

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE  
5 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**Item No: 14**

<b><u>UPRN</u></b>	<b><u>APPLICATION NO.</u></b>	<b><u>DATE VALID</u></b>
	12/P1181	02/05/2012

**Address/Site** Wimbledon Park Open Space, Revelstoke Road, Wimbledon Park, SW19 8EJ

**(Ward)** Wimbledon Park

**Proposal:** Proposed replacement of existing informal gravel parking area with tarmac and cellular porous paving, to provide additional seasonal (April to September) overflow car parking of 52 parking spaces (including 8 disabled parking bays), installation of 0.9m high wooden post and rail fencing bounding the car park, extension of existing tarmac footpath around new car park extension, installation of new bollards and gates, and installation of 2 heavy duty steel speed humps adjacent to main entrance of the Revelstoke Road car parking area.

**Drawing No's** Z87-01-08 (Site Plan), Z87-01-03, Z87-01-7, Z87-01-05, Arboricultural implications Assessment by M. Clews (received 17.8.12), and Design and Access Statement (received 15.10.12), and Transport Statement by Stirling Maynard (Received 15.10.12) (Addendum to Transport Statement received 09.04.13)

**Contact Officer:** Sabah Halli (8545 3297)

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**RECOMMENDATION**

**Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.**

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**CHECKLIST INFORMATION**

- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Statement been submitted: No
- Press notice: No
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: No
- Number of neighbours consulted: 193
- External consultations: Yes
- Controlled Parking Zone: Yes (P2(s))

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

This application is being brought to the Planning Applications Committee for determination because it is the Council's own development and due to the number of objections received.

## 2. **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The site comprises a gravel area within Wimbledon Park, adjacent to an existing tarmac permanent car parking area, accessed off Revelstoke Road. This gravel area is slightly higher than the main ground level of the park and bounded by timber railway sleepers. It was established on a temporary basis by TFL initially approximately in 2002 and was recently used again winter – spring 2011/2012, as a site compound during maintenance works to the adjoining railway line however was never removed following the completion of works. The Council has allowed it to be used as overflow parking for the past 6 years.
- 2.2 The existing permanent car park accommodates 33 parking spaces including 3 disabled parking spaces. In addition to the car park at Revelstoke Road, there is a car park at Wimbledon Park Road. This car park is not demarcated and accommodates approximately 40 cars. The boat lake also has a very small amount of parking for those using the lake.
- 2.3 Wimbledon Park is approximately 2 hectares in size and includes facilities such as bowling greens, athletics grounds, beach volley ball area, a boating lake, and is very popular during the summer months in particular. The park can be accessed by vehicles and pedestrians from Revelstoke Road and Wimbledon Park Road, and by pedestrians only from Home Park Road.
- 2.4 The park is bounded by residential properties. The east side of the park, and adjoining the site, is bounded by a railway line and beyond that the residential properties at Revelstoke Road and Melrose Avenue. The north and west sides are bounded by the properties at Southdean Gardens and Wimbledon Park Road, and the south side is bounded by the properties at Home Park Road.
- 2.5 The site is within walking distance of both Wimbledon Park and Southfields Underground Stations.
- 2.6 The park is located within the Wimbledon North Conservation Area and is Grade II Listed. The park is designated as Open Space, Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), and is within a Green Corridor.

## 3. **CURRENT PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal is to formalise the existing gravel informal over-flow parking area adjacent to the existing permanent car park, accessed from Revelstoke

Road. The formalised car parking area would continue to provide an additional seasonal parking facility which would be open for use from the beginning of April to the end of September to cope with the increased usage of the park during the summer months. The car park will be blocked off during the remaining months by new bollards to be installed at its entrance.

- 3.2 The formalised parking area would provide 52 parking spaces of which 8 would be disabled parking spaces.
- 3.3 Additional bicycle parking will also be provided, and these will be located to the front of the bollards and therefore usable all year.
- 3.4 The car park will be formed of an engineered tarmac base leading to a 'grass crete' base and surrounded by a perimeter kerb. Wildflower planting is proposed to be installed around the perimeter of the over flow car parking to soften its appearance.
- 3.5 As part of the proposals, the entrance layout to the two car parks will be reconfigured to include a mini-roundabout, and the installation of new speed humps as traffic calming measures.

#### 4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

11/P2709 - TEMPORARY FORMATION OF "WINTER WONDERLAND" EVENT OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD, INCORPORATING ICE RINK, REFRESHMENTS AND CHILD FUNFAIR RIDES.[SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2011 - SUNDAY 15TH JANUARY 2012] – Withdrawn

07/P1393 - ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY CLUB HOUSE FOR WIMBLEDON ATHLETICS CLUB – Approved

07/P0702 - INSTALLATION OF AN ELECTRICAL CONTROL ROOM ADJACENT TO POLICE PAVILION IN WIMBLEDON PARK ENTRANCE OFF HOME PARK ROAD TO HOUSE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE REFURBISHED PADDLING POOL – Approved

96/P0285 - INSTALLATION OF 11 FOUR METRE HIGH 'CHATSWORTH' LIGHTING COLUMNS ADJACENT TO FOOTPATH AT BOTTOM OF RAILWAY EMBANKMENT BETWEEN CAR PARK AT REVELSTOKE ROAD AND NEWLY INSTALLED FLOODLIT TENNIS COURTS, AND 1 FOUR METRE 'CHATSWORTH' LIGHTING COLUMN ADJACENT TO VIEWING TERRACE AT FOOT OF STEPS BETWEEN HOME PARK ROAD AND SOUTHERN CORNER OF TENNIS COURTS, EACH SURMOUNTED BY A 50W 'ABBEY' LANTERN – Approved

