



Brinton Park
HERITAGE STATEMENT
February 2020

January 2024: Addendum to Heritage Statement added at start of report -
new planning application submitted for reduced scope of works at park

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January 2024 -

Addendum to Heritage Statement - new planning application submitted for reduced scope of works at park

Planning approval was granted in June 2020 (application reference 20/0155/RG3) for works at Brinton Park, aiming to restore and conserve the park's historic and natural heritage. Since this planning approval was granted, the scope of the proposed works at the park have been reduced, which is listed below by the crossed through text along with text highlighted in red:

- Repairing boundaries/cemetery wall/retaining walls
- Improvement to pedestrian entrances
- ~~Surfacing around bandstand; improved paths, tree work.~~
- Recreation of ornamental lake
- ~~New café, toilets.~~ *No proposed new café building. Existing toilet block to be retained and refurbished.*
- ~~Improvements to car park and site access.~~ *Improvements to car park no longer in project scope of works. New one-way system in and out of car park to be provided.*
- ~~Refurbishment of original toilet block.~~ *Toilet block in centre of park now proposed to be demolished.*
- Re-instatement of original style park furniture and signage
- ~~Lighting to Richard Eve Memorial.~~ *No longer in project scope of works.*
- Modernisation to existing Sons of Rest Pavilion. *Building still to be extended, to house new café with terrace and activity space.*
- Ornamental planting extending the Senses Garden
- ~~Minor renovation works to original Victorian Park Bothy. Install gas boiler, new greenhouse, relocate water reservoir and build new toilets in Twigs Nursery.~~ *All works to Nursery area now removed from the project.*
- Improve natural habitats:
- Develop "tram stop" heritage feature
- Tell the historic story about the park through interpretation
- Programme of events, activities and volunteering opportunities
- Establish a new community led parks group

* Throughout this heritage report, text no longer relevant will be shown as strike-through text and supplementary text will be *highlighted in red italics*.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement supports the planning application for works to Brinton Park, to restore and conserve the park's historic and natural heritage whilst seeking to provide new facilities with proposed new building works.
- 1.2 This heritage statement has been based upon the research collated within the Conservation Management Plan, written by Landscape Planning and Design Consultants Ashmead Price. Throughout the design of the masterplan, the historic development of Brinton Park has been considered, by referring to the Conservation Management Plan in order to justify numerous design decisions.
- 1.3 Brinton Park – The People's Park, is an exciting new project which aims to restore and conserve the park's historic and natural heritage, fund new and improved facilities in the park as well as develop training, leisure, and volunteering opportunities for a growing and diverse local audience. Some of the improvements to be carried out include:
 - Repairing boundaries/cemetery wall/retaining walls
 - Improvement to pedestrian entrances
 - ~~Surfacing around bandstand, improved paths, tree work.~~
 - Recreation of ornamental lake
 - ~~New cafe, toilets.~~ *No proposed new café building. Existing toilet block to be retained and refurbished.*
 - ~~Improvements to car park and site access.~~ *Improvements to car park no longer in project scope of works. New one-way system in and out of carpark to be provided.*
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 - Ornamental planting extending the Senses Garden
 - ~~Minor renovation works to original Victorian Park Bothy. Install gas boiler, new greenhouse, relocate water reservoir and build new toilets in Twigs Nursery.~~ *All works to Nursery area now removed from the project.*
 - Improve natural habitats:
 - Develop "tram stop" heritage feature
 - Tell the historic story about the park through interpretation
 - Programme of events, activities and volunteering opportunities
 - Establish a new community led parks group
- 1.4 Brinton Park is a public park of 32 acres in total situated on the south western approach to the town of Kidderminster in Worcestershire. Kidderminster is a historic minster and market town in Worcestershire, 17 miles south-west of Birmingham and 15 miles north of Worcester. Brinton Park is owned by Wyre Forest District Council and is a District Strategic Park with Green Flag status. The Park and adjacent Cemetery are of significant historic importance as they are largely unspoilt Victorian landscapes. The site is a large public park (12.067 ha) primarily comprised of amenity grassland. Other features include scattered trees, a tarmac car park, and some buildings. The site gently slopes gradually to the south east.
- 1.5 To fund the project, the Wyre Forest District are applying for The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Parks for People grant programme. The project will see a £2.9 million investment into Brinton Park with a grant of £2.4 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. In December 2017, a round 1 pass was obtained which is providing development funding for a round 2 application. This enabled Wyre Forest District Council to appoint consultants to develop the project proposals in detail.
- 1.6 The park has a lot of historical importance within Kidderminster, especially due to the strong links with the carpet industry, which still exists there today. The site also contains the Grade II Listed Richard Eve memorial. It is important to understand the qualities that makes the site a sensitive location from a conservation and heritage perspective as there are statutory duties and design policy issues that will need to be addressed as part of this planning application.
- 1.7 Brinton Park is not in a conservation area.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

