gate, contractors gain access for large machinery by removing a section of railings in Tennyson Street as required. This has the potential to compromise the security of the park, and the safety of contractors and park users.

The gardens are designated as "No Dogs" under current byelaws. Signs to this effect are fixed at all 3 gates.

Welcome:

Playground signs have recently been renewed and placed at 2 of the entrance gates rather than at the playground itself (partly due to the lack of internal fencing to the junior playground). These give details of restrictions to the use of the playground and contact phone numbers. Parks Police have fitted temporary signs detailing dog ban bye laws at each of the gates and also 1 small sign detailing activities, which are banned in the park. This last is in response to nuisances caused by activities such as drinking alcohol, riding motorcycles, and rowdy or unsocial behaviour. There are also worn and obsolete signs at 2 of the entrances.

Planted areas provide little colour or interest.

Clean and well maintained:

The grass is mown regularly to maintain a short dense sward. There is a regular litter collection programme for general litter. 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 Montifiore Gardens to date.

The gardens contain mostly semi-mature and mature trees including one very large Ash tree on the east boundary. A mixture of native and non-native species but limited to predominantly Ash, Cherry and Birch. The most significant group of large trees are growing along the rear of 20-26 Montifiore Street and dominate the adjacent gardens. Routine tree inspection and maintenance is undertaken on a three-year rotation. No significant Pest or Disease problems have been recorded and there is no evidence of tree vandalism.

The play areas have daily visual safety inspections carried out by Wandsworth Parks Police, weekly recorded inspections by designated Council staff and quarterly safety inspections by Council technical staff. In addition an independent specialist carries out an annual inspection of all Council playgrounds.

Grass areas and paved areas are in good condition. Seats, bins, play equipment and shrubs have all suffered vandalism. Seats, bins and some signs are in particularly poor condition and need replacement.

The double gates at the Montifiore Street entrance are missing a drop bolt.

Health and well-being

Montifiore Gardens has both a toddler and a junior play area, which provide for play and exercise of children. There is a reasonably large grassed area suitable for informal ball games and other activities. Passive use of the picnic area and ornamental area also contribute

Community involvement:

A "Friends of Montifiore Gardens" group has recently been formed.

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. Maintenance of the playground 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, paths and 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 in the borough 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 22 large mature trees on the site, including 1 very large Ash tree and a group of 5 large trees to the rear of properties in Montifiore Street. These trees are inspected every 3 years and were in general good health at their last inspection. The group of trees at the rear of 20 to 26 Montifiore Street are now too large for this location, but are unfortunately not suitable to reduce in size by any appreciable amount. This has been requested by residents to alleviate the dense shade created. Works were carried out in early 2006 to reduce several of these trees by 20%, but this is already needed again.

Ornamental planting:

There are areas of shrub planting throughout the gardens. These are weeded regularly and pruned as required. The planting is characterised by medium to tall growing shrubs, which, for the most part, have been kept pruned at a low level to maintain site-lines across the park. Shrubs at the boundary with number 8 Montifiore Street have been removed to facilitate underpinning structural works to the house (by agreement with the Council). This is shortly to be re-instated. A thin area of land, sandwiched between the parks boundary and garden fencing to the rear of numbers 20 to 26, is cleared of growth occasionally, although this strip is outside the park boundary.

Seats:

There are four freestanding seats within this park. These are constructed of horizontal wooden planks and are in very poor condition due to vandalism. There is one child sized picnic table, in good condition, constructed from recycled plastic.

Bins:

There are 3 litterbins, one placed at each entrance. Two are constructed of timber slats surrounding a steel liner, in very poor condition. One is a black painted, perforated steel bin, in good condition. None have lids. There are no dog waste bins as the whole site is designated dog free.

Hard / paved surfaces:

Footpaths and seating areas are in good condition, surfaced in black tarmac, with brick edging. The play area has safety surfacing under individual pieces of equipment.

Lighting:

There is no lighting within the park, although street lighting does illuminate the site from each side.