95/P0387 - ERECTION OF EIGHTEEN 8 METRE HIGH FLOODLIGHTING COLUMNS TO ILLUMINATE THE 10 EXISTING TENNIS COURTS NEAREST TO PAVILION – Approved

94/P1127 - CONSTRUCTION OF SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE OUTFALL ON NORTH WEST SIDE OF WIMBLEDON PARK LAKE IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED BELOW GROUND DRAINAGE RUN FROM NEW TENNIS STADIUM SITE AT ALL ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB, CHURCH ROAD - Approved

MER1110/85 - OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF A NEW SPORTS HALL TO PROVIDE COVERED TENNIS COURT BADMINTON COURTS AND HOCKEY PRACTICE FACILITY – Refused, and appeal allowed.

MER609/71 - 2 STOREY BUILDINGS FOR CHANGING ROOMS – No decision

## 5. **CONSULTATION**

The application was advertised by site notice, press notice, and individual letters to occupiers of 193 properties adjoining the site and in neighbouring roads. A second public re-consultation was carried out following the receipt of an extended Design and Access statement and new Transport Statement from the applicants. 109 representations have been received in objection to the proposed works and on the following grounds:

- The two existing car parks are sufficient for genuine park users but need to be better marked out to make more efficient use of them
- There is a lot of commuter parking at the car park for the nearby underground stations and use by local builders
- The openness of the park will be destroyed
- The money to create this parking would be better spent installing pay and display machines in the existing car parks
- It encourages more people to drive to the park
- The park is very accessible by public transport
- The park is very busy in the summer months and reducing the amount of green space for people to use makes no sense
- The car park will harm the appearance of this Listed park
- There are road safety issues from the proposed car parks because vehicles will be heading out in different directions
- Wimbledon Park car park is not an excessive drive

- This proposal has not been justified and in any other instance the Council would be discouraging people to drive
- The current temporary car park is unauthorised and should not have been used for car parking
- It is not fair that people living in Revelstoke Road have to pay for yearly parking permits yet users of the car park can park for free
- Most people using the park normally walk
- More bicycle parking is what is needed
- Impact on the openness of the MOL
- The money to install the car park would be better spent on upgrading the park itself
- The entrance to the car park is very narrow and dangerous to the large number of young children accessing the park there
- The proposed car park is part of an attempt by the Council to commercialise the park e.g. the Winter Wonderland
- The car park will increase traffic along Revelstoke Road
- A bank of cars and vehicles ruins the vista of that part of the park
- Local parks should be for local residents and those residents should be able to access them by foot or bicycle unless they are disabled
- Increased numbers of cars mean increased anti-social behaviour
- There will never be enough parking spaces and so this proposal is a waste of money
- If more disabled parking bays are needed then provide only those
- The fact that the gravel is already there is not a reason to approve this car park

#### Wimbledon Park Heritage Group

- Strongly approve of the proposed works
- The use of the overflow car park has been of great assistance to park users over the peak holiday and summer periods

- The location of the overflow car park at Revelstoke Road suits the park visitors best because it is closest to the pool, kids play areas, the bowling green, water sports centre, and the Café pavilion
- The location of the car park being at the extreme edge of the park means that its encroachment upon the park's play areas is at a minimum
- The use of green grass bearing substrates is an important and welcome part of the plan
- The inclusion of a mini-roundabout will aid the movement of vehicles
- There is no doubt that the car park is used from time to time by those who are not actually visiting the park but any miscreants are a minimum nuisance and the vast majority of the users are genuine park users.
- The additional paths will help pedestrians in finding a safe route around the car parks
- It is suggested a hedge is planted on the park facing the car park in order to provide a more green aspect to what may not be the most attractive of amenities

#### Wimbledon Society

- The park is designated as an area of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and Grade II Listed, within an Archaeological Priority area, and is a Green Corridor.
- The main concerns are the justification for more parking given its current use by non-park users, the quality of the proposed design, and the adequacy of the application drawings.
- The council does not appear to have reliable information on how much of the present parking is being used by non-park users or any plan to control this
- Installing additional parking without controlling non-park use is contrary to policy CS 13a and b. Use of the park by non-park users is not ancillary to the proper operation of the park. As such, it is not accepted that there is a demand by genuine park users for the additional parking
- The proposed layout seems to have been largely driven by fortuitous positioning of residue from some engineering works to the railway. As a minimum a scheme should be prepared with the advice of a landscape Architect and which relates well to the existing features and levels.

- The proposed layout suggests that the existing hardcore area is going to be re-surfaced however the level of this area is already above the level of parks grassed areas and a raised area would appear visually crude and obtrusive.
- There may be an impact on trees as a result of the development
- There is no indication of how the messy current entrance arrangement will be resolved
- The drawings showing the proposal is not considered to be up to the standard required for an application in a conservation area.

