

Bethnal Green Gardens Shelter Conversion Design, Access and Impact Statement

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1.0 Design Statement

2.0 Project Brief

The Architects of London Borough of Tower Hamlets Building and Technical Services have been appointed by LBTH Parks and Play to plan the renovation and conversion of an existing Art deco style pavilion situated within Bethnal Green museum gardens from a park shelter into a café facility.

The proposal is intended to rejuvenate the building and contribute to the continued improvement of Bethnal Green Museum Gardens and the local area. With the building's location near to the Bethnal Green underground station, the conversion into a café will look to increase use of the park and be a generally positive addition to the local environment.

3.0 Use

The new design incorporates the following:

- An internal closed café area with flexibility for all year round operation. In the summer months, glazed bi-fold doors can be opened up to allow for a blurred inside/outside space transition. When not in use, security shutters can close off the facility
- A kitchen area for the preparation of food for the café plus internal serving hatch
- A dry store accessed from the kitchen for the storage of café supplies and equipment
- A fully accessible DDA compliant WC accessed externally

The existing building, believed to have been built in the 1930's was originally constructed to house a vent for the London underground. This infrastructure requirement was incorporated into a pavilion with open, sheltered benching plus a kiosk facility (now redundant). The pavilion has decayed over a number of years and is rarely used as originally intended.

4.0 Amount

The existing building will be retained with additions being made within the existing footprint. The existing GIA of 44.4m² will be increased to 53.3m² with the additional café internal area (Refer **PA-04**).

5.0 Layout

The Pavilion is located in the North East corner of Bethnal Green Museum Gardens which is in turn situated on the corner of Roman Road and Cambridge Heath Road. The proposed layout is for a café facility primarily that can be opened all year round; the London Underground vent will be retained. The space could also be utilised for community facilities though this would need arranging with the tenant and LBTH. The facility will also provide an externally accessed fully accessible WC (to be managed by the facility).

6.0 Scale

Please refer to planning drawings generally to consider scale. As mentioned, the buildings mass is not being altered apart from the addition of glazed screens to create increased internal area.

7.0 Landscaping

Existing landscaping and trees in the park will be retained and any vegetation near the works will be protected during construction. As shown on drawing **PA-09**, it is proposed to increase paving area externally to create a defined area for café seating during the summer. The paving and installation detailing will be of robust construction to allow for park vehicles to pass over without it's degradation over time.

8.0 Appearance

Particularly considering the buildings' situation within the Bethnal Green Gardens conservation area, the proposed appearance is intended to sensitively work with the existing building fabric whilst also positively responding to the striking art deco style of the existing building, plus giving the building a contemporary and regenerated aesthetic. It is proposed that the existing style remains dominant with the additions providing a subtle change to the building's outward appearance. This intention is in combination with the building being converted to uses that will benefit the park and local area far more than is currently in-place.

Where the doors at the southern end of the building are being closed off and filled in, it is proposed that bricks being removed for the creation of the café serving hatch and below existing benching can be reclaimed and reused to enable a seamless and matched aesthetic to the existing. The over sailing slender concrete roof will remain with the proposed glazed screens being recessed to allow this light and elegant feature to be read. Where the kitchen facility is being created, a white render infill is proposed with high level timber framed windows. This largely responds to the practical requirements of the new kitchen and need for internal wall space for operations. Also and importantly, security of the facility is dealt with whilst still allowing natural light into the internal area. As illustrated in the proposed drawings, these additions are designed in such a way that they enhance the appearance of the building by giving a clean updated aesthetic whilst not conflicting with the existing art deco design style.

Timber framed doors and windows are proposed throughout to reflect the intended use and human scale of building.

9.0 Access Statement

The site being located in the heart of the Bethnal Green area is surrounded by several public facilities and the position provides a natural hub for community use. The site is easily accessible via several bus routes along Bethnal Green Road, Roman Road and Cambridge Heath Road as well as Bethnal Green underground station approximately 50 metres away.

The design responds to the growing needs of the local community by offering an easily accessible facility which aims to enhance the local environment and has the added intention of creating a destination within the park to encourage use of the museum gardens area and locality.

10.0 Vehicular and Transport Links

As noted previously, the sites location is well located with numerous transport links in easy distance as well as roads for vehicular accessibility.

During the short construction period, the park has ample area to provide a small enclosed contractor's compound. Access to the site for construction vehicles is easily achievable though strategies would need careful consideration and management to allow for separation from the public.

11.0 Inclusive Access

The proposal is to maintain the single storey building with level access and circulation. External landscaping will provide level access to the building fully compliant with DDA requirements.

12.0 Security

Due to the pavilion's relatively vulnerable position in a public park, particularly during night periods when the park is closed, security provisions have undergone careful consideration. The proposed extents of glazing will have roller shutters installed to allow the areas to be completely sealed when the building is not in use. These shutters will be concealed discreetly within the lintel detail proposed to the external face of the timber windows (Refer **PA-10 and PA-11**). The windows at high level in the kitchen area will be securely lockable with use of toughened glass.

13.0 Consultation

The design team has held informal discussions with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets parks staff to discuss the security threats and any potential issues with local neighbours.

The highways and parking departments will be notified of the construction works date to suspend any residential parking bays that may cause conflicts with material deliveries.

14.0 Impact Statement

Largely because of the buildings' location within a park, the area surrounding the building is generally a mix of trees, grass, tarmac and vegetation. Directly to the East of the site is Swinburne House (approx 20m away) which is residential in use and separated by a private road, park fence and trees/vegetation.

The existing walls and roof will be upgraded to incorporate insulation to increase the thermal and acoustic performance of the building to ensure a sustainable design solution. As the proposal is to rejuvenate and re-use an existing building, the impact on the neighbourhood and environment will be positive.

The general impact on the surrounding area is intended to be very positive with the proposed use installing a facility that will look to further regenerate the local area and create a place where the general public will meet, greet and see as a destination.