

Play Facilities at Sydney Gardens, Bath

Report for HLF submission

Prepared for
Bath and North East Somerset Council

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**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Aileen Shackell Landscape Design was appointed in late 2015 by B&NES alongside Play Consultant Phil Doyle of Inspire 2 to develop play proposals for Sydney Gardens. The initial brief focused on the improvement of the Gardens to make them more 'playable' and generally more welcoming to young people and their families. With the decision then taken in early 2016 to re-submit the scheme to the HLF, this brief was subsequently widened to also include improvements to the main designated play space. This then became the primary focus of the scheme.
- 1.2 This short report provides an overview of existing play facilities on the site and goes on to examine the design proposals for their improvement. It covers the consultation feedback in relation to how this informed the play proposals and explains where comments on specific elements were not taken forward (and why).
- 1.3 The main focus of this document is the designated play space but the final section also looks at the wider Gardens, with regard to proposals to make them more 'playful'. The original ethos of Sydney 'Pleasure' Gardens was a landscape filled with fun and enjoyment; the HLF proposals therefore include a strong 'Pleasure Gardens' element, in the form of a suite of **playful features**, sensitively integrated within the Gardens landscape.
- 1.4 These features would complement the main designated play space but will broaden out the playfulness of the Gardens to appeal to people of all ages, not just children and young people. We have termed this, a 'Playful Landscape'. The use of adult-sized equipment in both the play area and the wider park would extend the use of 'playful' features to adults and to the older generation and vulnerable groups in particular. These play features would provide a significant attraction for these groups and add greatly to Sydney Gardens' health and wellbeing offer. It is hoped Sydney Gardens will be Bath's first 'dementia-friendly' park.
- 1.5 This document should be read alongside the masterplan prepared by LDA Design and the Outline Activity Plan and Consultation Report by Dr. Alison Millward.

2 Existing facilities

- 2.1** Sydney Gardens is a popular and well-used site. At either end of the school day it forms a popular through-route for local schoolchildren and during the day families with younger pre-school age children enjoy the play area and also in informal play – watching the birds and squirrels, hide and seek, bike riding, ball play etc.
- 2.2** The designated play area is located at the northern edge of the Gardens. The very busy Beckford Road forms the north west boundary and to the north east, the play area is bounded by a belt of tree planting and adjacent railway line. The Bowling Green and club hut are located to the south west and to the south east there is an open grassy lawn – not visible from the play area, as it is well screened along this boundary by a belt of tree and shrub planting.
- 2.3** The play area is situated in a very tucked-away location, not at all obvious from the main entrance. It is enclosed by walls and fencing (as well as trees and shrubs) and as such does not relate strongly to the rest of the Gardens, or even to the areas immediately adjacent. The roadside boundary feels quite exposed and although there are a few trees alongside the boundary wall this planting is not enough to muffle the traffic noise, or ameliorate pollution from vehicle fumes. On the positive side, users do report that they appreciate the seclusion and privacy of the area and also that they feel 'safe' there with their children who are unable to wander far, due to the enclosed nature of the space.
- 2.5** The existing play area is predominantly an open and grassy space with a low density of catalogue equipment (refer overleaf to **Figure 1**). The site is terraced into three different levels: the upper level is a small terrace which gives access to the external gate, currently not in use; the middle level is the largest and contains most of the equipment, and the lower level contains the slide and sandpit – this is most popular with the youngest users.
- 2.6** Informal discussion with users during site surveys ascertained that the large grassy space (middle level) is valued as somewhere where the older children can play and kick a ball around, while their younger siblings are busy on the lower level with sand play. Parents really do seem to value being able to enjoy a space which accommodates different ages and abilities at the same time.
- 2.7** The existing equipment offers relatively limited play opportunities and caters mostly for under-8's (to generalize). The landscape setting is mostly level and as such is good for informal ball play. The change in level (bank) between middle and lower levels is also a design feature that is seen as having play value. Observation of children at play suggested that the most well-used aspects of the play area at the moment are the sand play and the perimeter shrub planting where games of hide and seek are a regular occurrence.
- 2.8** The **10 Design Principles** set out in '**Design for play: a guide to creating successful play spaces**' (Play England / DCSF / DCMS, 2008) still represent what is seen as best practice in play design and should be adhered to in the process of making improvements to the play area in Sydney Gardens. Refer to the table overleaf for an appraisal of the current layout in relation to these 10 principles.