#### Friends of Wimbledon Park

- Wimbledon Park is Grade II Listed and in a conservation area and needs to be protected
- The car parking will detract from the character of the park
- April to September is longer than the summer season
- There is no justification for the car park because events in the park have not increased from past years
- Users should be encouraged to walk, cycle, and use public transport
- It is not an excessive drive between Revelstoke Road and Wimbledon Park Road car parks
- Wimbledon Park Road car is much better suited for an increase in parking because it is largely screened from view
- The methodology used to count visitors to the park is not explained
- A lot of users of the current car park are commuters using the tube station
- Nuisance to local residents from increase in cars to the park
- The park is heritage land and it is the grass, trees, and lake which make up the views which attract people
- The application should be refused and the land reverted to grass

#### Wimbledon House Residents' Association

- The extension is unsightly and result in a large strip of cars, which detract from this green space

- The gravel which forms the area at the moment was meant to be removed after TFL works ceased
- There are plenty of other places to park around the park and the car park at Wimbledon Park road is hardly used nor advertised
- If the car park at Wimbledon Park were marked out properly it would hold more cars
- The Revelstoke Road car is mostly used by commuters using the Wimbledon Park tube station
- The increase in car parking will not encourage people to use more sustainable forms of transport such as walking
- The additional parking encourages large groups gathering
- There is no policy for coach parking generally

#### Wimbledon Park Residents Association

- The Design and Access statement is very poorly written and omits key facts regarding the Listed designation of the park
- There is not an excessive drive to the Wimbledon Park Road car park
- There are many residents who are not happy that this area has been used as a summer overflow car parking and particularly because the area is left degraded in the times in between
- People should be encouraged to use sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling
- If the alternative car park were laid out properly it could accommodate more cars and alleviate some congestion
- Free car parking encourages commuters to use it for the tube station
- The use of the former TFL compound area as a car park is unauthorised development
- The site is within the Wimbledon North Conservation Area and the development is not acceptable in heritage terms
- Any proposal to reduce green space should be strongly opposed unless its is properly justified and meets the strict requirements laid down for such sites

## Wandsworth Council

'The proposed car park by reason of its scale, design, and location would fail to sustain, conserve or enhance the appearance of the character and open setting of Wimbledon Park to the harm of the Grade II\* Historic Park and Garden, Wimbledon North Conservation Area and the Metropolitan Open Land. The reduction in functional open space for sport and informal activity would be a loss of amenity for users of the park. The provision of additional car parking could result in increased traffic and congestion on local roads leading to the Revelstoke Road entrance of the park and insufficient evidence and justification has been provided to the contrary. Increased traffic and car use could be harmful to pedestrian and cyclists safety. The proposed development would be contrary to policies PL4, IS3, DMO2, DMS2 and DMT1 of the Wandsworth Core Strategy 2010 and Development Management Policies Document 2012.'

## Wandsworth Council Members (Southfields Ward):

- The only pedestrian access from the Wandsworth side of Revelstoke Road necessitates crossing the vehicular access route through the existing gates which would become even busier than at present and raising safety/access issues.
- Demonstrable need for the car park has not been proven. The existing car park can be improved and the site has very good transport links
- The proposal would entail encroachment into the MOL and a diminishment of available green space and loss of public amenity
- The proposal would result in a loss of the historic views of the lake and park land
- There would be an increase in disturbance to residents through a greater amount of traffic and associated noise and pollution
- The controlled parking zones surrounding the roads are not extremely restrictive and there are other smaller car parks around the park which can be used
- There is no one main entrance to the park; Revelstoke Road is one of 3 entrances
- The impacts of this application have not been fully considered and would result in an unnecessary loss of public amenity space when another viable parking site within the park is underused and underdeveloped

## Southfields Grid Residents' Association

- The plans and documents do not correlate in terms of the number of car parking spaces and sizes of areas
- This is MOL and Grade II Listed and within a conservation area. The site should be preserved as grassed recreation area.
- Visitors should use the Wimbledon Park Road car park and contrary to the Design and Access statement, it is not an excessive drive from Revelstoke Road
- The Revelstoke Road entrance is [particularly busy especially with children and pedestrians should be given priority
- Some method of charging should be bought in to deter non-park users from using the existing car park
- Emphasis should be given to accessing the car park by public transport
- The visual impact of the car parking at Revelstoke Road entrance needs to be reduced not increased

Planning Policy Officer

1.0 **Clarifications**

- 1.1 My comments will only relate to the impacts that the proposed new parking area will have on the open space & biodiversity designations and protected species.
- 1.2 These comments are in response to the February 2013 addendum to the December 2012 Transport Statement and revised 17 July 2012 Design and Access Statement, and supersede any earlier comments.

*Open Space*

- 1.3 The site is on land designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and Open Space. Many car parks exist in designated MOL and Open Space and as in this instance, are ancillary to the primary recreation/leisure use of the open space. If this application were to be approved, these designations would not be affected and therefore technically, there would not be a loss of MOL and Open Space.

1.4 Biodiversity

The site is in a Green Corridor

*Protected Species*

- 1.5 GiGL records show that there were positive sightings of five protected species in the vicinity of the site in 2002 and 2003. The details are listed in the table below.

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Protection Status</b>	<b>Year(s) Recorded</b>
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	BAP Priority London	2002
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	BAP Priority London; BAP Priority National	2003
West European Hedgehog	Erinaceus europaeus	BAP Priority London; BAP Priority National	2003
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	BAP Priority London; BAP Priority National	2002
Stag Beetle	Lucanus cervus	BAP Priority London; BAP Priority National; Hab&Spp Dir Anx 2; W&CA Act Sch5 Sec 9.5a; W&CA Act Sch5 Sec 9.5b	2002 & 2003
Common Frog	Rana temporaria	W&CA Act Sch5 Sec 9.5a; W&CA Act Sch5 Sec 9.5b	2002 & 2003

*All records stem from members of the public as part of the Wandsworth Garden Survey*

