

# PROPOSAL FOR “POCKET GARDEN” REGENERATION

10 March 2014

Mill Hill Park Conservation Area, Acton, W3

# Introduction

This proposal is addressed to the Mayor of London, Pocket Parks Programme on behalf of the Mill Hill Park Residents Association (MHPRA).  
The document and associated designs have been prepared by professional garden designers Anna Dargavel and Marcia Hurst, who are residents in Mill Hill Park Conservation Area.



INTRODUCTION



CRITICAL  
ISSUES



THE PROPOSAL



BUDGET  
REQUIRED



COMMUNITY  
BENEFITS



RECOMMENDATIONS

# Site Description

- The space proposed for the re-development is the green corner of approximately 340 sq.m. in size, located at the bottom of Mill Hill Road and Crown Street, bordering the Mill Hill Park Conservation Area.
- The site, further referred to as a “Pocket Garden” is of a high profile and is a visible ‘gateway’ to the Conservation Area, as well as is a thoroughfare for commuters, school children and residents alike.
- The green area consists of two adjoining spaces on both sides of Mill Hill Road, as it joins Crown Street, however this proposal concerns with one p triangle, as highlighted on the plan.
- There are small shrubs and flower beds, with mature trees running along the back wall.
- Two benches are located towards the back of the ground, partially concealed by mature shrubs.
- The area is maintained by street cleaners on a weekly basis, with seasonal grounds maintenance.

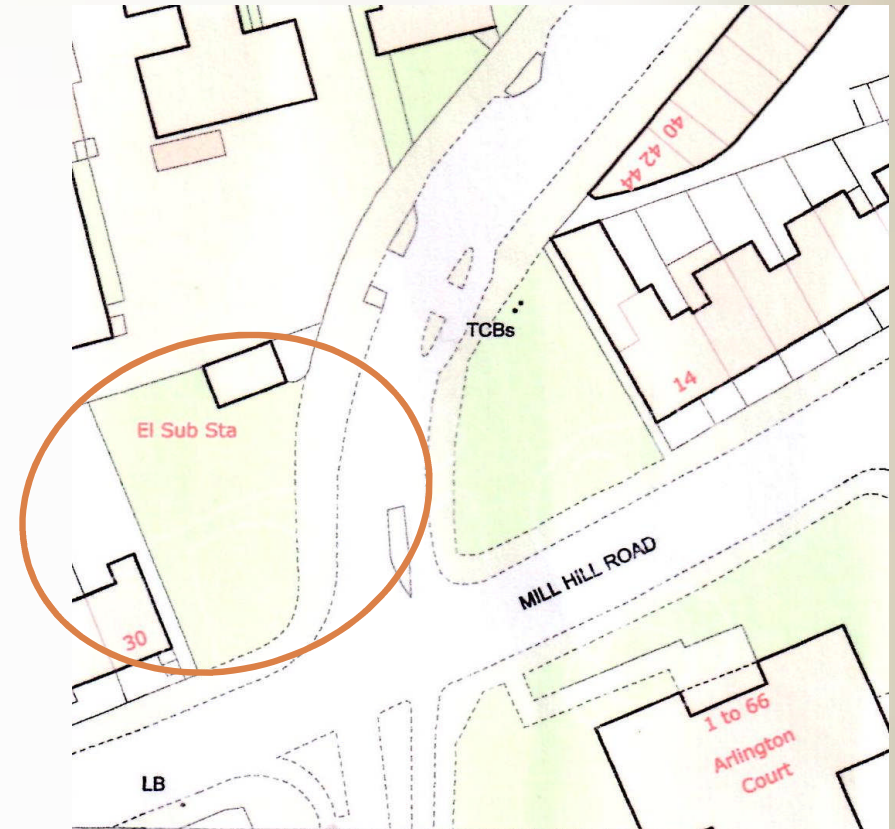


Figure 1: Site location

# Issue description

- The current layout, with benches located towards the back of the ground, concealed by shrubs, attracts street drinkers, resulting in anti-social behaviour, noise and rubbish left at the site daily, and particularly over the week-end.
- The local residents find the current situation intimidating, unsightly, noisy and often threatening. It is deemed unsafe to walk past this ground in the evening.
- Furthermore, the plants, which were planted approximately 10-15 years ago, are in a poor condition and require a fundamental refresh.
- MHPRA has been working with the Ealing Parks team and Safer Neighbourhood team to deal with on-going problems with this space. However, without a fundamental change in approach it has not been possible to address the issues.



# Objectives

The Mill Hill Park Residents Association has teamed up with locally based professional garden designers and the Ealing Council Parks team to research and propose a practical yet creative solution, which would benefit all residents in the Acton area.

The regeneration proposal is primarily concerned with one part of the ground located to the right when entering the Mill Hill Park Conservation Area. However, it aims to view both spaces holistically to achieve two primary community objectives.

## *Key Objectives*

1. To minimise the street drinking and littering problem.
2. To create an attractive space for the local residents and a wider community to enjoy.

