



Gunnersbury Park

Proposed New Cafe and Carriage Display Building

Design and Access Statement

v4 December 2014

CONTENTS

Page No.

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Scope of the Design, Access and Justification Statement	1
1.2	Context of the Application	1
1.3	The Café: Issues	1
1.4	The Carriages: Issues	1
1.5	Project Aspirations	1
2.0	Design Considerations	2
2.1	Existing and Historic Fabric	2
2.2	Use	2
2.3	Amounts	2
2.4	Layout	3
2.5	Scale	3
2.6	Landscaping	3
2.7	Appearance	3
2.8	Access	3
2.9	Environment and Sustainability	
2.10	Public Consultation	
3.0	Associated Information	3

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

This report has been updated (Version 4, December 2014) as part of a re-submission for “minor material amendments” to existing planning permission ref: 00885/C/S2 Dated 29/05/2014 for the proposed new café and carriage display building.

1.1 **Scope of the Design, Access and Justification Statement**

1.1.1 This document has been prepared for use in a submission for Planning Permission in respect of the following proposals for Gunnersbury Park:

- The removal of the existing Café and Toilet block.
- The construction of a new Café and Carriage Display Building

1.1.2 The document also forms a part of the HLF Stage E submission information, in support of the application for grant funding under the Parks for People and Heritage Grant programmes.

1.1.3 This statement has been prepared within the guidelines promoted by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), with input from other members of the Design Team, in particular Jan Anderson, Landscape Architect.

1.1.4 This document should be read in conjunction with all application information, but specifically the drawings enclosed under Appendix A.

1.1.5 Reference should also be made to the updated Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Café and Carriage Display prepared by Purcell.

1.1.6 Reference should also be made to the separate reports and information comprising the approved applications for planning and Listed Building Consent in respect of Gunnersbury Park and Gunnersbury Park House.

1.2 **Context of the Application**

1.2.1 Gunnersbury Park is located within the London Borough of Hounslow but at the boundary with Ealing Borough Council. The Park is owned and managed jointly by both Authorities, the situation arising out of the purchase of the Park from the Rothschild Family in 1925 at which time the Estate became a public park and Gunnersbury Park House (the Large Mansion) was established as a local museum.

1.2.2 Gunnersbury Park occupies an area in the order of 72 hectares and serves as an important and well-used local community facility. Within the north-east of the Park there are the Large Mansion and Small Mansion more correctly known as Gunnersbury Park House and Gunnersbury House which are listed Grade II* and Grade II respectively. These two early 19th century buildings originally constructed as single and independent dwellings subsequently came under single ownership of the Rothschild Family who occupied the whole of the Estate until it was sold in the 1920s.

1.2.3 The history of the Estate pre-dates the Rothschild’s ownership and although the original mansion designed by John Webb in the mid 17th century has long since been erased, various elements of the parkland landscape and a number of the structures survive from this previous incarnation.

1.2.4 The Parkland contains not only a number of listed structures but is also recognised in its own right as a Registered Park and Garden.

1.2.5 This document and the associated drawings should also be considered in conjunction with the previously approved application for the Café and Carriage building as well as the approved applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for proposals in respect of Gunnersbury Park House, Parkland Structures and Landscape.

1.2.6 The current proposals, which form the basis of this application, reflect changes to the Café and Carriage Building which seek to minimise the impact of the new structure on the adjacent landscape and mature trees to the north of the existing café.

1.3 **The Café: Issues**

1.3.1 The existing Café is a pavilion style building of circa 1950’s design, comprising a masonry structure to the rear and a timber framed, glazed structure to the front, over looking the Temple, Round Pond. Finished with a shallow pitched roof, it sits low in the landscape, an arrangement that has assisted the various tress and shrubs to mature around it.

1.3.2 Drawing 6674/01A shows the location of the existing Café structure, which is also to be site of the replacement building.

1.3.3 The existing Café performs a valuable function within Gunnersbury Park, serving a variety of visitors throughout the day. Its position is ideally suited to serving both the heritage core of the park and the adjacent Museum located in Gunnersbury Park House (The Large Mansion). Its outlook over the Round Pond, although screened by established shrubs, has great potential.