*All records require verification  
Grid Position Precision is within 1000sqm*

## 2.0 **Most relevant planning policies regarding open space & biodiversity designations and protected species**

### 2.1 Merton's Unitary Development Plan (October 2003) (UDP)

NE.1: Metropolitan Open Land

NE. 8: Green Corridors

L.6: Public Open Space

### 2.2 Merton's Core Strategy (July 2011)

CS 13 Open space, nature conservation, leisure and culture

### 2.3 London Plan (July 2011)

7.17 Metropolitan Open Land

7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

7.19 Biodiversity and Access to Nature

## 3.0 **The proposals in relation to the above planning policies**

3.1 UDP Policy L.6 states that: *“The loss of public open space to other uses will not be permitted, except where a development proposal will be ancillary to the recreational, cultural or social use of the open space or equivalent open space provision can be made either in the same locality or in an area deficient in public open space.*

*A development ancillary to the main use of the public open space will be expected to:*

*(i) not diminish the open character of the space, nor reduce public access to it or result in or add to a deficiency in public open space.*

*(ii) respect the landscape, historic, ecological and nature conservation value of the open space*

*(iii) where possible, increase public access, subject to impact on open character and the recreational and nature conservation functions of the land.”*

3.2 For the reasons given in paragraph 1.3 above, the proposals would not technically result in a loss of Open Space and the ancillary car park would broadly be in accordance with the criteria in UDP .L.6. For similar reasons the proposals would not be contrary to London Plan Policy 7.18.

3.3 Merton’s Core Strategy Policy CS13 requires that open spaces be protected and enhanced and clarifies in part b that we will *“Improve access to open space and nature conservation by public transport, cycle, mobility vehicles and on foot;”*. The policy specifies various modes of transport and therefore the absence of a reference to private vehicles/cars is conspicuous.

3.4 The proposed use of a part of the park to increase access to the park by means of cars would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS13. It is not clear from my research of the site planning history and the Permitted Development Order that the hardcore base on the proposal site, which was created for the former TfL works compounds and is referred to in the Design and Access Statement, is authorised development. I am therefore not awarding much *weight* to its current existence.

3.5 UDP policy NE.1 states that: *“The construction of new buildings on land falling within MOL will be inappropriate, unless it is for ... (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries and essential facilities for other uses that do not prejudice the open aspect of the land or conflict with the purposes of including land in MOL.”* Policy 7.17 of the London Plan has similar wording.

3.6 A planning condition ensuring the provision of appropriate planting in front of the car park should ensure that the right balance is struck between mitigating against the visual impact that a row parked cars would have at this location (*“not prejudice the open aspect of the land”*) and ensuring a suitable level visibility for security purposes.

- 3.7 The evidence submitted in the Design and Access Statement sufficiently addresses local objectors' concerns about the number of commuters using the existing car park.
- 3.8 The submitted evidence shows that there is much demand for parking at this location, particularly during the summer months, and that the other existing parking area would be less suitable for expansion. The proposed seasonal parking area would not be at the expense of existing sports pitches and in this instance, the increased vehicular access will improve accessibility to the sport and leisure *offer* at this park.
- 3.8 Admittedly a finely balanced decision, but in my opinion the proposed car park expansion is *essential* for the summer outdoor sport and recreation facilities and therefore, subject to planning conditions limiting access to the car park during the summer months and the provision of appropriate planting and surface treatment, the proposals are in accordance with UDP policy NE.1, London Plan Policy 7.17 and Core Strategy Policy CS13.

#### *Green Corridor and Ecological impacts*

- 3.9 Prior to the existing hard standing, the site was covered with mowed grass. The habitats of the protected species listed paragraph 1.4 above would not be unduly affected by the proposals and although the proposals will not enhance the nature conservation value of the Green Corridor, it will also not "*destroy or impair the integrity*" of the Green Corridor as required by UDP Policy NE.8. With regards to matters relating biodiversity and protected species, the proposals would be acceptable.

#### 4.0 **Recommendation**

- 4.1 With reference to the matters referred to in paragraph 1.1 above and subject to the attachment of suitably worded planning conditions referred to in the other paragraphs, the proposals are in accordance with the Council's Development Plan policies.

#### Transport Planning Officer

The existing permanent car park provides 33 car parking spaces, including 3 disabled parking spaces. In addition, a temporary car park has unofficially accommodated a number of vehicles during the summer months over the last 6 years.

The proposals will look to formalise the temporary car parking arrangements, providing a total of 85 car parking spaces (52 new formal spaces). Included in the 52 new spaces will be 8 disabled spaces. 33 spaces and 4 disabled spaces will be seasonal (only accessible between April and September).

In terms of the approach to the planning application from a transport planning perspective, it is essential to try to balance the essential parking needs of visitors, to minimise some of the on-street impacts on surrounding roads, to

continue to encourage a level of sustainable travel behaviour, and to preserve highway safety.

The unofficial overflow car park has been used for 6 years, and it is clear from the surveys that there is a demand for use of the spaces during the summer months. The proposed planning application will formalise the parking arrangements during this period, providing essential user parking, whilst helping to minimise overspill parking on the surrounding residential streets. Given the nature and range of uses within the park, it is not considered that the proposal will significantly undermine the use of sustainable forms of transport. On this basis, there are no transport objections.

A condition has been included requiring the provision of a Car Parking Management Plan. This will need to include a commitment that the extended parking facility is only operational between April and September and to also incorporate a parking enforcement methodology to ensure that the car parking spaces are not used by commuters.