Figure 1: Existing play equipment, Sydney Gardens Play Area

Sydney Gardens Play Design Report August 2016: Aileen Shackell Landscape Design

Table 1: Play Design Principles at Sydney Gardens

Ref	Principle	Current Layout	Proposed Layout	
<i>Successful play spaces should:</i>				
1.	Be designed for their site	No 'design' in current layout, it is a standard ('Kit, Fence, Carpet') or 'KFC' playground No attempt has been made to respond to the landscape setting	The new play space should enhance Sydney Gardens and should be especially sympathetic to the historic landscape setting – also by not being located in the more sensitive areas of the Gardens	
2.	Be well located	Poorly located in one of the least welcoming parts of the park, and too far from complementary facilities (café / toilets), too tucked away, doesn't feel a valued park facility Not a corner where play would occur spontaneously – children like to play where they can 'see and be seen' The current site feels exposed with views of passing traffic dominating	The new play space should be located in a more prominent position, closer to the entrance and also closer to the café / toilets To respect the historic layout, which has already been severely eroded by the canal and more significantly the railway, the new location should avoid the three main lawn areas and be located on the Gardens' perimeter The preferred location would be close to the main entrance (and café / toilets) in the area currently occupied by tennis courts	
3.	Make use of natural elements and materials	Current layout does feel quite 'green' with its extensive grass areas however the play elements are mostly catalogue items with the exception of the sandpit, and the shrubby edge along the boundary with the Bowling Green which does attract lots of 'hide and seek.' The overall appearance is quite bland and sterile	The new space should be designed so that equipment is a secondary element within a predominantly landscaped setting. The new layout should include references to the natural elements especially sand and water. Natural materials should feature strongly - these are easier to integrate within a landscape setting and also have inherent sensory / tactile value (timber, stone, boulders etc)	
4.	Provide a wide range of play experiences	The existing equipment is biased towards a younger age group and there is little to interest older children (though the grass does offer scope for informal kick-about). With the focus being on a small number of very traditional style items of catalogue equipment, and with the setting for these having been largely ignored, the range of potential play experiences is very limited	The new layout should be designed to cater for as wide a range as possible of ages and abilities, and without any overt segregation between old / young or disabled / non-disabled. The integration of equipment within a strong landscape setting which is designed in an expressly playful way will create a whole extra layer of play opportunities.	
5.	Be accessible to both disabled and non-disabled	The existing equipment is of limited value to disabled children and the change of levels	The new space should be as inclusive as possible; no play space will be accessible to everyone however there	

	children	internally will be difficult for many to navigate.	should be plenty choice and no feeling that disabled children (or disabled carers) are second-class
6.	Meet community needs	The existing play area is used by many families however this is probably in part a reflection of the pressure on parks and play facilities in Bath with a growing population and many families moving into the area. It seems likely that there are many groups who do not use the park.	The design of the new space should take account of other local play spaces as this is an opportunity to fill a gap in provision. The design should be informed by feedback obtained during the consultation and engagement process.
7.	Have an element of flexibility built into the layout	Apart from the small sandpit, the more open grassy areas, ('slack space') and the informal shrubby edge, the current layout is highly prescriptive and is likely to become dull and boring very quickly to regular or repeat visitors.	The new space should be far less prescriptive and one of the easiest ways of achieving this is to have much more emphasis on the landscape setting, and also by building in plenty 'slack space'. Lack of segregation between different ages and abilities also helps.
8.	Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge	The existing layout offers little in the way of challenge, this can be counter-productive as children and young people then create their own 'challenge' e.g. by sliding head-first down the slide (or worse, by playing alongside the railway track)	Experiencing risk and challenge is critically important for the development of children and the new space will include a range of such opportunities so that everyone regardless of their age or ability can 'stretch' themselves and learn new skills and abilities.
9.	Be sustainable, and appropriately maintained	The existing layout is relatively low maintenance and in fact the requirement for it to be low-maintenance may well have been one of the main drivers of the layout.	The new play space will be higher maintenance than the existing one and it is important that this is acknowledged at the outset. Larger user numbers are an indicator of a good space but also usually result in litter bins being emptied more frequently and more wear and tear on equipment and landscape setting. The design of the new space should prioritise play value above maintenance but at the same time ensure that the design is realistic given the limited (though hopefully enhanced) maintenance resources available.
10.	Allow for change and evolution	The existing layout is typical of traditional KFC playgrounds in that once installed it is 'finished' and is not expected to alter in any way other than when equipment reaches the end of its lifespan.	The new space should be designed with scope to evolve as the needs of the community change and as the landscape setting matures. This evolution could be managed by the Parks team in tandem with the Friends and should be the natural consequence of a continuing process of monitoring and review of usage.