2.1 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the government's policies in relation to the development and the following section is considered most relevant to this proposal:

Section 4 of the NPPF relates to decision-making, to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Section 8 of the NPPF relates to promoting healthy and safe communities. It states that planning policies and decisions should plan positivity for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving well-designed places and recognises the indivisibility of good planning and good design. It sets out a number of key design considerations that should be addressed, including good functionality, a strong sense of place, responsiveness and history (reflecting the identity of local surroundings and materials) and visually attractiveness as a result of local surroundings and materials) and visually attractiveness as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. It requires proposals to conserve and enhance any biodiversity. Any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including the loss of ages or veteran trees, should be refused unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate their significance. The NPPF states that development leading to substantial harm, or total loss of, a designated heritage asset should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

2.2 The Wyre Forest District Council's 'Adopted Core Strategy' sets out the amount of development to be delivered in the District up until 2026 as well as the broad locations for delivering housing and other major development needs such as employment, retail and transport. It does not deal with site-specific issues. All subsequent planning documents build on the principles set out within the Core Strategy. The following key policies are some that are applicable for the development proposed:

- 2.2 Creating a desirable place to live: improving access to community facilities and parks and open spaces for all residents.
- 2.2 A unique place: the need to reverse increasing levels of habitat fragmentation. Ensuring that new development complements the District's local distinctiveness and unique heritage assets.
- 3.3 Vision: The District's varied natural habitats, together with its diverse and historic landscapes are thriving, and offer a range of indoor and outdoor interests, contributing to local educational opportunities and sustainable tourism.
- 3.12 Vision: Residents have the opportunity to lead healthier lifestyles with improved access to clean and attractive green spaces, facilitated by a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes.
- 3.13 Development Objectives
- 5.22 Reasoned Justification: All new development should make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the town.
- 9.23 Reasoned Justification: There are a number of green spaces and green corridors within the district which are currently fragmented but have the potential to provide a well-linked network of green infrastructure eg. Brinton Park and St. George's Park.
- 9.27 Proving Opportunities For Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity: WFDC supports a wide range of habitats and species.

3.0 Historical Significance

- 3.1 The history of Brinton Park reflects the development and growth of Kidderminster from medieval times when John Leland, a visitor to Kidderminster c1540, commented that the town “standeth most by clothing”.
- 3.2 The site of Brinton Park was part of a much larger manorial estate surrounding Caldwell Manor and it is likely that it was a private deer park for hunting of game and managing rabbit warrens. The sandy healthy and largely treeless character was ideal for this purpose as a parkland landscape not suitable for cultivation. The varied topography, commanding views and man-made fish pools would have given great aesthetic value to the estate in the pre industrial era.
- 3.3 By 1805 the carpet industry was the most important of the town's industries. For the best part of the next two centuries Kidderminster was internationally renowned for this product. From the mid- 19th century the industry was concentrated in the river valley and close to the canal as the carpet factories had grown up heavily dependent on traditional water power to fuel the mills. The Staffs and Worcester canal established by 1772 was instrumental to enable the distribution of the products to the rest of the country and beyond.
- 3.4 The rise of Liberalism amongst the most powerful men of the town in the 19th century stimulated a shared vision of nurtured growth and spread of the carpet manufacturers including John Brinton which was unique to Kidderminster and in contrast to the uncontrolled and chaotic growth of the other nearby Black Country towns.
- 3.5 The establishment of freehold land clubs during the mid- 19th century was an attempt to encourage the working class to become land owners to invest and build homes funded through the land clubs in an early model of the modern mortgage arrangement. There was a social and political motivation in the Liberal minded manufacturers as the qualification to vote went along with land ownership, so it was a means of spreading the right to vote to other social classes in the town.
- 3.6 John Brinton was involved as a Trustee in the Kidderminster Freehold Land Society and contemporary maps show how land parcels he assembled around the perimeter of what was to become Brinton Park (Sutton Common) were defined and subdivided as investment plots for the ordinary working person. One example of a land parcel later became the Brinton Park extension area, and a rectangle of land to the north of Talbot Street named Franchise Street was another example.
- 3.7 When Brinton Park was purchased in 1883 and presented to the Town by John Brinton in 1887 it was intended to stimulate development of housing and well planned suburbs to the southern side of the town, away from the crowded conditions in the river valley. It was the shared Vision of the carpet manufacturers which is unique at Brinton Park; to acquire land for both open space and housing on the edge of the town in order to improve the living conditions of the working man and to afford them ownership of land and property.
- 3.8 The significance of the Park as a stimulus to growth is in stark contrast to the other Black Country industrial towns which had swallowed up land in uncontrolled growth and needed Parks to offer a green lung in a degraded industrial landscape.
- 3.9 The cemeteries were also part of this movement and Kidderminster followed the example of other industrial towns by laying out the cemeteries on undeveloped land where there was space to accommodate the remains of the rapidly expanding urban population. The relationship of the cemetery to the park is therefore significant as part of the planned expansion of Kidderminster from its organic and congested beginnings.