Therefore, there are no transport planning objections subject to conditions in respect of provision of the approved vehicle parking, the implementation of approved cycle parking, and the submission of a parking management strategy.

#### Tree Officer

No objections subject to conditions being added to any approval in respect of tree protection, site supervision, and construction of the car park using a 'no dig' method and the car park being of a porous material.

#### Green Spaces Manager

No objections, and fully supports the proposed development. There is an issue with parking above and beyond that during the spring and summer.

For more than 5 years due to the numbers of visitors especially at weekends 33 parking spaces is insufficient at Revelstoke Road and so an overflow area has been required on the open field. I have been there twice in the past 10 days or so in the late morning (so not at peak times) and the number of cars in the overflow has exceeded the number of free core parking spaces on 27/5/12 at 10.45am and there were no special events there that day. This is typically the case on a weekend even when the weather is not especially good. Events simply magnify those existing issues, as do school sports days, activities at the sailing centre, etc.

#### Conservation Officer

No objection.

#### English Heritage

This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of the Council's specialist conservation advice.

## 6. **POLICY CONTEXT**

The relevant policies contained within the Adopted Merton Unitary Development Plan (October 2003) are: L.6 (Public Open Space), NE.1 (Metropolitan Open Space), NE.8 (Green Corridors), BE.1 (Conservation Areas, New development, Change of Use, Alterations and Extensions), BE.8 (Setting of Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and the Wider Historic Landscape), BE.22 (Design of New Development)

The relevant policies contained within the Adopted Merton Core Strategy (July 2011) are:

CS 13 (Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture)  
CS 14 (Design)  
CS 20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery)

Wimbledon North Character Assessment

### London Plan 2011:

7.4 (Local Character)  
7.5 (Public Realm)  
7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology)  
7.17 (Metropolitan Open Land)  
7.18 (Protecting Local Open Space and Addressing Local Deficiency)  
7.19 (Biodiversity and Access to Nature)

### National Planning Policy Framework

## 7. **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### 7.1 **History**

7.2 The existing gravelled area was first laid down approximately ten years ago as a temporary area to accommodate a TFL site compound in connection with works being carried out on the adjacent rail line. The laying down of hardcore would be classed as 'development' however this did not require planning permission subject to the hardcore being removed and the land being reverted to its original form (grass), which it was not, because attempts to cultivate grass seed had failed. This area has periodically been used by TFL since then until the present day, with new hard core being laid each time. The Council also started to allow the use of this area as a public car park for park users for the past 6 years. This area has only been open for parking during the April to September summer period and is closed at all other times.

7.3 The use of the gravel area for public parking required planning permission because it should have been reverted back to grass following the completion of works by TFL to the nearby rail line. It is the intention of this application to formalise the use of the gravel area through its replacement with a permanent car park. This would only be open for April to September each year.

7.4 **Principle of a Seasonal Extension to the Existing Permanent Car Park**

7.5 The site is on land designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and Open Space is in a use ancillary to the primary recreation/leisure use of the open space.

7.6 **Demand**

7.7 Since the original submission of the application the applicants have provided an extended Design and Access statement and submitted a Transport Statement (and later Addendum) at the request of Officers in order to provide additional information on the justification and demand for the proposed works.

7.8 The park currently accommodates the following activities:

- 20 tennis courts (approx. 32- 60 users daily during term-time, in addition to All England Lawn Tennis club who use 5 courts all day Sat and Sun (May to October) (Term time weekday: 300 users daily, term time weekend: 530 users daily, holiday weekdays: 375 daily, and holiday weekend: 480 users daily)
- 18 hole mini-golf course
- 2 beach volley ball courts (estimated 5,400 yearly users)
- Childrens' interactive 'splash pool' (open 12 weeks over the summer)
- 2 childrens' playgrounds
- Childrens' sandpits
- Athletics track and Stand (year round approx. 30 – 90 users daily, in addition to daily school bookings (April to July) with approx. 30 – 100 users)
- Sailing, kayaking, and windsurfing centre (approx. 33-92 users daily)
- Adult sailing (approx. 2 – 16 users per week)
- 2 football pitches
- Bowls green, and club (29 members and mostly elderly)
- Bowls Pavillion (approx. 8 – 40 users daily, and up to 50 at weekends through party hire)
- Cafe (ancillary to other activities and park, and approx. 5 staff depending on season)
- Police Safer neighbourhoods Team office (up to 5 cars daily)
- 'Active Plus' summer courses (approx. 60 children per week)
- Outdoor fitness classes (approx. 15 – 20 users daily, and 25 – 96 users at weekends for childrens' football/rugby coaching)
- General recreation of the park (walking, cycling, jogging)

7.9 Appendix 1 of the Transport Statement and the later Addendum to the Transport Statement contains results of research carried out in the current usage of the park and its facilities. A one-off parking count survey was

carried out on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 at approximately 2.30pm, and 34 cars were noted, only one space less than the capacity of the formal car park.

