

Havant Park

Feasibility Study

DRAFT

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CIVIL ENGINEERING & LANDSCAPE TEAM

Havant Park Overview



Source: Park Planning Committee



Access point main road into park



Club House



Current access point



Current access point



Cricket Club



Play area



Havant building



Mature trees and infrastructure



Canopy of mature trees



Havant courts



Open space / events area

1. Introduction and Background

1.1

The scope of this feasibility study is to analyse the existing context of Havant Park and create an aspirational master-plan of how Havant Park will look in 20 years time. As a 'Flagship' park and an important area of open green space within an urban environment it is vital that we have a considered strategy to shape how Havant Park will look in the future.

In line with Havant Borough Council's (HBC) regeneration strategy for Havant Town centre and Hampshire County Council's (HCC) Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) this community infrastructure levy (CIL) funded report was commissioned to provide a clear and aspirational, yet pragmatic design to ensure we maximise the potential of this valuable public asset

The study will look to provide a framework of recommendations based on the analysis of existing facilities and this will inform the outline design. This has been done in partnership with stakeholders affiliated with the park.

2. History of Havant Park

2.2

The recreation ground that is now known as Havant Park was originally three meadows in private ownership, which were bought and laid out by the Local Board of Health. The park, which was known as Havant Recreation Ground, was opened in 1889. The present pavilion was donated by tradespeople of Havant and was opened in May 1891.

Havant park has played an important role in providing recreational facilities including football, hockey, tennis and notably cricket. Havant Cricket Club was founded in 1874 by Dr Norman, and still active today. However the original pavilion in the recreation ground has been modernised and extended to meet present day needs.

Over the years Havant Park has played a significant role in the community providing an area of open space for all residents to enjoy. The park has hosted many events over the years from horticultural shows, sporting events and parades.

Association Football has flourished in Havant and the Eclipse Football Club, founded a year later than the cricket club, won the Portsmouth Junior League in 1898. The Eclipse team merged with Havant Rovers in 1903 and they went on to win the Midhurst Six-a-side Tournament in 1908. They won the Portsmouth League Division II in 1921 and were promoted to Division I in 1922. The Havant Intermediate Cup, the Havant Junior Cup and the Southern League Division I were also among their achievements. They had many other successes through the years and eventually became the Havant and Waterlooville Football club and played at their ground in West Leigh. There have also been several football teams associated with local churches in Havant from the early days. In addition to the Recreation Ground, cricket was played on Stockheath Common by Havant Rovers who had their headquarters at the now demolished Cricketers Tavern.

Havant Hockey Club, founded in 1905, had a successful team with several players having been selected for the county during the last seventy years. There is also an active and successful rugby union football club with a new clubhouse incorporating squash courts, and built in 1974 adjacent to the Hooks Lane pitches. Annual amateur tennis tournaments were held on the Recreation Ground and there were many good players of both sexes although the dress was very different from today.

The Dolphin Hotel Bowling Club was the most successful of the local clubs who, together with other local clubs, formed the basis of The Old English Bowling Clubs Association League. In 1921, the Dolphin Club organised a 'top-hat cricket match' and this and a later version of the match was played on the Recreation Ground. The amateur athletics meeting was held annually on the Recreation Ground. This event was hailed nationally as a success and attracted athletes from all over the country for the open events and the day was a public holiday in Havant. The expenses of running the meeting were met by closing part of the recreation ground and charging the spectators an entrance fee.



The Havant Council School Headmaster, Harry Beaton and his 'Bird and Tree Gang' planting the Horse Chestnut in Havant Park circa 1910.



Australian sailors played Australian Rules football in Havant Park. The winners were 'presented' with with the FA cup won by Portsmouth in 1939



Home guard parade in Havant Park after standing down on Sunday 3rd of Dec 1944.



3. Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints

Cricket Club

Havant Cricket club use the pitch, pavilion and store behind the pavilion. The outfield boundary size is determined by the ECB guidance and the leagues in which Havant Cricket Club play. Due to the nature of the size and scale of the required cricket pitch, the northern open space must be designed in such a way as to accommodate the requirements of the cricket club.

Mature Trees

The mature trees within Havant Park, whilst a great asset to the park and Havant Town Centre, present constraints to any design due to the extensive nature of their root protection zones. This means any intervention will require a mitigation strategy to ensure no damage is done in the construction zone.