1.3.4 However, the existing building is now in very poor condition, surviving through ‘first aid’ repair as can be seen by the various patches and props securing the existing fabric.

1.3.5 The main issues with the existing Cafe building are:

- Poor condition of the building fabric, with a limited life expectancy.
- A lack of toilet provision within the building.
- Inefficient space arrangements around the kitchen and servery areas.
- An uninviting facility, which results in, unrealised potential.
- Adjacent trees and shrubs have begun to impact on its setting, screening bad but also good views.

1.4 **The Carriages: Issues**

1.4.1 The historic carriages are presently displayed within the Drawing Room of Gunnersbury Park House as a permanent museum exhibit.

1.4.2 Despite their size and robust appearance, these are sensitive exhibits which require controlled environmental conditions, limited daylight and screening from direct sunlight, due to the detrimental impact this can have on the wood and leather fabric.

1.4.3 In these respects, the existing location of the Carriage Display is poor and the arrangement of the space limits visitor interpretation of the exhibits. In turn, the carriages do little to enhance interpretation of the historic Drawing Room.

1.4.4 The main issues with the existing Carriage Display are:

- An unsuitable space for interpretation of the Carriages.
- Poor environmental conditions.
- Lack of access to rearrange the exhibits and to improve interpretation.
- Impact on the interpretation of the historic Drawing Room.