7.10 More recently, parking counts have also been carried out by the Greenspaces Manager on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July, and Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013, with the following results:

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Cars in Revelstoke Road Hard-standing Car Park (max. 35)</b>	<b>Cars in Revelstoke Road Overflow Car Park (max. 50)</b>	<b>Cars in Wimbledon Park Road Car Park (max. 40)</b>		<b>Notes</b>
Saturday, 8 <sup>th</sup> June, 2013, 12.15pm	22	41	20		
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 10.50am	15	27	10		23 degrees, sunny intervals with occasional light showers, breezy. Bowls match from about 2pm but otherwise no extraordinary events today
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 11.10am	14	32	10		"
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 01.10pm	11	27	23		"
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 02.10pm	22	37	22		"
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 02.30pm	24	35	22		"
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 03.30pm	34	51	32		Cars now queuing for parking spaces at Revelstoke Road overflow hence 51 cars. One car occupying two

					spaces at RR hard-standing car park and so effectively that car park was full
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013, 03.40pm	Not recorded	Not recorded	35		
Thursday, 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2013, 03.45pm	42 (i.e. comprising 'improvised' parking outside of bays and cars waiting for a space to become available)	55	39		Hot sunny day, 35 degrees but breezy. Cars parked outside of marked spaces and also queuing to park. All 3 car parks had cars parked up the central spine area causing chaos for those cars arriving. Paddling pool very busy; Merton Active Plus event on site but relatively few people in open field. Tennis courts not especially busy.

- 7.11 It is very clear that demand for parking is significant. This is especially so because many of the park's facilities cater for younger users, especially those too young to drive/have access to a car, and more elderly users who may not be able to drive. Many of the activities also require specialist kit/equipment which cannot easily be carried on public transport and necessitate the use of a car.
- 7.12 The above also does not take into account 'one-off' events held at the park such as speed events, outdoor cinema evenings, School sports days, Thai festival, and coaches transporting users for certain activities, and Police parking which is noted as an average of 5 cars.

7.13 Commuter Parking

7.14 In relation to the use of the car park by rail commuters, surveys/observations carried out by the applicant indicate that there are a very low number of users of the car park for this purpose.

7.15 Surveys of the Revelstoke Road car park usage were carried out 8-9am and 4-5pm on the 14-18<sup>th</sup> March 2011, and 31<sup>st</sup> August, and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (during school holidays). Vehicle registration plates were recorded (except for staff cars) and any vehicles present at both counts were noted. The results are below:

7.16 Of the above, 12 cars were noted as being present in the morning and the afternoon on a single day during the week. 1 car was noted as being present morning and afternoon on 3 days of the week.

Date (2011)	8am - 9am	4pm - 5pm	Cars present at both
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	9	26	4
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	15	27	5
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March	18	22	1
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	11	16	1
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	11	8	3

Date (2012)	8am - 9am	4pm - 5pm	Cars present at both
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> August	11	61	3
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	12	85	6
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	12	85	6
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	11	59	4
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	No Survey	No Survey	No Survey

7.17 Of the above 12 cars were noted as being present in the morning and the afternoon on a single day during the week. 3 cars were noted as being present morning and afternoon on 2 days of the week, and 1 car was present 3 days of the week.

7.18 In addition to confirming that there is not significant commuter parking use of the Revelstoke Road car park, the surveys also show that the car park is considerably busier in the Summer than in the Spring.

7.19 The above notwithstanding, the applicant has advised that should commuter parking ever become an issue in the future, the Council would consider introducing parking charges for the use of the car park as a deterrent to the minority who may use the car park(s) for free commuter parking.

7.20 Staff Parking

7.21 The applicants have advised that there up to 3 grounds staff in the park daily, 3 core sailing staff plus 10 - 20 more staff in peak seasons, and 5 cafe staff. In addition to this, there are the support staff for other activities that the Council offers within the park, for example, tennis coaching, volleyball coaching, and other support staff. The applicant has advised that a number of these staff drive to the park and particularly because some will be transporting equipment.

7.22 Is Wimbledon Park Car Park Under-Used?

7.23 A number of objections have comments that Wimbledon Park car park is not well used and is often empty, however sample surveys carried out on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012 show that the Wimbledon Park Car Park is well used, and often almost full to capacity (see below).

<b>Date and Time (2012)</b>	<b>Cars present in Revelstoke Road hard-standing car park (max. 35)</b>	<b>Cars present in Revelstoke Road overflow car park (estimated max. 50)</b>	<b>Cars present in Wimbledon Park Road car park (estimated max. 40)</b>
Saturday 8th September, 10.30am	35	47	26
Sunday 9th September, 10.30am	28	29	19
Saturday 22nd September, 10.15am	34	40	35
Saturday 29th September, 10.30am	35	48	31
Saturday 6th October, 10.15am	34	40	26

7.24 The above sample survey shows that even in the mid-morning on a typical weekend day the main Revelstoke Road car park is full or almost full and the number of cars in the overflow car park at Revelstoke Road exceeds what space is available in the Wimbledon Park Road car park.

7.25 It is also noted that this survey was carried out in the later, Autumn, end of the season when weather is more changeable and the water splash pool is closed

and so the parking figures would be higher during the Summer months, and when the splash pool is open.

7.26 In addition to the above information, the applicant has given the following reasons for the permanent replacement of the temporary Revelstoke Road over-flow car park as opposed the extension of the existing Wimbledon Park car park:

7.27 *'If additional parking were to be located there it could not be directly adjacent to the existing parking provision as this is bordered by an area of ancient woodland and the parks 2 football pitches. Therefore, to locate additional parking to this entrance it would need to be located away and alongside the pathway running towards the athletics track. This is not suitable for a number of reasons:*

*(a) Ground conditions and topography unsuitable for hard surfacing as this part of the park becomes waterlogged and there are natural underground springs in the vicinity. Previous attempts to return the area to grass have failed because of the hard-core base.*

*(b) The Wimbledon Park entrance is not the entrance of choice amongst the majority of park users as it is approximately 1 mile from the most popular amenities. This is especially so for parents of small children who visit for the playground and paddling pool and who benefit from having a shorter distance to walk. The same is for disabled users/school groups visiting the sailing centre and other park amenities.*

*(c) The Wimbledon Park car park is closer to a tube line, shops and banks and so more likely to attract opportunistic parking by non park use cars*

*(d) This car park is not visible from staffed areas of the park and so more open to crime/abuse*

*(e) Golf balls from the adjacent golf course could damage cars'*

7.28 Sustainable Transport

7.29 Core Strategy policy CS 13 seeks to encourage travel by sustainable forms of transport as opposed to private vehicles and as such, although there would not result a loss of MOL or Open Space as a result of the proposal, there does need to be adequate justification for a proposal which would be contrary to policy CS 13.