Fencing:

1.5 metre high, hoop top metal railings form the boundary to both Tennyson and Montifiore Street. Sections of the railings to Montifiore Street are fixed to the top of a low brick wall. Railings are in sound condition but badly need painting. A short section has recently been replaced following removal to facilitate underpinning works to number 8 Montifiore Street (by agreement with the Council).

1.2 metre high metal railings enclose the toddler section only of the playground.

1.8 metre high chain link fencing forms the boundary to the side and rear of numbers 20 to 26 Montifiore Street. This is in reasonable condition but unattractive.

Low metal knee rails surround the planted areas. These are unpainted galvanised tubular steel.

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.

Continue discussions with residents and Parks Police to attempt to alleviate problems of youths causing nuisance. Liaise with Play Services to ensure that designing out these problems is considered in any future developments to the playground. One gate is currently being kept locked shut. Monitor effects via Parks Police reports to see if this has any positive outcome. Ensure junior and toddler play areas are both fenced off from the rest of the gardens in any future development of the playground

Monitor the regular removal of a section of railings to provide vehicle access for contractors. Assess the need for a separate service gate and implement when possible.

Welcome:

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

Remove old redundant signs from gates.

Clean & well maintained:

Remove the two older wooden litter bins and replace with Earth Anchors style bins with lids. Remove the four wooden seats and replace with either all metal or recycled plastic types. Ensure missing drop bolt to the gate in Montifiore Street is replaced.

Continue to replace those trees that have to be removed, and address the shade caused by the large trees at the boundary to 20 to 26 Montifiore Street when possible. Improve the age class diversity and species mix when planting trees. North and south boundaries would benefit from screening of the adjacent buildings. This should be achieved, in part, by forthcoming replacement shrub planting following structural works to properties at the northern boundary.

Health and well being:

Consider other features that would contribute. Consider cycle parking racks to encourage greater use of cycles to and from the park.

Community involvement:

Install new cabinet signs to include area for temporary notices and community group information.

Sustainable approach:

Continue to avoid the use of peat and pesticides. Use composted materials for mulching planted areas. Use recycled materials in seats if suitable.????

Montifiore Gardens Park Management Plan 2007

ACTION PLAN

Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
MfG101	To make Montifiore Gardens a place where people feel safe and secure	Ensure users can readily see all areas	Maintain shrubs at current height or replace with low growing planting	Ongoing	Parks Service Parks Police Friends group
MfG102		Reduce incidents of nuisance caused by youths and children	Liaise with Parks Police and Friends group to maximise effects of Police efforts	Ongoing	Parks Service
MfG103		Ensure users have ready access and egress	Monitor effect of permanent locking of gate at Tennyson Street	Ongoing	Parks Service Parks Police
MfG104		Secure junior playground	Provide separate fencing when possible		
MfG105		Provide safe access for contractors	Monitor current arrangements.		
MfG106			Assess need for service gate		
MfG201	To make Montifiore Gardens welcoming and define a sense of place	Improve visual appearance at entrances	Remove redundant signs	June 08	Parks Service

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Code	Aim	Objective	Action / task	Target date	Who
MfG202		To provide information on facilities within the park, at entrances	Design and install new signs at all entrances	As part of wider signage review of parks and open spaces	Parks Service Graphics
MfG301	To provide a clean and well maintained Park	Replace old seats and litter bins	Order new bins	Following playground refurbishment	Parks Service
MfG302		Keep fencing and gates in good condition	Order repair of missing drop bolt. Paint external railings if possible		Parks Service
MfG401	To provide a park which contributes to the health and well-being of all who use it.		Consider any other feature which could be provided to encourage use of the park		Parks Service Friends group
MfG402		To increase cycle facilities to and within parks.	Investigate the potential for cycle parking		Parks Service Technical Services Dept
MfG501	To effectively engage with, and involve, the community in decisions made relating to Montifiore Gardens.	To carry out consultation with different user groups to influence the enhancement of this park	Maintain links with Friends group and any other local group or schools	Ongoing	Parks Service