3 Outline design proposals

3.1 The section which follows outlines, in a number of key headings which are most relevant to Sydney Gardens, how we have responded to the 10 design principles, in terms of a design for the improved designated play area. **Figure 2** at the end of this chapter shows the current proposals in plan form, along with supporting images.

3.2 Location

Existing

The play area has been located in one of the most tucked-away parts of the park, possibly to reduce the visual impact of the play equipment on the historic landscape, and even perhaps to minimize any potential noise for other park users. The play area sits in one of the least attractive parts of the park, with the two main boundaries formed by a busy road and by the railway, and feels very much a secondary element in the park, implying that children's play is a lower priority.

The location of the existing play area is not seen as being unsatisfactory by the majority of existing users who are very familiar with the site and have generally commented positively on its seclusion, and the feeling of 'safety' there (implying they don't worry about children escaping). On the 'minus' side, for new users, the play area can often be very difficult to find. In addition, the traffic noise and pollution from Beckford Road detracts from the ambience of the play area.

Proposed

Having considered the pros and cons of the current location it was decided to consider the possibility of relocating the play area, so as to achieve the following objectives: to bring it closer to key features such as main entrance, toilets, and Museum; to make it easier for new users to find, and to locate it in a more attractive setting.

The preferred location for a new play area was assessed as being the lower **tennis courts and adjacent bowling green** which had both been earmarked for possible de-commissioning as part of the master-planning process. Importantly, this new location still sits within the perimeter zone, leaving the central spaces open and un-cluttered, as the open central grassy spaces in Sydney Gardens are an important remnant of the park's original late 18th century layout.

This proposal would require the removal of the existing tennis and bowling green facilities. The Bowling Green club recently wrote to the Council requesting to end their lease.

The replacement of the lower tennis courts with a new play and informal sport-based recreation facility has proved the most contentious of the proposals and this would require further discussion and consultation at the next stage, should the project go ahead. This proposal would need to be understood in the context of the Council's emerging tennis strategy and also bearing in mind the related proposal to retain and upgrade the other tennis courts at the top of Sydney

Gardens.

3.3 Relationship to the wider Gardens

Existing

The current play area has an extremely weak relationship with the rest of Sydney Gardens, from being in a ‘cul de sac’ location and with the only boundary shared with the Gardens being completely screened by trees and shrubs, meaning that the play area effectively feels cut off from the nearby green space. Though the current degree of seclusion is seen by many to be a positive aspect, it is the view of the play design team that ‘seclusion’ has now become ‘isolation’.

Proposed

Relocating the play area to where the lower tennis courts and bowling green sit would facilitate a much stronger relationship with the main Gardens. Though some screening along the shared boundary would be required to maintain a sense of enclosure from inside the play area, as well as providing partial screening of play equipment, it would be possible (and desirable) to create glimpsed views into the play area, thus creating a degree of inter-visibility between the play area and wider Gardens which would strengthen the connection between the two.

Locating the new play area in a more prominent location closer to the main entrance would send out a clear message to the community that meeting children and young people’s needs in the Gardens is a high priority, and that this user group along with their families is welcomed in the Gardens. The new location also allows more scope to cater for a far wider range of ages and abilities than was possible on the current, smaller, site. The use of adult-sized equipment in the play area (as well as in the wider park) would extend the use of ‘playful’ features to adults and to the older generation and vulnerable groups in particular.

3.4 Combining play with informal, sport-inspired recreation

Existing

The current play area provides a very narrow range of play opportunities which are almost wholly dependent on catalogue equipment, with the exception of the central grass terrace which provides space for informal kick-about / ball-play. The current layout represents a very traditional approach to designing for play which has been described as the ‘KFC’ approach – Kit, Fence, Carpet (the term coined by Helen Woolley of Sheffield University). The assumption is that children’s play can best be catered for with specially designed equipment which meets defined safety standards; this is a very narrow understanding of what constitutes ‘play’. The equipment in the current layout also caters for a very narrow age and ability range.

Proposed

The layout of the proposed play space is based on a very different concept indeed. Carefully selected items of play equipment and the associated landscape setting are designed simultaneously so as to be mutually complimentary in terms

of their aesthetic and also to offer the maximum ‘play value’ possible as well as far greater ‘risk and challenge’ than is currently possible. More familiar items of play equipment such as swings are then also complimented by the addition alongside of sport-inspired features such as basketball hoops, goal ends, and table tennis. The combination of the two represents an expression of a very different understanding of ‘play’ which sees it as an activity which is all age and all ability, - even multi-generational - and which caters for boys and girls; offers plenty choice and is relatively non-prescriptive.

Physical skills such as balance and hand/eye co-ordination will be acquired far more effectively in a layout such as the one proposed, where play opportunities are greatly increased with the addition to more traditional style play equipment, of informal sport-inspired recreation.