1.5 **Project Aspirations**

1.5.1 The aspirations of the new Café and Carriage Display project include:

- Improvement of the visitor’s experience of the café.
- The provision of improved food and drink preparation facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher quality of structure in which to house the Café • Improvement in the display of the coaches and their interpretation, improving the visitor experience. • Re-establishment of the historic Drawing Room as part of the Large Mansion • The provision of a well designed, secure, and sustainable structure within the park, capable of housing the Café and coach display into the future. 	
2.0	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS	
2.1	Existing and Historic Fabric	
2.1.1	The adjacent Gunnersbury Park House is a Grade II* listed, early 19 th century mansion located within both a conservation area and a designated Historic Park and Garden.	
2.1.2	Gunnersbury Park is a Grade II* Registered Landscape consisting of both open parkland and formal gardens. The overall landscape contains a number of historic buildings and structures	
2.1.3	The existing Café dates form the 1950’s and perhaps represents a rise in popularity of the park as a social venue and a place for families to relax informally, around the Round Pond, which at that time was used as a boating lake.	
2.1.4	The Café is now in a poor state of repair. Having stood for approximately sixty years, it has over the latter part of its life suffered from poor maintenance and a ‘sticking plaster’ approach to repair and upkeep. Following storm damage, the roof has been overlaid with black tarpaulins and the roof truss ends show deformity, with one propped by a timber post.	
2.1.5	A condition survey recently undertaken on behalf of the Local Authority estimated a budget cost in the region of £120,000 to undertake urgent and basic repairs, and a cost in the region of £330,000 to fund any concerted attempt to address the failings of the existing structure and fabric in a more permanent manner.	
2.1.6	Consideration has been given during the design process to establishing a new Café within the adjacent Museum, in Gunnersbury Park House and at the Orangery, further south into the Park. The former proposal was felt to have too great an impact on the historic spaces of the Large Mansion, limiting the area available for exhibition and compromising interpretation of the ‘heritage rooms’. It was also realised that whilst such an arrangement might serve museum visitors well, the converse might be the case for park users, with potentially negative results.	
2.1.7	The design process also showed that the existing Orangery was away form the main footfall routes within the park, which would be critical to the Café being a sustainable business. In fact the Orangery already provides a valuable service as a private, letable function venue, which will continue to be its use.	
2.2	Use	
2.2.1	The existing Café building has been in use for this purpose since its construction in the 1950s. It consists of a kitchen with ancillary storage, a servery and main seating area. The building addresses external terrace seating to the south-west and a children’s play area to the south-east	
2.2.2	The existing Café is served by separate toilets housed in a modern building adjacent to the north-west corner of the Large Mansion.	
2.2.3	In conjunction with the main Gunnersbury Park project, which includes the repair and redevelopment of the Museum, renovation of the parkland and the future redevelopment of sports facilities, it is proposed that the existing Café be removed and replaced by a new structure. This building will contain a new Café, including associated spaces (kitchen, storage, plant etc.), visitor toilet facilities and a space for the exhibition of the historic carriages. The existing toilet block will be removed following the establishment of the proposed sports facilities in the near future.	
2.2.4	Drawings 6674/02 to 04 show the plans, elevations and views of the existing building, illustrating how the space is currently used.	
2.2.5	Drawings 6674/16 to 20 indicate the proposed arrangements for the new building and use of the spaces, which are summarized as follows:	
2.2.6	The overall template of the plan draws on the existing layout, creating new Café seating spaces with glazing to give views to the south-east and south -west with kitchen, ancillary spaces and WCs located on the north-west side, backing onto the existing trees and shrub screen.	
2.2.7	The use of the new building can be defined as spaces that will be publicly accessible and private or “back of house” spaces. This is identified graphically on the plan, drawing no. 6674/17.	
2.2.8	Generally, the building has two primary spaces: The public café and the carriage display area, which will only be accessible by museum staff on an infrequent basis.	
2.2.9	WC facilities are accessed from the café space and comprise 1no. fully accessible toilet and 2no. unisex toilets. A dedicated room for baby changing has also been provided.	
2.2.10	The kitchen is conceived as an open plan space with a large servery fronting the public café and a serving hatch opening out to the external terrace seating. Dry storage and chilled storage space are located to the rear of the kitchen. Staff facilities include separate WC, staff room with lockers, independent plant room and cleaners store.	
2.2.11	There are two external spaces that are integral to the building’s design, layout and use. The café space opens out to the south-west onto a seating terrace that runs the full length of the building. During the summer months these internal and external spaces can be more closely linked when the three sets of bi-fold doors can remain open. The second external area is the triangular terrace to the North which will primarily be used to view the carriages. This space incorporates low level plinth seating and is big enough to accommodate schools visits.	
2.2.12	A screened refuse area is discreetly located to the rear of the building.	
2.2.13	The carriage display area will provide a tailor-made space for the display of the historically significant Rothschild carriages, and associated exhibits, which are currently, displayed somewhat incongruously in the Drawing Room of Gunnersbury Park House (the Large Mansion). The new building provides the opportunity to provide a display space with appropriate access, lighting and environmental control.	
2.3	Amounts	
2.3.1	The existing buildings comprise as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing Café has a gross internal floor area of 164 sq.m used solely as a public Café facility. • The existing toilet block occupies a footprint of approximately 28 sq.m 	
2.3.2	The proposed building occupies a gross internal floor area of 300 sq.m comprising the following, net internal floor areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café seating area: 116 sq.m • Public WC + Baby Change: 17.5 sq.m • Kitchen + Storage: 74 sq.m • Carriage Display area: 61 sq.m • Other staff areas: 13.4 sq.m 	
2.3.3	Through the proposed design, the amount of floor space available for public use is increased and the functionality of the building is diversified by incorporating the display of the historic coaches, which are linked to the history of the site by their connection with the Rothschild family.	