7.30 Given the nature and range of uses within the park, the nature of kit/equipment often required in connection with these uses, and the young age of many of the park users (below driving age), it is considered that the opportunity for the use of more sustainable forms of transport to and from the park is much more limited in this instance.

7.31 The surveys carried out by the applicant show clearly that there is a high demand for parking during the summer months and the proposal would provide essential user parking, whilst helping to minimise overspill parking on the surrounding residential streets.

7.32 Impact of Not Providing Seasonal Overflow Parking at Revelstoke Road

7.33 The applicant has stated in their Design and Access, and Transport statement that the car park is essential to maintain and improve on the existing leisure offer of the park. Should the development not proceed, it would give rise to the following impacts:

- The removal of the existing overflow provision in the park would be disastrous to the current activities. It is anticipated that the park would lose bookings at all facilities in particular the sailing centre and athletics track, which are unique in the borough and regularly accessed by those living some distance away and travelling by car.
- A significant drop in the number of small children visiting the interactive splash pool during the summer. This facility is also unique in the borough and is highly popular during its open season. It was funded by a generous private donation and intended for the use of the children of Merton and the surrounding area. It would be a extremely sad if the numbers of children able to access and enjoy this facility were to drop.
- It is also predicted that the bowls club would be adversely affected by a reduction in available parking in the park. This could result in a loss existing members, attract fewer new member, and receive fewer visitors on competition days. The bowls sport provides a facility for the harder to reach older, more sedentary, members of the community who are unlikely to take up alternative sports if they lose the opportunity to access the current facility.
- A reduction in the numbers of people able to access the park and its facilities overall would have a negative impact on activity levels within the general population.

7.34 *Conclusion*

7.35 In light of the additional information provided and considering the scheme on balance, it is considered that the car extension has been sufficiently justified in terms of the demand for it, and specifically in this location, but also the negative impact on the use of the existing park facilities if the formalisation of the existing informal car parking area were not to go ahead. The use of the proposed car park for between April and September and for vehicular and bicycle parking only can be ensured through an appropriately worded condition on any approval.

7.36 Highway Safety

7.37 The Council's Transport Officer has assessed the proposed development and raises no objections on safety grounds.

**7.38 Impact on the Open Space, Green Corridor, MOL, Listed Park, and Conservation Area**

7.39 Wimbledon Park is designated as Public Open Space within the UDP. Public open space is defined in para. 4.187 of the UDP as *'Public parks, commons, heaths and woodland and other open spaces with established and unrestricted public access and capable of being classified according to an open space hierarchy, though not necessarily publicly owned'*

7.40 The recreation ground is designated as a Green Corridor within the UDP, which is defined in para.4.19 as *'... continuous areas of green space leading through the built environment, and which link to each other and larger green spaces or MOL. They can assist the movement of some plant and animal species through the Borough, allow some animals to undertake movements between different habitats that they require for survival, maintain the presence of some animals in places where they would not otherwise be found, and help to ensure the maintenance of the current range and diversity of flora and fauna, and the survival of important species'*.

7.41 The proposed car park extension would be partly tarmac to match the existing permanent car park and the remainder of a cellular porous paving ('grass-crete'). It would be bounded by 0.9m high timber post and rail fencing. The car park extension would include metal railings and bollards to stop use of the car park outside of the April to September period. It is also proposed to install low level planting (Wildflowers) around the perimeter of the car park to soften its appearance within the park but whilst still allowing full views into it and of parked vehicles in the interests of safety and security.

7.42 There will be no loss of open space as a result of the proposal to change the existing informal gravel parking area to a formal permanent seasonal overflow car parking area since use will simply change between different open space types. Policy NE.1 of the UDP advises that ancillary car parking is an appropriate use within MOL if it is an essential facility for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, and the applicant has demonstrated that this is the case here.

7.43 Although the Council would normally seek to maintain and increase public access to open space and the proposal will result in restriction of public access to this area, it will provide improved parking facilities in the recreation ground, which would benefit those attending the park and especially those with children, elderly visitors, or those with mobility issues. Given the limited number of months that the car park would be used and the proposed landscape enhancement surrounding the car park, this aspect of the proposal is considered to be acceptable and would not impact on the openness of the park.