# High level proposal

At a high level the following improvements are proposed:

- Introduction of colourful, all year interest low maintenance shrubs and plants, whilst keeping some of the healthy existing plants, with partial removal of common, self-seeding tree species.
- The site will be illuminated by low voltage LED lights to highlight the structure, including uplighters to the groups of multi-stem birches to add interest in the evening, whilst discouraging street drinkers from the site.
- Removing two benches and recycling bins located in the triangle.

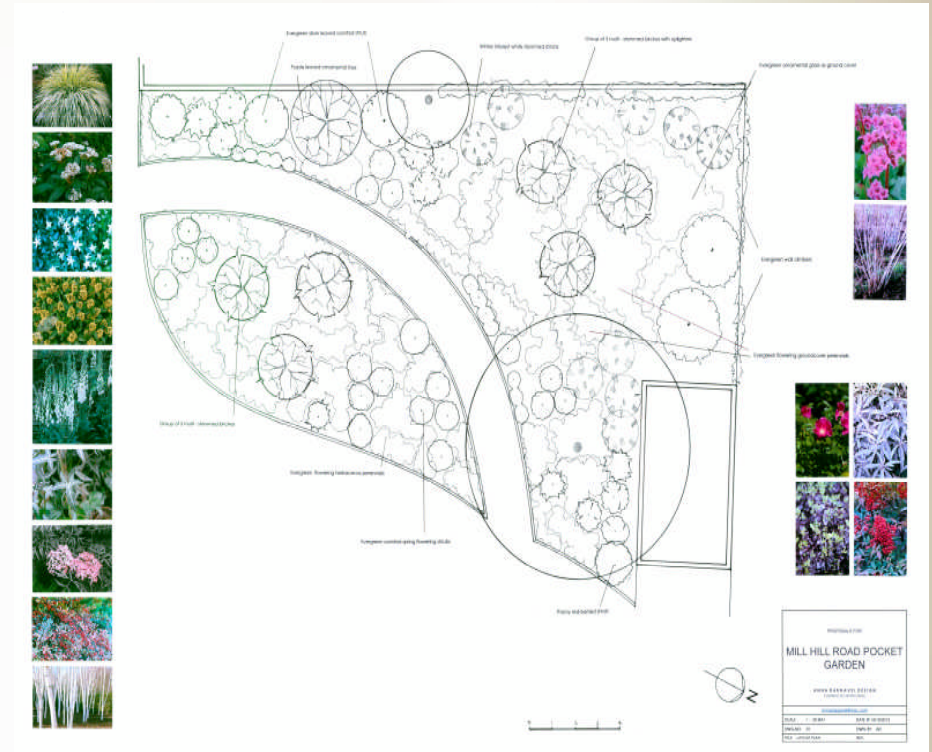
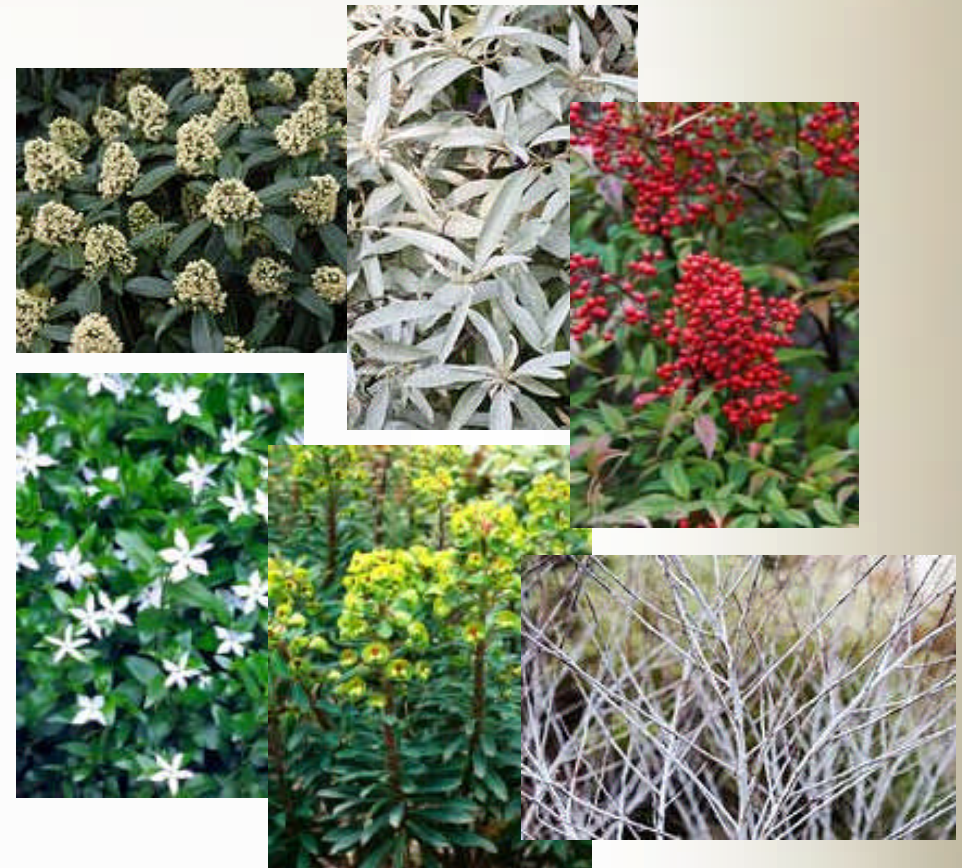