Railway Line

The existing railway line in close proximity to the north creates an enclosed and impermeable barrier which introduces design restrictions. Noise and light pollution will also be a factor when locating amenities. The pedestrian and cycle connections will be influenced by the train station.

Park Road North / Railway bridge

The presence of a busy road and large bridge over the railway greatly influences the character of the park. The structure introduces an additional enclosure to the park on the west of the site. The presence of the bridge creates additional challenges to the redesign of the park in terms of overshadowing, inhibiting connectivity and blocking any visual permeability to the west.

Existing Events / Leases

Havant Park hosts a diverse range of events of varying scale, which are held predominately in the summer months. These events require a large area of open space and have historically used the area to the south of the path which dissects the park. Access is also required to water, electricity and toilet facilities

Recreation / Amenity Facilities

The existing provision includes a play area, skate park, tennis courts, kick about goal, public toilets and cafe. Consultation with the HBC leisure officer has concluded that all present facilities should be retained within the park, and included in the master plan for the future of Havant Park. The requirement to include all facilities within the site create substantial constraint.

Opportunities

Watercourse

The existing concrete lined watercourse is an unsympathetic and artificial intervention and there is an opportunity to re-integrate it better with the park's natural environment. This will create opportunities for increased biodiversity, improving the visual amenity of the stream itself, encouraging greater interaction with nature and promoting well-being and social interaction as a result. Furthermore, Natural England historically supported and promoted the re-naturalisation of this water course, as such, this intervention should be fully explored in the future design of Havant Park.

Open frontages

The Havant regeneration strategy looks to open up the eastern frontage and this will create opportunities to create interactions with, and alter the dynamics of the visual and experiential elements of the park in relation to how the park links with the built environment. The inclusion of a road abutting the eastern boundary will improve pedestrian connectivity and enhance the north south links which are to be intended as the main pedestrian link in Havant Town Centre from the Train Station.

Cafe / Toilet

The cafe was historically located in the Victorian lodge on the west of the Park. This is now vacant and offers scope for a newly located provision within the park. The toilets are in a poor condition and are uninviting. Given the poor condition and limited space within the park there is an opportunity to have a collaborative design for both amenities.

Play Area / Skate Park

There is an opportunity to upgrade and improve the existing play area and skate park facilities. They are considered apart of the Havant Park Open Space Strategy which means they are protected in-line with Local Plan policies.

Access

This study will look into the existing provision of access points surrounding the park and will provide suggestions on how we can improve the links to the neighbouring area. The access should be appropriate for all users and encourage the use of sustainable transportation

Planting / Community

The park would benefit from a more considered planting scheme with a view to improving biodiversity, foraging opportunities for wildlife, habitat creation and green corridors. It is envisaged that community groups will be involved in the ongoing support of the regenerated park - bringing in health, welfare and social interaction benefits in the process.



4. Havant Regeneration Strategy

The Opportunity

There are ambitious plans to enhance Havant Town Centre to secure its future as a place where people want to live, work and play. Two large scale developments are proposed for the Town Centre and Meridian sites in the town. Interventions proposed for these areas aim to attract more visitors to the town, promote more sustainable modes of travel to get here and will create a vibrant, lively atmosphere which will encourage longer stays.

Town Centre Regeneration Overview

- The Town Centre is arguably one of the most important areas of regeneration within the borough, since it caters for the widest range of people and is the historic heart of the town. The potential exists to improve the fabric of the town centre and to celebrate its special features, such as Havant Park, its historic buildings and waterways. Potential interventions for the town centre are illustrated in the adjacent plan and include:
 - Refurbishing the railway station and providing a station square to welcome residents and visitors, improving pick-up/drop-off and taxi arrangements and linking to the new bridge over the railway
 - Re-shaping the area to the south of the railway station into a perimeter block, providing strong frontages onto the station, Havant Park and North Street. The ground floor could be a mix of offices, retail, with residential with flats above and under-croft car parking
 - Creating a new town square adjacent to Havant URC Church, to give the town centre some dedicated public space for sitting, meeting and civic events
 - Redeveloping the Meridian Centre to provide new mixed-use blocks with retail and leisure on the lower floors and along a new Twitten, which runs from Elm Lane to West Street
 - Re-designing the bus station to incorporate it within a new block with residential apartments above, in order to create an active frontage onto Havant Park
 - Providing a second Twitten, which connects the park, bus station and Elm Street with West Street. Office and/or retail uses front onto the Twitten with residential above. Active uses, along with appropriate lighting will ensure the Twittens remain inviting to use at all times of the day
 - Provision of under-croft car parking, with a podium garden above. Roof gardens are incorporated where possible
 - Re-designing Park Road North to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements between the retail park and the town centre, encouraging linked trips
 - Providing signage and wayfinding to create a new pedestrian route to the town centre via Hornwell Spring. The Billy Line weaves through the town centre, with both pedestrian and cycle route options.

