

Alexandra Park Design Guide (DRAFT)

1. Introduction

In order to maintain consistency of park furniture a special condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund development project (2002-07) was to produce a furniture & design guide. The guide was written to accommodate the choices made during the Lottery Project. In 2013, five years on from the project, it is now time to review this guide.

The Palace is embarking on a large regeneration scheme and generally a higher quality of infrastructure is being sought.

2. Background

The Park contains a wide range of furniture of various style, age and condition. Some is modern, installed during the Lottery project. Other items were installed during the 1980s development and more still pre-dates that.

Currently there are six types of Park bench and seven styles of litter bin. There is also a plethora of bollards, railings, lamp columns and signs. During the Landscape Development project many old and damaged benches and bins were replaced.

A design guide dating from the mid-1980s has been discovered that describes the items used in the Park from 1979 to about 1986, and approved items pre-dating that scheme. This guide followed the brown, cream and blue colour scheme still evident in some items of furniture and signs.

This guide divided the Park into four design zones.

1. Palace and environs - areas of Victorian influence
2. Traffic areas
3. General Park areas
4. Pavilion (a short term listing during the lifetime of the events pavilion)

It was intended that all future maintenance and repairs would follow this guide, however this appears to have been ignored or possibly forgotten from around the 1990s. A more consistent style across the whole Park is perhaps more appropriate now.

The Palace and environs will come under the consideration in the early stages of the regeneration scheme and the designers should refer to this new guide.

Thanks are due to the *Friends of Alexandra Park*, the *Hornsey Historical Society* and the *Alexandra Park and Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)* who have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into this version of the document.

3. Principle Park Furniture Items

The photos below show the styles chosen by the Landscape Development Manager in 2006 for the HLF Landscape Development Project:

Park bench:



Litter bin:



Dog waste bin:



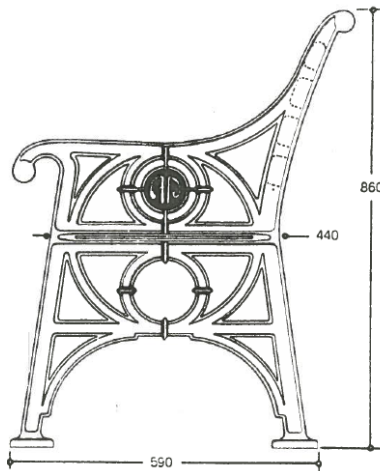
Many of these benches and bins were installed during the project, however, many various other benches and bins remain on site. This style of bench seems too plain and functional for a heritage site such as this. Complete replacement across the whole site has always been prohibitively expensive so items have been installed in a piecemeal fashion. The style of litter bin chosen was economical, but they are now looking tired and many have failed hinges.

4. Park Benches

During the last five years or so, benches were only be replaced as they reached the end of their working life or were vandalised beyond repair. This in effect means replacement of less than one bench each year. A few enquiries are received annually for new memorial benches. Since 2007, rather than install new benches, existing benches have been dedicated and a fee collected for annual repainting for five years.

The grounds maintenance contract was recently varied to include repainting of one-third of the benches each year over the remaining three years of the contract.

The 1980s design guide specifies two types of bench for the Park a (modern) *Victorian* style seat with “Eastgate” seat ends, painted brown with the old ‘AP’ roundel (in cream). The back and seat were made of clear varnished iroko slats.



Existing Eastgate bench by the deer enclosure

In the General Park areas the design was the basic ‘Pointer Seat’ with a golden finish to the timbers.

In early-2013, the Hornsey Historical Society reviewed the literature to ascertain if a particular bench was used in the Park before 1900. Photographs show that the early benches were quite plain, back-to-back seats. They had wooden planks for seats and a metal rail as a backrest. These are not the highest aesthetic quality so the Eastgate seat will be specified for the whole Park. The proposal is for dark-green frames and wooden slats.