2.3.4	Internally, the café seating area has been sized to populate 80 covers and circulation space. Externally, there is potential for a further 150 covers extending the terraced area to the grass embankment and new landscaping leading to the round pond.
2.4	Layout
2.4.1	The building will be formed as two distinct elements, one housing a new Café and the second housing the collection of historic carriages. It is proposed that whilst each element will serve distinctly differing purposes, they will occupy the landscape as a single and unified structure.
2.4.2	Drawing 6674/17 indicates the proposed floor plan arrangement for the new Café and carriage building.
2.4.3	The Café is located in a position similar to the existing building and has improved views to the park and adjacent buildings through large areas of glazing. The siting of the building and landscaping of the adjacent areas enables an improved visual connection to the Museum entrance, thus reinforcing the connection between the two buildings.
2.4.4	The kitchen and associated spaces are located on the north-west side of the building, with provision of a secondary staff entrance.
2.4.5	The Carriage Display space to the north is shielded from potentially damaging southern sunlight by a solid wall with occasional narrow openings to provide views into the display space. Glazing to the north elevation allows views of the display from the main driveway, enhancing the link between the carriages, Gunnersbury Park House and the Museum.
2.4.6	The separation of the Café and coach display by the linking structure allows for staged construction environmental separation of the two uses and greater flexibility in opening to visitors.
2.5	Scale
2.5.1	The new Café building reflects the scale of the existing building and is considered appropriate to its setting.
2.5.2	The café and carriage display space form a single story pavilion with a maximum external building height of 4650mm. Internally, the carriage display finished floor level will be 350mm lower than the café to accommodate existing levels on site. Externally, this is expressed as a shallow gradient.
2.5.3	The overall scale, footprint and gross internal area of the proposed building has reduced in comparison to the scheme which has received Planning Permission.
2.6	Landscaping
2.6.1	The associated landscaping proposal is conceived to create a smooth flow of users through the space, with external seating and children’s play areas located conveniently in the vicinity of the Café.
2.6.2	The existing planting scheme will be retained where possible, although it is acknowledged that this has become overgrown in places and that some reduction of overall planting is desirable, particularly to re-establish views and to create links with the Museum entrance.
2.6.3	The landscaping proposals form a part of the overall proposals for the wider area of Gunnersbury Park, but relative aspects are included under Appendix A.
2.6.4	The intention is to use augured piles and ground beams where constructing foundations near to existing trees to avoid intrusion into the root zones. Specialist advice of arboricultural consultants associated with the Gunnersbury Park project will be sought in the course of developing the proposals although it is anticipated that the removal of some existing trees and shrubs will be required.

2.7	Appearance
2.7.1	The external details of the new building are designed to achieve a discreet appearance to avoid competing with existing park structures. The external walls are to be finished in a combination of vertical Siberian larch boarding and full height glazing; the roof is to be finished EPMD membrane with a zinc fascia detail.
2.7.2	Proportionally, the building has been arranged on a structural steel grid. This provides a rhythm to the elevations and helps to define fenestration.
2.7.3	The detailing of the vertical Siberian larch cladding incorporates a “hit and miss” system, which gives the surface a texture. This is accentuated with external lighting provided in the overhanging canopy.
2.7.4	Internally, the Café will be fitted out in a range of finishes, including painted metal structure, timber, painted plaster, white concrete floor finish and ceramic tiles.
2.8	Access
2.8.1	The reformed landscaping and new building design will provide level access to all building entrances.
2.8.2	Internally, the circulation will be step-free.
2.8.3	Finishes inside the building will reflect the desire to assist visitors with partial sight and a hearing loop is to be provided at the servery
2.9	Environment and Sustainability
2.9.1	The construction of a new building provides the opportunity for a highly efficient structure with appropriate levels of insulation, solar protection and sustainable equipment. It is not considered desirable to incorporate rainwater/grey-water harvesting technology in this case, because of the scale of the building and the intention is to concentrate on maximum thermal efficiency using natural and sustainable materials.
2.9.2	The building envelope will be heavily insulated and cold bridging will be reduced to a minimum. In maximizing air tightness and the specification of thermally efficient materials, the overall u-values and performance of the building is maximized. The ambition is for the building to meet legislation set out in the London Plan, which outlines greater economies of fuel and power than part L of the Building Regulations (additional 40% reduction overall).
2.9.3	Lighting will utilise energy efficient luminaires and other services installations will employ water saving technology.
2.10	Public Consultation
2.10.1	Public consultation was previously undertaken for the design proposals which gained consent. Within the time frame available, it has not been possible to undertake further public consultation on the revised proposals described in this report, prior to its submission. However, the scheme will be presented as a part of the on going public consultation exercise associated with the main Gunnersbury Park project.
3.0	ASSOCIATED INFORMATION
3.1	The following drawings should be read in conjunction with this report:
6674/01A	Site Location Plan
/02	Plan as Existing Café Building
/03	Elevations as Existing Café Building
/04	Photographs of Existing Café Building
/16A	Café and Carriage Display Site Plan as Proposed
/17A	Proposed Café and Carriage Display Plan

/18A North-West and South-East Elevations as Proposed
/19A North-East and South-West Elevations as Proposed
/20A Long Section and Proposed Structure

3.2 The following document should be read in conjunction with this report.

- Proposed Café and Carriage Display, Gunnersbury Park Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by Purcell.