

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The masterplan for King Edward Memorial Park (KEMP) was commissioned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) in Spring 2016 as a blueprint for improvements under the Thames Tideway Tunnel (Tideway) project's £3.1 million Section 106 agreement.

The masterplan process, design and report was undertaken by the masterplan design team led by muf architecture/art, with project management, cost control and soft landscaping by Mott Macdonald. The cafe feasibility was undertaken by Leisure Consultancy, with Clear Water Revival undertaking the lido feasibility. The Tideway section of the report is authored by Tideway with design led by Weston Williams and Partners.

The masterplan objectives are to minimise the negative impacts of the construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel connection at KEMP and to deliver wholesale improvements.

The masterplan is to a level of detail equivalent to the Royal Institute of British Architects' (RIBA) Work Stage 2

The commissioned outputs are in line with the Project Brief prepared by LBTH and Tideway and the design process was regularly reviewed through Steering Group meetings that included the masterplan and Tideway fore-shore design teams, LBTH, Tideway and Tideway's main contractor CVB.

1.2 The Site and Context

King Edward Memorial Park is located adjacent to the Thames in the Borough of Tower Hamlets in the ward of St Katherine's and Wapping, it covers 3.3 hectares and is comprised of open green space, tennis and other formal games courts, a play area and a riverside walk. The Park is within the jurisdiction of LBTH.

The neighbourhood to the Park has a diverse demographic with extremes of wealth and poverty, high residential density and limited access to open and green space.

The Park was opened in 1922 and is an outstanding example of Edwardian landscape design with a highly formal layout, however over the years the fabric and the Park planting has fallen into disrepair

1.3 Research and Design Methodology

The masterplan design process and report writing was over a period of 13 months.

The process began with an initial period of desk based and on site research, and a brief development process, through one to one meetings with 21 LBTH officers, stakeholders, local organisations and institutions.

In parallel a feasibility study was undertaken on the cost, siting and viability of a cafe as a means to provide toilets in the Park.

This initial process established the design principles and a design approach that was tested at the first public consultation event in June 2016. This research and the feedback from the first stage consultation informed the next stage of design to establish the outline masterplan that was presented for the second stage public consultation in September 2016.

The subsequent design refinement included a period of value engineering to bring the project in budget and to produce a scheme coordinated with the Tideway fore-shore design, the Tideway program and the Tideway advance works in the re-provision of a permanent play area.

1.4 Summary of Research Findings

- Overall the Park fabric and planting is in need of repair and renovation
- Works to the Park since 1922 have in places undermined the original layout and the masterplan is an opportunity for re-mediation.
- There is poor access to and within the park and unwelcoming entrances.
- The 'block' of sports pitches creates an inert area when not in use and splits the Park into 'hard' and 'soft' zones.
- The views to the River are obscured by planting and not fully maximised
- There are areas that encourage anti social behaviour or feel unsafe because they are not overlooked
- The KEMP catchment area has a rapidly increasing

population, with a high percentage of children and the Park is an essential amenity to meet the needs of children and all local people for access to green space, play and sports.

- The Park is much valued by local people, who feel a strong sense of ownership as a place that gives access to nature, views of the river, peace and quiet as well as opportunities for play, sports and exercise.
- There are several local organisations with a vested interest in the Park and use it on a regular basis
- The Thames path, which forms the southern boundary is well used.
- There is much local concern around the disruption and the end design of the Tideway works.

1.5 Design Themes

The research, design and consultation process established the following design themes that shape the masterplan.

- Look Back to Look Forward

Value the Edwardian layout, fabric and the historic covenant between the monarch and people.

- Connect with Nature, Connect with Life

Access to open green spaces and water as essential for the health and wellbeing of all people.

- Ways In and Welcome

The Park as an inclusive, safe and welcoming place with equality of access to all amenities.

- Make Space for Everyone and Everything

Balance multiple needs in a park of limited size in an area with limited open space.

- Slow the Flow

A low technology approach to Sustainable Urban Drainage, (SuDS) as counterpoint to the Tideway works.

1.6 Masterplan Design

The consultation findings, though with some variance expressed overall support for the masterplan design as set out below and in section 4.

The masterplan design balances the needs of a range of different, diverse and sometimes conflicting uses in a park of a limited size in an area with extremes of wealth and poverty and limited access to open space.

The masterplan design delivers improved facilities for sport and play, enhances the soft landscaping and repairs the fabric throughout.

- Ways In and Welcome

The masterplan design preserves and enhances the historic design and improves access and views to the river.

The masterplan design meets the aspirations of local and national planning and policy guidelines including the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and does not increase maintenance or any other liability for LBTH.

The masterplan creates a seamless and holistic design integrated with the Tideway foreshore design proposal.

In addition to the designs for the Park the masterplan report also sets out:

- The implementation plan and time-scales to coordinate with the Tideway works program.
- The cafe study which advocates a permanent destination cafe outlet on Brussels Wharf with a seasonal cafe with toilets in KEMP.
- The cost plan for the masterplan design and implementation, which is within the available £3.1 million budget, which accords with the section 106 contribution.
- An appendix with links to documents referred to in the report and a contact email address

King Edward Memorial Park Masterplan

