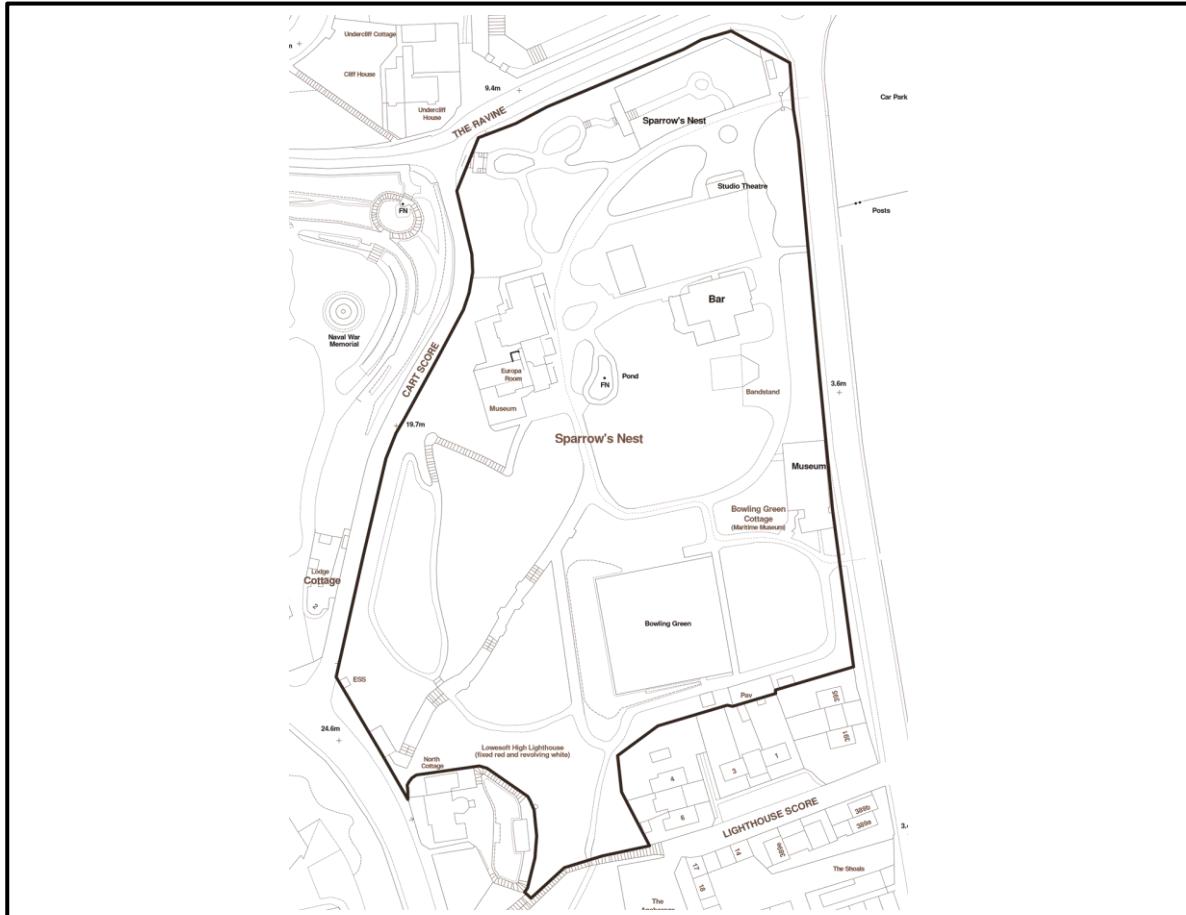


Sparrow's Nest, Lowestoft, Suffolk



Current Site information

Ward: Harbour

Site Reference: SK261656

Area:

Special Status:

Covenants:

Entrances: 5

TPOs:

Services:

Facilities on site:

Access:

Species on Site:

Soil Type:

Issues:

Current main use of site:

Park

Future planned use of site:

Sparrow's Nest will be the Destination Culture Park in Lowestoft. It was home to what was once an iconic theatre in the town and still houses three museums, a movie theatre, a restaurant and a very popular café and bowling green used by three clubs. It is a natural amphitheatre and has a shell designed band stand which can also be used/adapted for outdoor projection as well as one of the town's beacons.

Sparrow's Nest still has most of the bones of what made it one of the premier parks in the town. It would not be practical to restore some areas of the park however it should be possible to restyle them to maintain the feeling of the park whilst adding a slightly more modern planting palette. It is proposed that a theme based around Alice in Wonderland/Through the Looking Glass be used in the park.