The addition of items such as table tennis will also play a key role in widening the usage of the play space to others, including young adults, and the numerous visitors to Bath who also use the site.

3.5 Creative play

Existing

The existing play area, being so heavily dependent on catalogue equipment, is almost devoid of opportunities for creative play, with the one notable exception being the sandpit round the slide. Informal creative play also happens in the shrub areas round the perimeter, where the wilder natural environment lends itself well to imaginative play and role play.

Proposed

Sand and water play is a key element within the proposed layout in the upper area (currently the bowling green). This would be located close to the proposed café and locating the two together would maximize levels of usage, making the economic case for this proposed layout very secure. Sand and water play represent one of the most engaging play opportunities for children of all ages. The combination of being able to manipulate and change the environment, with the sensory aspects of sand and water, as well as the enjoyment in playing with elements which are inherently unpredictable all mean that sand and water play are highly engrossing for all ages and abilities (including adults).

A planted labyrinth is proposed as the setting for the sand and water play. A labyrinth was one of the highlights of the original historic layout and Jane Austen is quoted as saying that she was looking forward to living in Sydney Place as she could then ‘visit the Labyrinth every day’. The labyrinth would create a playful garden for people of all ages, adults and children alike, which could also be of great biodiversity value and also hark back to the original Pleasure Gardens’ layout.

