

Occasional Parking Area St Paul's Field, St Paul's Road, Old Town, Barnsley

This statement covers the issues that arise from the long term use of an area on the edge of St. Paul's Road that has been in use for occasional parking for many years, both under the tenure of the Church and subsequently when it was passed to the Council as an open space.

The intention is to formalise, accommodate and constrain the occasional parking that continues to take place on St.Paul's field.

Background & Reasoning

For many years the area at the fringe of St Paul's field, adjacent to St.Paul's Road, opposite the Church entrance has been used as a parking area in association with the church, the adjacent parish hall and the users of the open space. This use has been taking place for a considerable period of time and there is reason to consider that this use could be considered as 'lawful'.

The impact of this use has been considerably detrimental to the condition and upkeep of the open space area in two ways:

- The area over which vehicles travel is compacted and depressed and creates depressions where water is ponding and underfoot conditions are poor. Attempts have been made to improve the underlying drainage to remediate this situation. Nevertheless, this part of the open space has become unuseable to support the open space use.
- The approach of drivers to using this peripheral area for parking is not to pull/reverse onto the area from St Paul's Road, but to leave the road some way away from 'parking' area and to describe a semi-circular route across the field and forwards into a space at the kerb edge. This practice, further damages the surface of the field, again compacting parts, leaving depressions and hindering even maintenance.

The practice of using part of the field for access to the 'parking' has potentially serious consequences for users of the open space. With no physical restriction along a long frontage, drivers choose at which point to leave the carriageway and carry out their manoeuvres. This is dangerous for anyone using the open space, unsure of which direction the vehicle may be travelling and the driver's control on the surface is considerably lessened. There have been incidents of conflict which

have escalated into personal confrontations. This potential danger cannot be allowed to continue for purely safety reasons and there needs to be some formal arrangements to separate vehicles from users of the open space.

In addition, vehicles driving off the grass field in wet conditions are likely to drag mud and material onto the public highway, creating safety issues.

Faced with the above issues there is adequate reason to stop any vehicle using the open space area to access and park. To undertake this in an appropriate manner, the existing bow-top fencing, installed along part of the boundary on Greenfoot Lane and into St Paul's Road could be extended along the remainder of the frontage, without need for planning permission.

The consequence of such action would be to create serious highway issues along the road when parking was needed or to increase parking on nearby surrounding residential streets. St.Pauls Road has no footway, as a consequence parallel parking alongside the road, would force pedestrians into the carriageway of the road. The surrounding area already has Resident Only parking restrictions in part. In addition the majority of adjacent streets comprise terraced property, where on-street parking already is at a premium to support the residential needs.

The Church clearly generates a specific demand on Sundays. In addition it generates parking demands for funerals and other religious occasions. The Parish Hall has accommodated play groups and other community functions which generate both daytime and evening parking. There is an expectation that the use of the Parish Hall will be increased. All of these will continue to generate parking demands both daytime and evenings, which if not provided for, will increase conflicts on surrounding streets and impact on local residents.

The view taken is therefore that a proposal that reflects the reality of the situation, confines and constrains the parking removing both safety hazards and maintenance issues is the most appropriate and sensible option.

Greenspace Issue

The matter of impact upon the greenspace designation has been the subject of discussions with the Parks Service of the Council (David Gill, Parks Manager) .

On balance, it is agreed that the proposed provision mitigates the impact of current and established practice while providing a facility for users of the open space. Parking within designated greenspace is not unusual (viz. Locke Park, Sugdens Recreation Ground, Glendale Close etc.) and this solution is regarded as acceptable by the service.

As mitigation it is agreed that tree planting will take place on the southern side of the fencing of species and standards to be identified by the Parks Manager)

Summary

Whilst this is a very limited incursion into an area that is designated urban greenspace, it benefits the greenspace itself by ensuring a consistent surface and condition for users and a better maintenance outcome. It will result in the greenspace area being safer for users, removing the conflict with vehicles. The proposal not only benefits the community who use the church and the parish hall, but the open space users. It should be noted that part of this area, lies outside the control of the Council, in the tenure of the Wakefield Diocese.

Specific Design Issues

Surfacing The parking area needs to reflect the context and 'read' with the open space area. As a consequence, the chosen method is to consolidate and re-inforce the grass surface with proprietary plastic mesh; reinstating the excavated top soil; and then re-seeding the grass. This work has already been carried out by the Council's Engineering Services and despite it being carried out during the winter, the area is already beginning to green-up.

This treatment allows the surface to appear green, but be resilient enough to accommodate the occasional parking of vehicles. In the medium term, following consolidation within the mesh, material will cease to be deposited on the highway, which has been the case for numerous years. It also maintains a sustainable surface by allowing water percolation into the underground drainage, rather than creating surface water run-off

into limited highway drainage. The material also reflects the expected occasional use rather than full time parking use.

Fencing With over half the boundary already fenced with green painted bow-top fencing, the logical solution is to continue with this boundary treatment to 'contain' the parking and prevent manoeuvres to access it across the field.