4.0 Cultural Significance

- 4.1 Brinton Park remained the only public park in Kidderminster up until the establishment of Georges Park in the late 1920's and this added greatly to its significance to the Town people.
- 4.2 Sutton Common had been a social gathering point before it was gifted to the Town and this continued in the early days of the park when there was relatively limited development of the park infrastructure by the time of the Queen Victoria Diamond jubilee (1897) and later a major re-launch at the Coronation of Edward VII in 1902 (Coronation Drive formed).

- 4.3 Brinton Park continued to mark the significant national occasions and there is evidence of special Coronation events held for George V in 1935 and Elizabeth II in 1953. The accounts of large gatherings in the Park from the time it was Sutton Common until the festivals and Fetes throughout the 20th century mean that the Park is in the hearts and minds of the whole population of the town.
- 4.4 Brinton Park has evolved over a long time and its evolution has continued into the 20th and 21st centuries to respond to the current social context and needs of the local community. It is significant to find a complete archive of early plans, surveys and details of the various built features from the architect J T Meredith's early concept sketches, to the Borough surveyor's more detailed plans as the Town Council established a Park and Pleasure Ground Committee from 1900. The Park demonstrates the skills of landscape design in the Edwardian Period and the plans represent a regionally significant archive of the heritage.
- 4.5 Whilst some Victorian Parks had a fixed blueprint from the start, Brinton Park has adapted to change over time whilst retaining much of the original infrastructure and circulation sketched out in Meredith's early vision and developed by the Town Council Engineers. The names of the Engineers involved in successive developments in the Park are well recorded in the Council minute Books and this is locally significant as a heritage archive. The engineers have often shown great ingenuity and resourcefulness in improving the Park with limited budgets.

5.0 Natural Heritage Significance

- 5.1 The natural significance and strengths of the park are its distinctive topography; the open character of the grassland; mature structural tree planting surviving from the late 19th century with remnant semi natural vegetation; intact boundaries; adaptation of historical water features; and small scale built features linked by a network and hierarchy of drives and paths.
- 5.2 The origin of the Park from the medieval deer park and warren has created a distinctive landscape character of meadows and 'sand pits' and there is great potential for restoring and enhancing the natural heritage significance of the Park.
- 5.3 The recent habitat survey of the Park has revealed areas of semi natural acid grassland, numerous trees with potential for bat habitat and evidence of badger activity. The potential for linked Green Infrastructure from the Town centre via the mature cemeteries and out to the Park boundaries is very significant and of particular value to the present population and wildlife.

6.0 Richard Eve Memorial

- 6.1 The Richard Eve memorial is Grade II listed with Historic England (the only listed structure in the park). The memorial was constructed in 1902 and utilised glazed terracotta and ceramic tiles to form a fully glazed tower structure. The monument is largely original although some extensive repair works have been undertaken as part of an earlier restoration.
- 6.2 It was designed by Joseph Pritchard of the local firm of architects, Meredith and Pritchard and listed, was erected by public subscription as a memorial to Richard Eve. This structure was repaired with the help of a grant award from HLF in 2005 and is regarded as the main historical feature in the park.
- 6.3 A condition survey was undertaken in November 2019 for the restoration works of the monument, but these repairs will not be carried out as part of this HLF application.