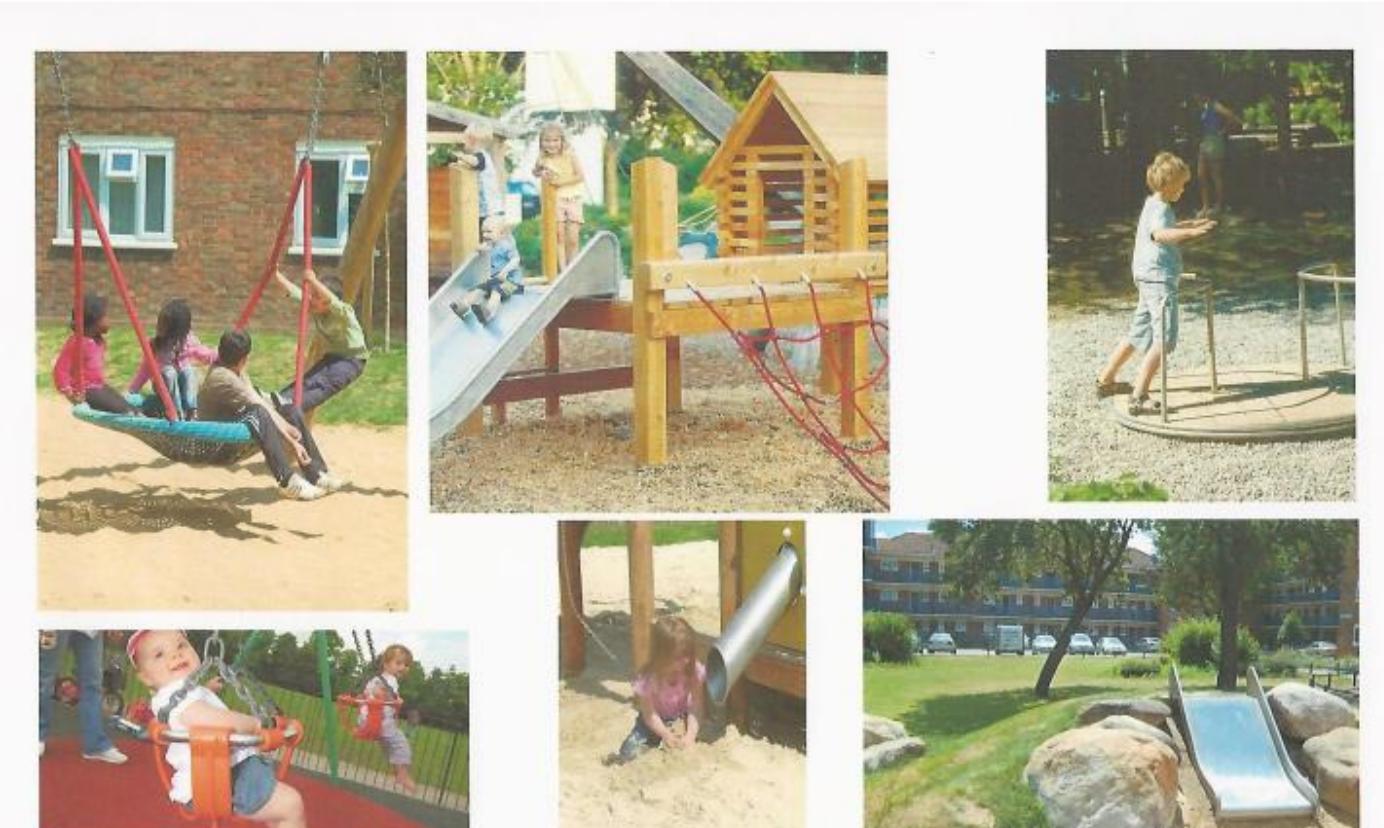
Figure 2:
Play Space Proposal Plan



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Project:	Sydney Gardens
Client:	BNES Council
Drawing title:	Play Areas - Proposed Layout
Drawing no:	213-BK01 Rev B
Scale:	1:500 @ A3
Date:	June 2016



Sydney Gardens: Designated Play Space

1. Younger play



ailene shackell
landscape design

Figure 3:
Image sheet 1, Play Space

Figure 4:
Image sheet 2, Play Space

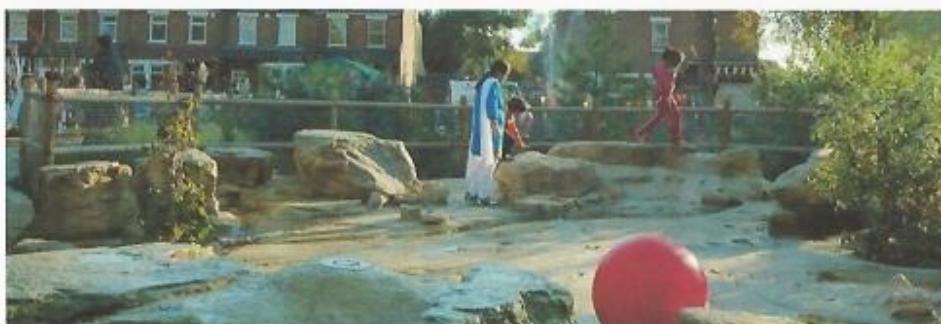


Sydney Gardens: Designated Play Space

2. Older + more challenging play / ball play

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Figure 5:
Image sheet 3, Play Space



Sydney Gardens: Designated Play Space

3. Sand and Water play in the Labyrinth Garden

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4 Consultation feedback and response

4.1 The Proposal

Set out below is a *summary* of the feedback received regarding play in Sydney Gardens, and the play proposals specifically, between 2013 and 2016. The Activity Plan provides more details. Items highlighted in yellow indicate where the outline design proposals have been informed directly by this feedback.

4.2 Initial consultation feedback

Initial consultation in November 2013 established that:

- 92% of local residents interviewed had been to Sydney Gardens, visiting on average once a week, with the main reasons to visit being to walk, visit the canal, use as a through route, to relax, use the children's play area or combine with a visit to the Holburne Museum;
- 65% of people with junior or senior school children said their children used the park to meet up with friends, as a through route, to visit the canal or use the play area;
- More than 50% felt there was not enough to do and were dissatisfied with the play area.
- There was widespread local support (78%), particularly among social housing tenants, for the principle of a restored and updated Sydney Gardens. People in this survey wanted:
- More events and activities – open air concerts, plays and performances; special activities for children and young people; art and craft activities
- A better play area
- A café
- More information about the history of the gardens
- Nature trails and a natural labyrinth.

4.3 Initial consultation as part of this phase of the project

A **Stakeholder Forum** was held in May 2016 to which representatives from 80 local organisations were invited. A total of 27 representatives attended the workshop and participated in group discussions focussed on the heritage, landscape, play and activities. This group of well-informed stakeholders wished to see a number of elements, including (of most relevance):

- Retention of tennis facilities
- Upgrading of play facilities and the installation of new features
- A café with an offer aimed at families

In a **Teenager's Survey** in June 2016 it was found that this group would like to see more adult sized play and fitness equipment, special events, a performance space, plenty of benches and display space for artworks.

4.3 Comments on the design proposals

Comments to the first exhibition of proposals are set out below (excerpt from Alison Millward's Activity Plan). A commentary on this response is set out in the table which follows.