- 7.44 Policy BE.22 of the UDP and policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy seek to ensure that new developments are of high quality design and which relate to their surroundings. Policy NE.1 of the UDP advises that in considering the design and siting of extension or development special regard will be had to the desirability of protecting the settings of Listed building, ancient monuments and the wider historic landscape, including views to and from historic parks and gardens.
- 7.45 The proposal would result in some change in character and appearance within this part of the park since the car park would be of man-made materials (porous cellular paving) and not natural grass, or the existing gravel. However, it is considered that the proposed development is not so significant in scale that this change in the appearance of this periphery part of the part of the park would detrimentally impact on the character and appearance of the park as a whole. Conditions can also be added to any approval requiring the submission of the exact details of the proposed materials for the car park (colour etc), the material and design of the proposed bollards, and details of the design and materials of the proposed 0.9m high timber post and rail fencing, and details of the proposed low level planting, to the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to works commencing.
- 7.46 **Neighbour Amenity Issues**
- 7.47 Policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy requires that developments be designed and in a way such that seeks to minimise any negative impacts on the amenities of occupiers of adjoining properties.
- 7.48 The nearest residential properties to the site comprise the properties adjoining the site at Revelstoke Road and Melrose Avenue.
- 7.49 It is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties as a result of the proposed formalisation of the existing informal car parking. The ground area would not be increasing from existing and therefore the level of parking would not be intensified. The car park is also only intended for seasonal over-flow parking for the busiest months of the year, April to September, and would be locked outside of those months.
- 7.50 Conditions can also be added to any approval which would restrict the use of the car park to the parking of motor vehicles and bicycles only, and restricting the use of the car to between the 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September only.
- 7.51 **Trees and Landscaping**
- 7.52 The proposed base to the car park would comprise the existing gravel base, slightly graded down to accommodate the cellular porous paving, and with concrete kerbing to replace the existing timber railways sleeper. No excavations are proposed.

7.53 The proposed footprint would encroach on the root protection areas (RPAs) of seven category 'C' trees, which have been identified as having a collective amenity value. Subject to the car park surface being porous and works being of a 'no dig' type, the proposed development would impact on the health of these trees. The use of 'no dig' construction and the requirement to submit a construction method statement to the LPA for approval prior to development commencing can be ensured by relevant conditions on any approval.

7.54 It is proposed to install low level vegetation bounding the car park to soften its appearance within the park, and it is considered appropriate to request details of this to be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to development commencing.

7.55 **Disabled Access**

Of the proposed additional 52 car parking bays, 8 would be disabled parking bays. It would also be possible to directly access the car park from the park and new adjoining footpaths.

8 **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

8.1 The proposal does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly there is no requirement for an EIA submission.

9. **CONCLUSION**

9.1 This proposal is acceptable in policy and design terms, and would preserve the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed park, the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjoining and surrounding properties, or on traffic and parking circumstances within the locality of the site. The proposed development would not result in the loss of any open space, and would provide essential recreational facility enhancements, to the long term benefit of the users of the park.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION**

Subject to the following conditions and informatives:-

1. A1 Commencement of Development (full application)
2. A7 Plan Numbers
3. B1 External Materials to be Approved
4. D10 External Lighting

5. Non – Standard Condition – Construction Method Statement (for amenity and tree reasons).
6. F1 Details of the soft landscaping proposed around perimeter of the car park
7. F2 Implementation of this landscaping
8. F5 Tree Protection (reference to BS 5837: 2012)
9. F8 Site Supervision
10. Non – Standard Condition: The car park hereby permitted shall be constructed using a ‘no dig’ method as specified in the BS 5837: 2012, and shall be surfaced with a porous materials such as permeable tarmac. Such details shall be included in the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

Reason: To safeguard the trees in accordance with policy CS 13 of the Adopted Merton Core Strategy.

12. H6P Cycle Parking
13. H7 Cycle Parking Implementation
14. Non-Standard Condition - Prior to the commencement of the development a working method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to accommodate:
  1. Parking of vehicles of site workers and visitors;
  2. Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
  3. Storage of construction plant and materials;
  4. Wheel cleaning facilities
  5. Control of dust, smell and other effluvia;
  6. Control of surface water run-off

Reason: To the interests of vehicle and pedestrian safety and the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and to comply with policy LU.4 of the Adopted Merton Unitary Development Plan 2003.

15. H11 Parking Management Strategy (to include mitigation measures should commuter parking become an issue)
16. Non – Standard Condition: The car parking area hereby approved shall only be used for the parking of motor vehicles and bicycles and for no other use.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the occupiers of the surrounding properties, vehicular and highway safety, and to retain the openness of this area of MOL and Open Space.

17. Non – Standard Condition: The car park hereby approved shall only be used between the 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September each year.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the users of the park, the parking conditions in the surrounding roads, and in retaining the openness of this area of MOL and Open Space.

Reason for Approval:

This proposal is acceptable in policy and design terms, and would preserve the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed park, the Wimbledon North Conservation area and would not result in a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjoining and surrounding properties, or on traffic and parking circumstances within the locality of the site. The proposed development would also not result in the loss of any open space, and would result in essential recreational facility enhancements by providing important additional seasonal over-flow car parking for users of the park and its facilities.

The policies listed below were relevant to the determination of this proposal:

Adopted Merton Unitary Development Plan (October 2003)

The relevant policies contained within the Adopted Merton Unitary Development Plan (October 2003) are:

BE.1 (Conservation Areas, New Development, Change of Use, Alterations and Extensions)  
L.6 (Public Open Space)  
NE.1 (Metropolitan Open Space)  
NE.8 (Green Corridors)  
BE.8 (Setting of Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens and the Wider Historic Landscape)  
BE.22 (Design of New Development),

Adopted Merton Core Strategy (July 2011):

CS 13 (Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture)  
CS 14 (Design)  
CS 20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery)

London Plan 2011:

7.4 (Local Character)  
7.5 (Public Realm)  
7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology)  
  
7.17 (Metropolitan Open Land)  
7.18 (Protecting Local Open Space and Addressing Local Deficiency)

7.19 (Biodiversity and Access to Nature)

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)