7.0 Design of New Build and Associated Heritage Impacts

- 7.1 Brinton Park is a public park of 32 acres in total situated on the south western approach to the town of Kidderminster in Worcestershire. The park has a lot of historical importance within Kidderminster, especially due to the strong links with the carpet industry, which still exists there today. The site also contains the Grade II Listed Richard Eve fountain memorial.
- 7.2 The development of the park and the proposed buildings have been designed to be sympathetic with the character of the park. The development has been designed to be infitting with the historic rationale of a series of small structures and pavilions in the landscape. Any proposed buildings have been designed to be modest and in keeping with the scale of the Park. The restoration and improvements to existing structures and pavilions within the Park will provide a sense of pride and will return them to their former magnificence. This will be balanced with sensitivity designed new structures, such as the café and the extension to the Sons of Rest Pavilion. The proposed buildings have been sensitively located, so they do not impact on the open feel of the park.
- 7.3 The new café building offers the opportunity for a new innovative structure of an appropriate scale within Brinton Park. Due to the size constraints of the site, this has determined the footprint of the café. The new cafe replaces an existing unremarkable toilet block building. The small building has been designed to maximise the views across the park, using plenty of glazing in the elevations. The shape of the café is organic with a projecting prow-like front to the building, which is directed towards the bandstand and memorial. A sympathetic palette of materials has been used in the design of the café, consisting of stone, timber cladding, glazing and a zinc roof. Due to the level difference across the site, the café has been designed to sit on a stone plinth, with proposed planting to the elevation facing the reinstated pool which grounds the building into the park surroundings. *Works no longer in project scope of works.*
- 7.4 The extension to the Sons of Rest Pavilion have been designed to sit sympathetically alongside the existing building, designed to reduce the perceived scale and massing of the new structure when compared to the existing building. The scale of the extension is such that it is not considered to 'stand out' or appear incongruous or inappropriate in park setting. An additional 40sq.m in total (gross internal area) being gained which represents approximately 34% increase from the original floor area (approx. 136 sq.m). Aesthetically, the main objective is to retain the look of the existing pavilion, with the proposed extension complimenting the old building and being sympathetically designed. By looking back at historic photos, it was apparent that there was once a veranda overlooking the pool area. The idea is to reinstate this veranda, which will create an outdoor seating area and viewing platform over the pool area and parkland beyond. *There will also be a new proposed terrace, which will provide outdoor seating for the new cafe, overlooking the reinstated ornamental lake.*
- 7.5 The planting strategy is made up of discreet areas of new planting, taking a cue from historical precedents including the 1901 Borough Engineers plan. There are opportunities for horticultural decorative planting in association with the existing horticultural display gardens, the Pool margins and the restored Sons of Rest building. New native hedge planting will be used to give enclosure to discreet areas as well as improving the appearance and forming a backdrop to shrub or perennial borders. There is still a contrast, which should still be maintained, between the open feel of the upper central pasture and the enclosed intimate feel of the valley landscape and the higher eastern and western enclosure on the edge of the Park.
- 7.8 The historic ornamental pool and associated dell planting area will be reinstated as part of the park works. Historic documents are available for the original design of the pool, island and bridge crossing, which have been closely examined for the design of this area. The pool was a very important feature of Brinton Park and features heavily in people memories as to what make Brinton Park a special place. Restoration of the pool area will provide an added attraction and focus in the park and will stimulate interest from those people in the community who remember the paddling pool facility. The landscape character of the Ornamental Pool and bridge will be restored, improving views across the Park. The pool will maintain water quality and enhance wildlife interest in the Park and will provide a new picturesque feature.

7.9 There is desire to extend and improve car parking under this project. By moving the entrance to the car park further back from Sutton Road, this will improve visibility and safety for pedestrians and vehicles. The garage blocks will be demolished and replaced with new planting and the existing driveway location will be returned to parkland. All parking will be removed from this main entrance driveway and replaced with grass, thus creating a fantastic sense of arrival to the Park and the car park area will be improved to provide more spaces. *The garage blocks will be retained for storage and a new one-way system will be provided into the car park, to help ease traffic congestion onto Sutton Road.*

7.10 In relation to the NPPF the first test is to consider the significance of the heritage asset and then consider the level of harm attributed to the development. In concluding that there is no harm in policy terms it is not necessary to further consider the test within paragraph 196 of the NPPF which requires less than substantial harm to be considered against the public benefits of the proposal.

7.11 It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of section 16 of the NPPF.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The development of the park and the proposed buildings have been designed to be sympathetic with the character of the park and the development has been designed to be infitting with the historic rationale of a series of small structures and pavilions in the landscape. Any proposed buildings have been designed to be modest and in keeping with the scale of the Park.

8.2 With all things being considered, it is our view the proposed works will have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the Brinton Park and works restore and reinstate the remaining lost heritage features of the park.

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