The design also includes the ‘AP’ roundel which has been superseded by the People’s Palace logo. Both the CAAC and HHS showed a preference for the older roundel. This is a discrete detail and it is proposed to use this logo on the new benches

It is hoped that a ‘donate a bench’ scheme will be launched in the 150th anniversary year. This will be a variation to the memorial bench scheme and provide quite a legacy across the Park as a whole. A bench in the new style will be donated replace existing benches. Dedication plaques can be installed at the donator’s request.

The list price for the benches is £379 plus VAT and delivery. Installation charges will be additional. As they are replaced, the old benches can be recycled for spare parts.

When existing memorial benches are beyond their working life, the commemorative plaques will be transferred to the replacements.

There are also two wooden memorial seats on the race course. These are in an informal setting under a tree and could be used for any memorial benches requested

for informal areas in future.

5. Bollards

Bollards and posts are usually located along paths, roads and around car parks. The design guide specified a suite of styles, but this has been supplemented with various styles in an *ad hoc* fashion over the years.

Two styles are proposed:

- For the Victorian area around the Palace: Manchester matt black
- In the Park areas: square profile wooden posts, with a 'weather-top'.



Manchester bollard

6. Litter Bins

The 1980s design guide specified four different litter bin types. As with other items the style is inconsistent across the site. A single style is now suggested, a round, cast iron type. The exceptions to this rule are railway sleepers bins in the conservation area and the mobile wire cage bins.



All bins in working order will be retained until replacement is required. However, the small heritage-style open-topped litter bin was too small for modern use and caused problems with rubbish overflowing. Those in the Park were replaced in 2007 and two that remain on the Terrace are due for replacement.

If an old or vandalised bin is replaced the new bin may be located in a better position nearby, if necessary. The overall number of bins on site is to remain constant at about 75.

Wire cage litter bins are used as a mobile bin. They are relocated throughout the year. For example, they are placed on the south slope in the summer when the area is populated with sun bathers and picnics, but in the winter they are moved to AP Way as this route is heavily used by the visitors to the darts and snooker championships.

The dog waste bins installed in 2005 have become severely corroded and in some cases they have been removed altogether. Since re-classification, dog waste can be deposited in regular waste bins. Where there is a need to retain a dog-waste bin a post mounted green bin has been installed to reduce the visual impact.

The CAAC have expressed the opinion that the separate red bins are removed altogether, but this causes concerns from other Park users because the litter bins are not fully enclosed and the smell can become unpleasant. Luckily at Alexandra Park the bins are emptied on a daily basis, so smells should not become an issue.

7. Finger posts

The 1980s design guide shows a metal Victorian style post, but there is only one extant example. A number of wooden finger posts were installed around the Park in 2006-07. This design is appropriate for the Park and will continue to be maintained.

8. Gates, railings and fences

There are ornate Victorian railings at the entrances from Dukes Avenue, Alexandra Park Road and Muswell Hill. The drawings from the 1980s design guide are shown overleaf. These gates will be maintained.

The guide also specified a 'boom gate' in steel box-section – intended to be blue, brown or green but all are now painted white. These are not of the highest aesthetic value and should be replaced as they reach the end of their life.

Plain steel 'park railings' in are located along The Avenue boundary and will be maintained in black. This style is ideal for the proposed railings along Newland Road as part of the s106 funded project.

Wooden fencing can be found in the Grove, Redstone pond, the conservation and balancing ponds and the pitch & putt course. The Park Manager has been replacing this fencing in a consistent style as the opportunity arises. The fencing around the Islands and Workshop buildings in the Grove has been repaired or replaced in the last three years.



There are also flat-top railings and hoop-top railings around the boating lake and elsewhere. The proposal is to replace these with railings to match the Avenue Boundary if and when they get replaced.

8. Park Notice Boards

There are sixteen Park notice boards on site. The majority of them are wooden structures with a map, a welcome notice and a changeable poster section. The map and welcome notice are now rather dated and will be revised and replaced following the current marketing guidelines. The wooden structures will be retained.



9. Supplemental

For the record, the paint reference numbers for the 1980s colour scheme are:

Cream BS06C33

Brown BS08B29

Blue BS18D433