Table 2: Consultation Comments on Play

	Fun and Pleasure	Yes	No
18	<p>Relocate the play closer to the main entrance with tree and shrub planting and plenty of grassy space too</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes if it is maintained properly. • More natural and organic looking playground. • Trees and shrubs for playing in and climbing. • More benches in the play area please. • For ideas visit the excellent Barton Country Park in Bradford on Avon. • Sort out the rats in play area. • Need a covered area for reading when raining. • Must have access to drinking water. • Play area currently is safely contained – important (x2). • Improve existing play area and do not expand it (x2). • <i>Why change what is good. There is Parade Gardens for visitors to sit and listen to music, drink tea etc.</i> • <i>Sydney Gardens is an elegant place that should be maintained as such. Children have play areas in plenty of other parks. Please not a focal point here.</i> 	21	8
19	<p>Timber play equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph is very reminiscent of Belgium's Province-domein Kessel-Lo Park (Bloo near Antwerp). My children have the most wonderful memories of living there with access to these spaces. 	24	4
20	<p>Sand and water for creative play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory play is inclusive of children of all ages and abilities. • <i>Worried that litter/rubbish would ruin the sand area.</i> • Make the sand the type which will make sand sculptures and put in raised bed at wheelchair height. • Dogs need to be restricted. • Hard surface water play e.g. Granary Square at Kings Cross- lower maintenance? • Is Splash & Ripple's adventures still available? • <i>A place of peace and quiet?</i> 	18	13
21	<p>A ball play area with a single hoop and seating for older girls and boys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitely. • <i>Older kids especially boys should not be in close proximity to younger ones. They will be intimidating.</i> • Could you use one of the tennis courts near park? • Location. 	19	16
22	<p>Overall design concept for play zone with maze/labyrinth, play mound, ball play, young and older play areas, water and sand between the bowling pavilion and the main entrance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would love a maze! • A maze. • Maze a great idea. Honours the past structure of the gardens while 	20	19

	<p>being a great place for children (and adults) today. Is it a maze or a labyrinth? Labyrinth has much deeper history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use false grass on the play mound – easy to keep and doesn't get dirty so child friendly. • See children's play area at Chew Valley Lake for all ages. • Play area will need far more equipment for children. • A castle – Bristol. • Some people enjoy segregation. It is an unpopular view but some of us don't enjoy the noise and disruption of children. • <i>Not segregating areas for children/young people from the rest of the gardens is very important. This is a cross-generational place.</i> • <i>Older kids will not want to share this play zone – very uncool.</i> • <i>Keep the small children's area separate as they can be overwhelmed by older ones.</i> • <i>What demographic evidence is there to justify the play area?</i> • <i>Is there an established need for a play area?</i> • Yes. • Climbing frame. • Large scale chess game. 	
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Table 3: Initial play consultation – design response to comments

Ref	Item	Consultation comments	Design response
	<p>Relocation of play to lower tennis courts and bowling green 21 = yes 8 = no</p>	<p>Generally favourable subject to satisfying concerns about 'safety'</p> <p>Maintenance raised as a concern</p> <p>Strong agreement on more 'natural' and greener layout</p>	<p>Play area shown as having a well-defined boundary / means of enclosure – to be determined at detailed design stage, this proposals fed through to the final proposals</p> <p>Design team discussed the MMP with consultees</p> <p>Tree and shrub planting and grass retained as an important part of final proposals, especially forming a buffer on the roadside boundary, helping mitigate concerns re pollution</p>
	<p>Timber play equipment (<i>as opposed to metal</i>) 24 = yes 4 = no</p>	Very strong consensus with regard to the choice of this material	Only timber equipment proposed within the final proposals
	<p>Sand and water for creative play 18 = yes 13 = no</p>	Many anxieties expressed about what is essentially management and maintenance of this though most commenting seemed to like the idea, may be that	Sand and water retained as a key feature in the final proposals but further consultation will need to be carried out specifically relating to management and maintenance to ensure buy-in to proposals

		many were not familiar with it	
	<p>Ball play with single hoop and seating for older girls and boys <i>19 = yes 16 = no</i></p>	<p>There was some confusion arising from the image selected which showed ball play immediately next to housing and there was clearly resistance to this which may have fed through to the apparent low level of interest.</p> <p>Concerns expressed about mixing older and younger children – again many consultees may not be familiar with sites where this has been done successfully.</p>	<p>Ball play area would be well away from any residents' housing and would also be located to avoid the ball going over the wall into the road</p> <p>Ball Play area has been carefully designed and located to separate it slightly from the younger children's equipment, this layout was included in the final proposals</p>
	<p>Overall design concept for play zone with maze/labyrinth, play mound, ball play, young and older play areas, water and sand between the bowling pavilion and the main entrance <i>20 = yes 19 = no</i></p>	<p>Number of minor comments received on the need for a play area, and on management and maintenance issues</p> <p>Lots of support for a 'maze' or labyrinth</p>	<p>The more minor comments would be dealt with during detailed design stage when further consultation would be undertaken</p> <p>A 'labyrinth' has been shown as part of the layout on the former Bowling Green area and this was retained for inclusion in the final proposals, following consultation. The exact nature of this would be determined during detailed design stage.</p>

4.4 Consensus Check

Dr. Alison Millward carried out further consultation following development of the *final* design proposals with an exhibition at a local shopping centre, an on-line survey, and a final drop-in session in the Gardens. The proposal for improvements to play in the Gardens, - set out below - which included both a reference to the designated play space and also the 'playful gardens' concept, attracted a good level of support during this 'Consensus Check', with **60%** of respondents saying they supported it.

