

REDEVELOPMENT OF QUEEN'S WALK PLAY AREA, GODMANCHESTER

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

Background

Godmanchester Town Council are responsible for the operation and maintenance of a number of children's play areas throughout the town. The main two areas are those at Judith's Field, and at Queen's Walk. The latter is located in the historical heart of the town, and near a number of interesting recreation areas, including the River Great Ouse, the Mill Lade, Portholme Meadow, Godmanchester Lock and the 'Rec'. The under-10s fenced play area was originally built in the 1990s, and has served the town well, but is beginning to show its age. A new facility, SkyWorld – for older children – has been built nearby, and we now wish to undertake a holistic redevelopment of the fenced children's play area.

Site

Queen's Walk Children's Play Area (QWPA) is located on an island between the Great Ouse Sluice and the Mill Lade. It is shown on the attached plan, and measures approximately 20 x 40 metres. It is surrounded by a security fence, approx. 1m tall, and has 2 pedestrian gates for normal access, and a 'field gate' at the side for access by mowers etc. It currently provides the following items of play equipment:

- a. Swings x 2
- b. 'Baby' swings x 2
- c. Roundabout
- d. Seesaw
- e. Climbing/adventure frame
- f. 'Pirate ship' and sailboard

While most of these items are fully serviceable, none are fully accessible, and they represent individual items as opposed to being part of an overall design.

Any development should reflect that the QWPA is in a Conservation Area, and is overlooked by a number of properties on the opposite side of the Mill Lade, the willows and a footpath. Those residents will, rightly, have an expectation that any changes should not adversely affect their outlook.

Requirement

The Council are looking to develop this play area and are seeking innovative solutions which will meet the following criteria:

- a. Equipment suitable for a range of ages up to 10. This should include provision for babies under close supervision.
- b. The plans should encourage co-operative play, and thus might be themed around a major item which can be used by a number of children simultaneously.
- c. Some equipment should be 'accessible'. This will include access for wheelchair users, but also for those with non-physical disabilities.
- d. The equipment should be harmonious within this environment, and should not be an eyesore to residents with properties overlooking the area. Hence the use of bright colours at high levels should be avoided.
- e. Equipment should cater for traditional activities – eg swings, roundabout – as well as for more adventurous play.

- f. Maintenance and periodic testing should be considered at the design stage in order to reduce ongoing costs.
- g. Ideally all equipment should be located within the existing area to reduce costs of moving or replacing fencing.
- h. Suitable seating for supervising adults (who might be quite old) should be specified, and might be included within the play equipment.
- i. The project will be a design and build contract, which would include removing existing equipment and fall area matting as appropriate.
- j. Design of fall areas should be considered to minimise empty spaces, but also with longer-term upkeep and repair in mind.
- k. While cost is not the major limitation, our funds derive from our residents, and we must be able to demonstrate that what is provided represents an improvement over the current equipment, and provides value for money. If grants were available to assist with the purchase, this would be of benefit.

Replacement play installation at the Queens Walk Children's Play area

(Age Range 2 – 8 yrs. old)

Queens Walk, Godmanchester PE29 2NB

Godmanchester Town Council are inviting proposals for the redevelopment of this play area. Recent upgrades at other sites have highlighted the considerable fall space needed when providing individual items, due to safety zones etc. It is therefore seeking options that provide multiple and co-operative play opportunities with larger single items. After various surveys of our local users' certain desirable features have been established.

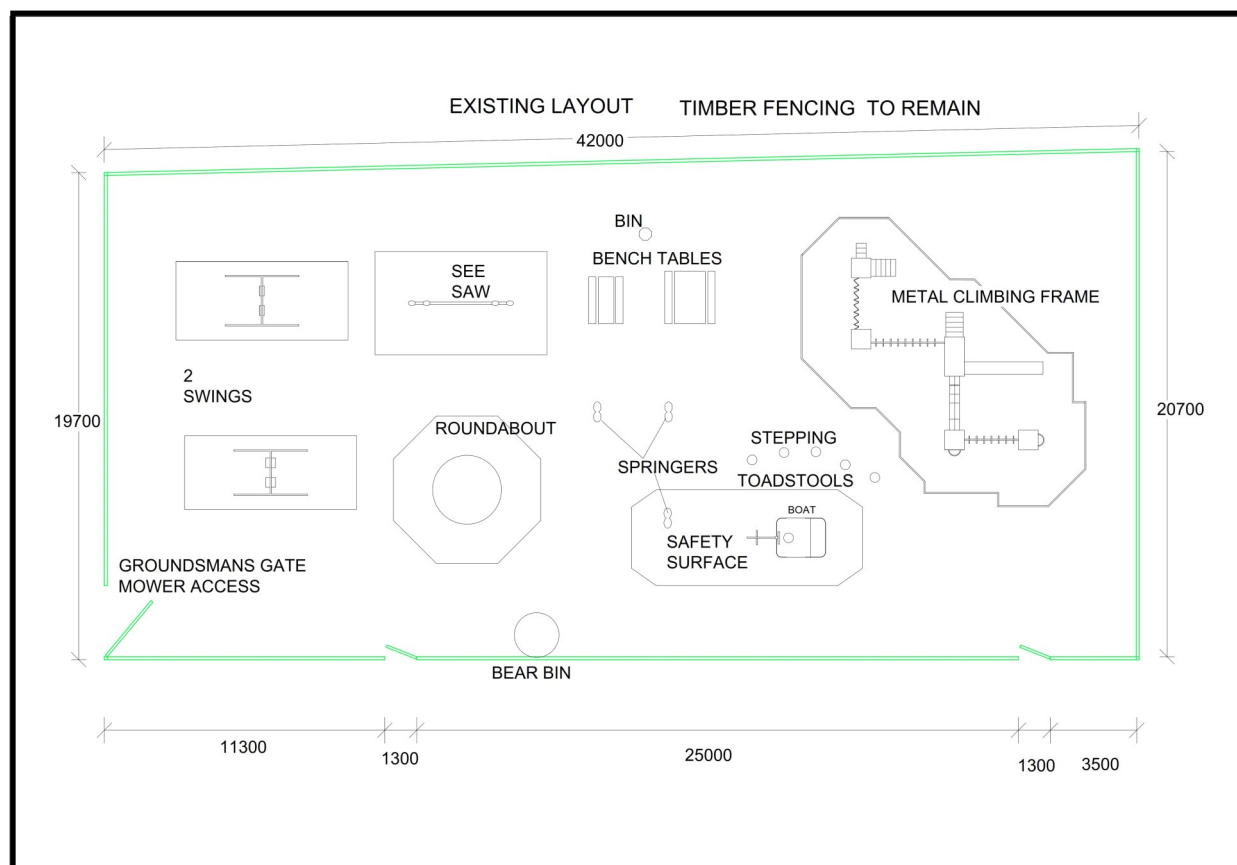
The new equipment should, as far as possible, create an 'accessible playground' offering a range of play experiences to children of varying abilities. Individual items that have been considered are:

- A. an accessible roundabout.
- B. an accessible see saw enabling both wheelchair and individuals use.
- C. a swing area with more swings including a baby/adult dual use item.

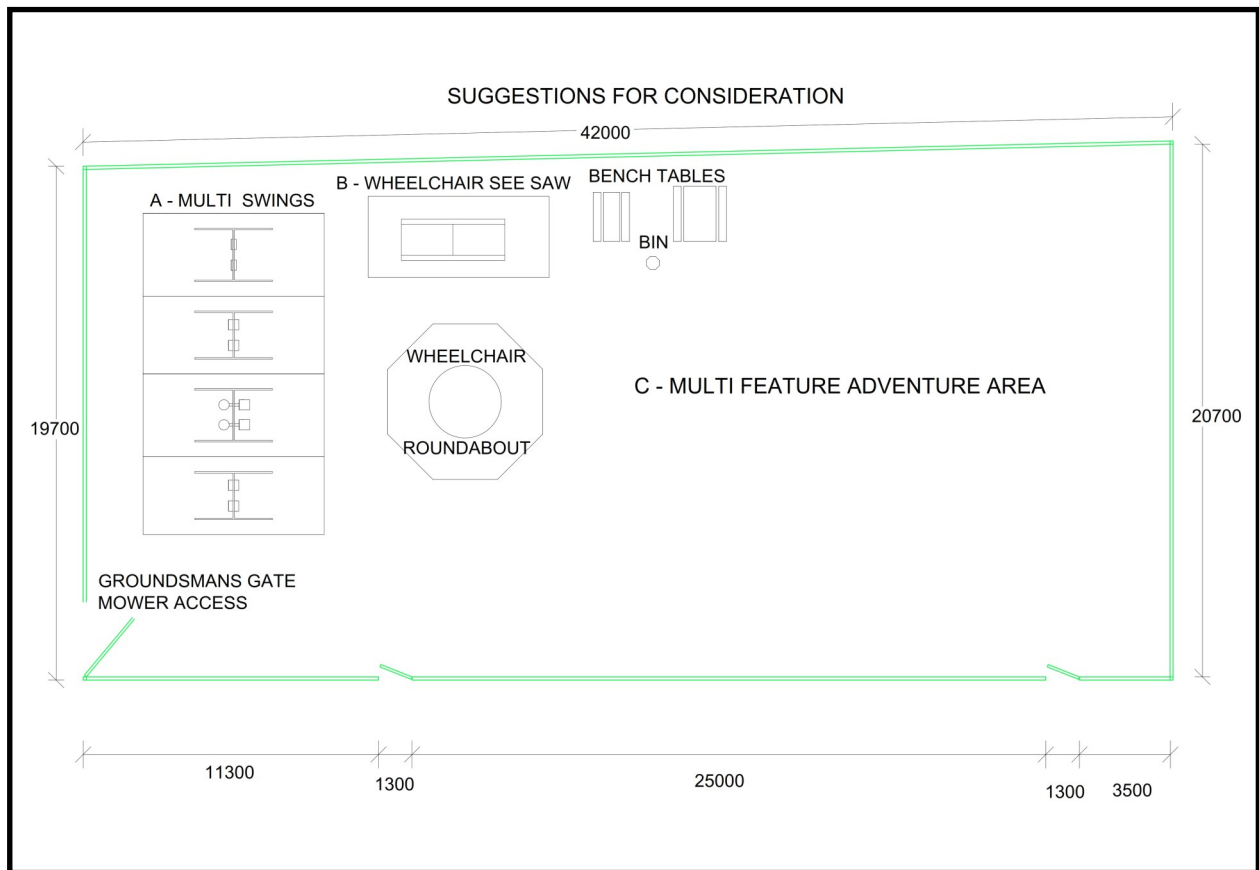
A multi-play train combination at another of our sites has proved very popular, as has a sunken trampoline. The Council recently had to remove a much-loved apparatus with rope climbing net features and monkey bars and feel that it would be desirable to re-provide these in the new setup.

The site is in a CONSERVATION AREA and the replacement (s) needs to complement this, to appeal to local residents and non-users.

A site visit can be arranged through the Town Office; other details are covered in the accompanying cover letter. Proposals will be reviewed on the 10th of April 2023.



The existing play equipment.



Various views of the existing site