Figure 2: Proposed design layout

# Detailed proposal: existing plants

The proposal is based on re-using some of the healthy existing plants, with a significant amount of plants donated by the residents:

- **Plants to be kept:** Liriope/geranium grasses , Sorbus tree; large ash and a cedar.
- **Residents' donations:** Euonymus alata x 2/Euonymus "Red Cascade" x 2/ various hellebores, grasses, vincas, euphorbias and narcissi
- **Plants to be removed:** In addition to removing perennial weeds, it is also proposed to remove sycamore seedling at rear perimeter, pyracantha and Portuguese laurel.
- **Plants to be introduced:** this illustration provides a sample of proposed plants with more detail overleaf.



Clockwise from top left: 1) 'Kew Green' (evergreen winter flowering shrub); 2) 'Quicksilver' (evergreen scented flowering shrub); 3) Nandina (year round interest - red berries, white flowers); 4) 'Cockburnianus' (winter interest - silver stems, in spring bright leaves); 5) Euphorbia (striking colour and form); 6) Vinca difformis (evergreen flowering groundcover).

# Detailed proposal: new plants

The new plants will compliment the landscape, adding the following species:

- Betula var. Jaquemontii multi-stem x 6
- Skimmia x confusa 'Kew Green' x 5
- Nandina domestica x 6
- Elaeagnus 'Quicksilver' x 2
- Rubus 'Cockburnianus' x 9
- Rosa rugosa 'Rosarie del' Hai' x3
- Berberis wilsonii x 2
- Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Tom Thumb' x 12
- Sambucus nigra f.porphyrphilla 'Eve' (Black Lace' x 1
- Viburnum davidii x 3
- Pileostigia viburnoides x 3
- Agapanthus africanus 'Albus' x 39
- Euphorbia amygdaloides var, Robbiae x 18
- Euphorbia x martinii x 15
- Bergenia cordifolia 'Purpurea' x 20
- Liriope muscari extg. X 48
- Vinca difformis x 54
- Pachysandra terminalis x 30
- Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola' x 90
- Geranium 'Endressii extg. X 30
- Digitalis purpurea ' Albiflora' x 36
- Hedera helix 'Pedata' x 3



# Detailed proposal: key requirements

For the design to be successful the proposal is reliant on the following additional investment:

- ❑ Soil cleaned for weeds and fresh soil brought in
- ❑ Tree surgery: removal of non-specimen, self-seeding sycamore trees and pruning of a large ash tree
- ❑ Removal of the benches, hard standing and bins
- ❑ It is proposed to replace the current bins with small litter bins, only suitable for small litter
- ❑ Lighting and power supply with LED low power lights
- ❑ Refresh of the interpretation board
- ❑ Considerations for street signage on completion (to reduce visual clutter)
- ❑ Removing part of the paving under the benches and replacing it with plants
- ❑ Review of the maintenance schedule to fit the requirements of this space, including a more frequent watering schedule in the first year.

# Budget required

The MHPRA proposes that part of the budget is allocated from a combination of the 2013/14 South Acton Ward and Mayor of London Pocket Parks Programme to support this proposal for implementation in year 2014-2015..

The costs have been validated by the Ealing Parks' team based on the designs supplied with this proposal.

#	Improvement area	Estimated cost £
1	Plants	2,100
2	labour for site preparation, tree surgery and planting	3,750
3	Top soil	650
4	removal of benches and hard standing and fixing of new railing	500
5	Lighting, cabling and labour	2,000
6	Site interpretation board	1,000
		<b>TOTAL</b> £10,000

# Community benefits

- The Mill Hill Park Conservation Area strives to maintain its green areas and this prominent space will become a distinctive entry point into the Conservation Area.
- The new proposed layout of this green space will benefit the residents, passers-by, local pupils, and a wider community to enjoy the space, whilst also utilising the green area on the opposite side of the road.
- The MHPRA strongly believes that by removing the benches from their current hidden places and moving them to a more prominent location it will stop street drinkers and by introducing more suitable litter bins, located next to the benches, littering should be reduced.
- Finally, this is an invaluable opportunity to bring the community of all generations together to make a joint effort in looking after this green space.

# MHPRA's Recommendations

This proposal reflects the general consensus of canvassed opinions and feedback, and is supported by professional designers, who have witnessed this garden at its best and worst times, thereby, giving us a genuine experience base to work from. These considerations have been incorporated into the proposed design.

MHPRA strongly recommends that proposal is considered for funding in the next calendar year of 2014.