"Play: a new play area located nearer to main entrance with a labyrinth, sand and water play features. New all-ability play, sport and fitness equipment, replacing the lower tennis courts and bowling green. More playful features e.g. swings and a sham castle throughout the park for all to enjoy".

5 Sydney Gardens: a 'Playful Landscape'

- 5.1** The original ethos of Sydney ‘Pleasure’ Gardens was a landscape filled with fun and enjoyment; with surprises round every corner, and a plethora of social spaces and activities, not just in daylight hours but extending late into the evening when lanterns lit up the Gardens for musical and other entertainment. The HLF proposals therefore include a strong ‘Pleasure Gardens’ element in the form of a suite of **playful features** integrated within the Gardens landscape. These features would complement the main designated play space but will broaden out the playfulness of the Gardens to appeal to people of all ages, not just children and young people. We have termed this, a ‘Playful Landscape’.
- 5.2** The use of the adult-sized equipment in both the play area and the wider park would extend the use of ‘playful’ features to adults and to the older generation and vulnerable groups in particular. These play features would provide a significant attraction for these groups and add greatly to the Gardens’ health and wellbeing offer.
- 5.3** The Playful Gardens elements would include a wide range of features. Some would echo the history of Sydney Gardens, whilst others would help draw attention to a particular feature, some would be permanent features in the Gardens, and others would be ephemeral or even simply consist of an event or entertainment of some sort. But all of the ‘features’ would aim to foster an ambience of playfulness, surprise, and delight. Overleaf is a reference plan showing where the features might be located, along with two photo-sheets showing images of similar features in other locations, for inspiration.
- 5.4** The current list of **playful features** is just a starting point for the next design stage, should the project go ahead, when their feasibility would be explored further. It includes:
- A ‘wishing well’ – making a seating / wishing space next to the 18th century reservoir opening, at the top of the park;
 - Grassy mounds for tumbling or rolling down;
 - A swing in the shape of an Oak leaf, and a Rope or Tree swing;
 - Outdoor table tennis;
 - A drinking fountain;
 - A fallen tree to climb on;
 - Musical instruments; and
 - A Sham Castle (on the location of the original one).
- 5.5** Consultation on the ‘playful gardens’ has established a good level support from the public. Some have expressed a desire to see ‘natural’ features and not play equipment, (which is what is intended anyway) and others have expressed concerns about their maintenance. These issues would be explored further at the next stage, should the project proceed.