The regeneration vision will have a significant impact on how people will engage, manoeuvre and interact with Havant Park. The master plan for Havant park will be informed by the outline design for the regeneration strategy. The design will act as a guideline and will directly feed into the subsequent layout and arrangement of Havant Park taking into account the attraction to road layout, active frontages, access points, pedestrian routes and future needs of the Park.

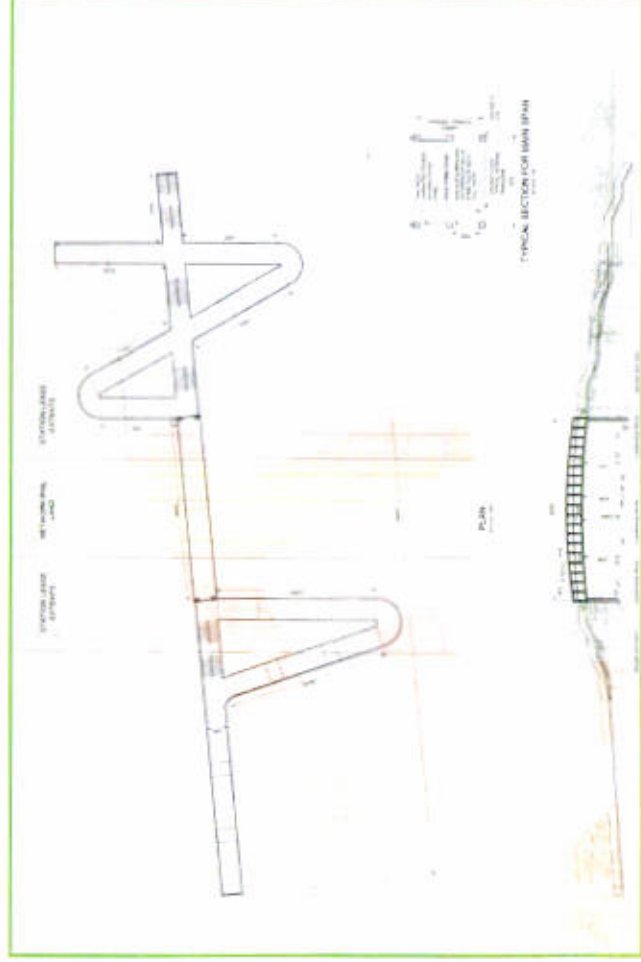


5. Havant Station Footbridge

It is widely accepted by many that the Havant railway footbridge is long overdue a replacement. Constructed in 1947, the bridge will need major intervention in order to secure its long term future. The existing footbridge is unsightly with parts visibly rusting. The bridge is the first or last thing you see when you arrive or leave Havant and it currently does not provide a good impression. A survey found that on average a total of 3800 people use the bridge daily, therefore the footbridge provides a vital crossing point over the railway line, linking the south side of Havant town shopping centre and bus station to north side amenities such as the leisure and job centres, medical centre, college and civic council campus.

A feasibility study was carried out in 2017 to explore possible replacement options which satisfy the complex engineering constraints set out by Network Rail. These options have been examined in the context of buildability, security measures and overall outline costs. Whilst the final design has not been approved the concept of a wider bridge with possible cycle links which lands in both the park and the station appears to be the design principal.

Such an intervention will have a significant implications to the access of Havant Park from Elmleigh Road and will strengthen the north south sustainable transportation links. As such the redesign of the footbridge must be factored into the feasibility study. Whilst the final design is yet to be approved the principal of the footbridge landing within the north east corner of the park appears to be the preferred design.



Draft proposal - Havant footbridge replacement feasibility Report 2017



Enrich from Havant Regeneration animator video



Enrich from Havant Regeneration animator video