Figure 6:
Reference Plan, Playful
Gardens

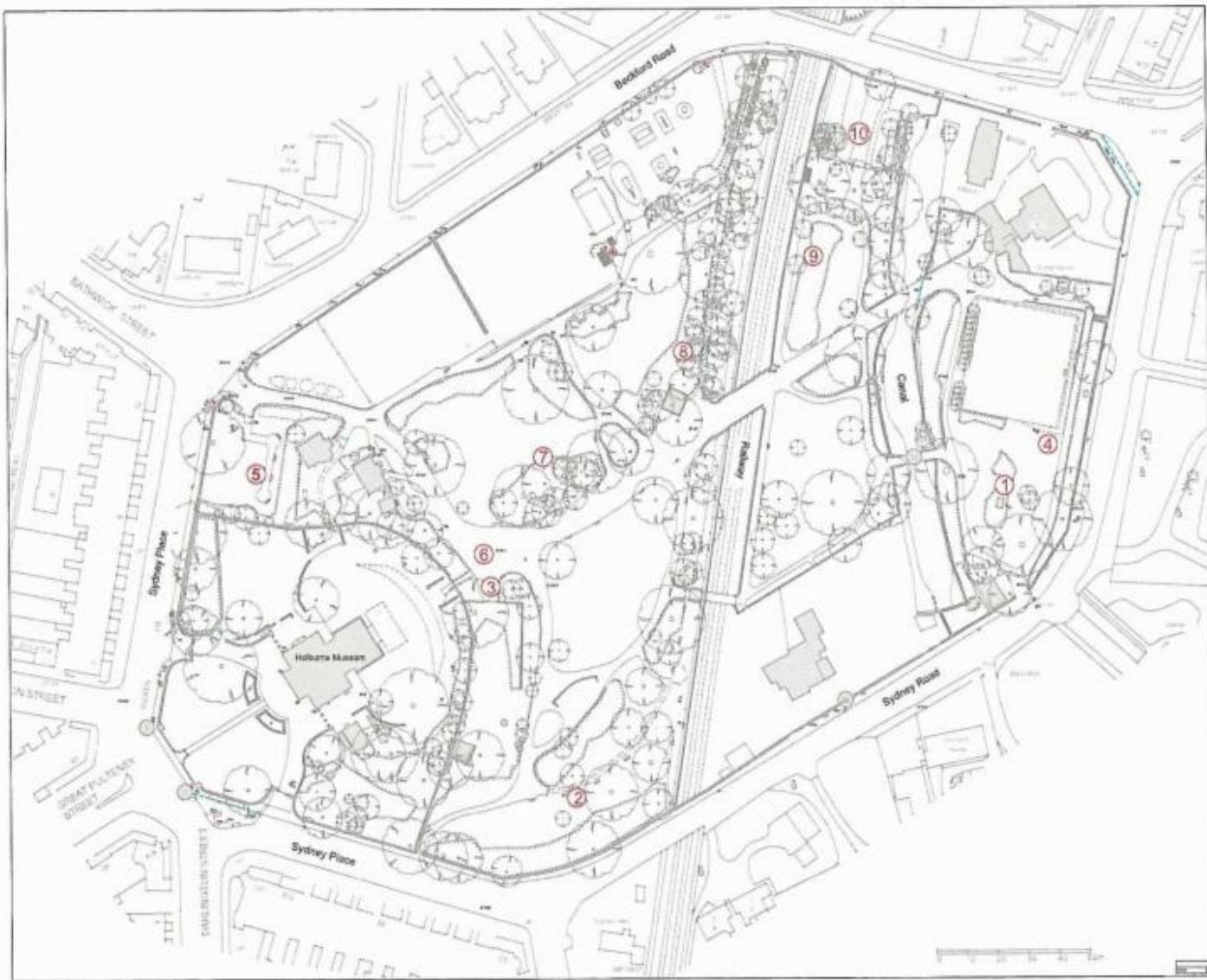


Figure 7:
Image sheet 1,
Playful Gardens



Refer to drawing SK02
for proposed locations
of play features



Project: Sydney Gardens, Bath
Client: BNES Council
Drawing title: Images for Playful Garden
Drawing no: Sheet 1 Rev A
Date: June 2016



Figure 8:
Image sheet 2,
Playful Gardens

6 Summary and Conclusion

6.1.1 Summary

Play proposals have been developed as part of the HLF scheme for the following two main elements: the designated play space, and the playful features in the wider gardens. Our play proposals are forward-thinking in that they represent a far more wide-ranging understanding of play than is usually the case, with conventional play equipment sited alongside sport-based informal recreation, and with much of the equipment large enough in scale to be accessible even to adults.

6.2 The proposals: designated play space

The proposals for the designated play space show a new play area, relocated on what is currently the lower tennis courts and Bowling Green. This play area has been designed carefully to include both conventional 'catalogue' play equipment and also sport-based informal recreation, in the form of basketball hoops, goal ends, and table tennis – on a hard paved surface which will be equally good for bikes and scooters. The play area design follows the approach advocated *by* '***Design for play: a guide to creating successful play spaces***' with a strong emphasis on a soft landscape setting and the use of natural materials.

6.3 The proposals: playful gardens

The proposals for the 'playful gardens' suggest a suite of playful elements, selected to evoke a spirit of fun, surprise and delight for both adults and children, each one sensitively integrated within the gardens' landscape. The elements will not include catalogue play equipment but instead a wide range of features, both permanent and ephemeral / transitory. By including these elements, something of the ambience of the original Pleasure Gardens will be restored.

6.2 Consultation

Consultation has taken place on both of these proposals and there has generally been a high level of support for the proposals, with negative comments relating mainly to matters of maintenance and management rather than to the outline design. The only main item still to be resolved and which will require further and more detailed consultation is the replacement of the lower tennis courts with the informal play and sport-based recreation, as shown in this document.

6.3 Conclusion

Sydney Gardens already includes a well-used play area, however the limited play opportunities available and dated appearance of the layout do not reflect the significance of these very important gardens, located at the heart of the Bath World Heritage Site. The proposed improvements, which have demonstrable public support, would help create a far wider user group for play and informal recreation here and would also significantly enhance the wider Gardens landscape.