The older Japanese garden with its water features would be too costly to restore and maintain and we have a better example which we should restore at Kensington Gardens. It is proposed to create a sensory garden in this area with the old pond being turned into a mini "maze", the rockeries planted with tactile, aromatic or bright plants and a living willow structure planted on the northern raise areas where currently steps lead to nowhere. This would be enhanced by the croquet scene from Wonderland with playing car hoops as tunnels in the maze and hedgehog balls and flamingo mallets. To replace the missing ponds and provide the sound of running water a self-contained solar wall fountain and tank would be place against the wall where the steps lead down from the Cart Score entrance. Where often these fountains have a lions head with water coming out of the mouth this could be the head of the Cheshire Cat. There would also be a living willow feature towards the walled area to the north of the garden.

Between the Japanese Garden and the old Rose Garden is the terrace which is surrounded by a box/privet hedge which is coming to the end of its life. It is proposed that we consider replacing the hedge with a pergola to provide height and interest as well as planting opportunities which would house picnic bench style communal seating and overlook the new replacement to the rose garden. This seating would include the Mad Hatter at one end and the March Hare at the other with the Dormouse emerging from a tea pot on one of the tables.

The old rose garden was removed several years ago and the few roses which are left do not to wall in the location. This space had been a rose garden for more than half a century and would probably need most of the soil replaced if growing roses again was thought about. This area however does appear unloved as it currently it and the location and the all year-round attraction of the park would allow us to develop a winter garden (i.e. one which had interest all year around but comes into its real glory over the winter months). As part of the design it would be proposed to incorporate a pergola from Harrods and also a couple of concrete chess tables and seats each overseen by a chess queen, one white and one black/red as per Looking Glass.

Along the eastern boundary of the park we had been hoping to use secondhand wrought iron fencing to replace the wooden fencing and open up the view into the park. As a long term aspiration it should still be looked at as a possibility. As part of this we need to consider commissioning a new entrance between the bowls pavilion and the Maritime Museum to attract visitors and link across to the Ness.

The Japanese entrance from Yarmouth Road needs to be restored and a lot of effort has gone into working with East Coast College on this however other partners should be considered. The old line of box/privet behind this should be removed as most of it is dead and the soil improved and planted with Lavender as not only would it look nice it would also serve to mask any smells from anti-social behaviour. Here we could also have the top of the rabbit hole with the White Rabbit disappearing into it with the other end of the hole at the bottom of the steps and his head coming out.

The old central handrail which led down the steps and path down to the main part of the park need to be restored for safety and reasons and the benches in the recesses along this path need to be re-installed to provide resting places during the climb/descent.

Consideration needs to be given to the planting in the upper area of Sparrow's Nest and this is where one or more of the potential National Collections could come to the fore. The area is referred to as the Bluebell Walk and this is being built on year on year with the planting of new spring bulbs. There is an area which will make a fine fernery and also a level area which was once old toilets which could be utilised. It is proposed that a sculpture of the Jaberwocky would work very well in the centre of the Bluebell Walk.

Handrails also need to be considered near to the Lighthouse Score entrance to the park and down to the bowling pavilion as this area can become slippery. The concrete water tank in this area and the natural springs need to be investigated to see how they might be used to help irrigate the park.

The old second bowling green that is now just grass needs to be given a use and something to welcome visitors into the park. Maybe this could be another place that we could work with schools to create re-cycled plastic bricks to build raised beds in the form of a ship's prow and create an wheelchair friendly garden.

The pond in the centre of the park requires planting and the depth considered as it may not currently be deep enough to sustain fish. It needs surface cover, marginals and oxygenators. Unfortunately, the fountain is not really compatible with water lilies if they are too close so other alternatives need to be considered, flowering marginals will help enhance the pond and attract pondlife such as dragonflies etc. The aim should be to get the pond to a level to sustain some fish.

In line with the culture theme of the park it would be fun to have outdoor games tables such as chess/draughts, snakes and ladders etc

Park signage is also important especially information and interpretation signage.

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The play area could do with renovating and extending because of the amount of use the park receives and this could be on the same theme. Local sponsorship has been offered in the past and could be investigated.

We should investigate the potential of working with the Moviemakers and the Marina to see if the movie theatre could be used as an arthouse cinema or similar as this could help both of them out and possibly benefit Giardino's as well.

Key Development Opportunities:

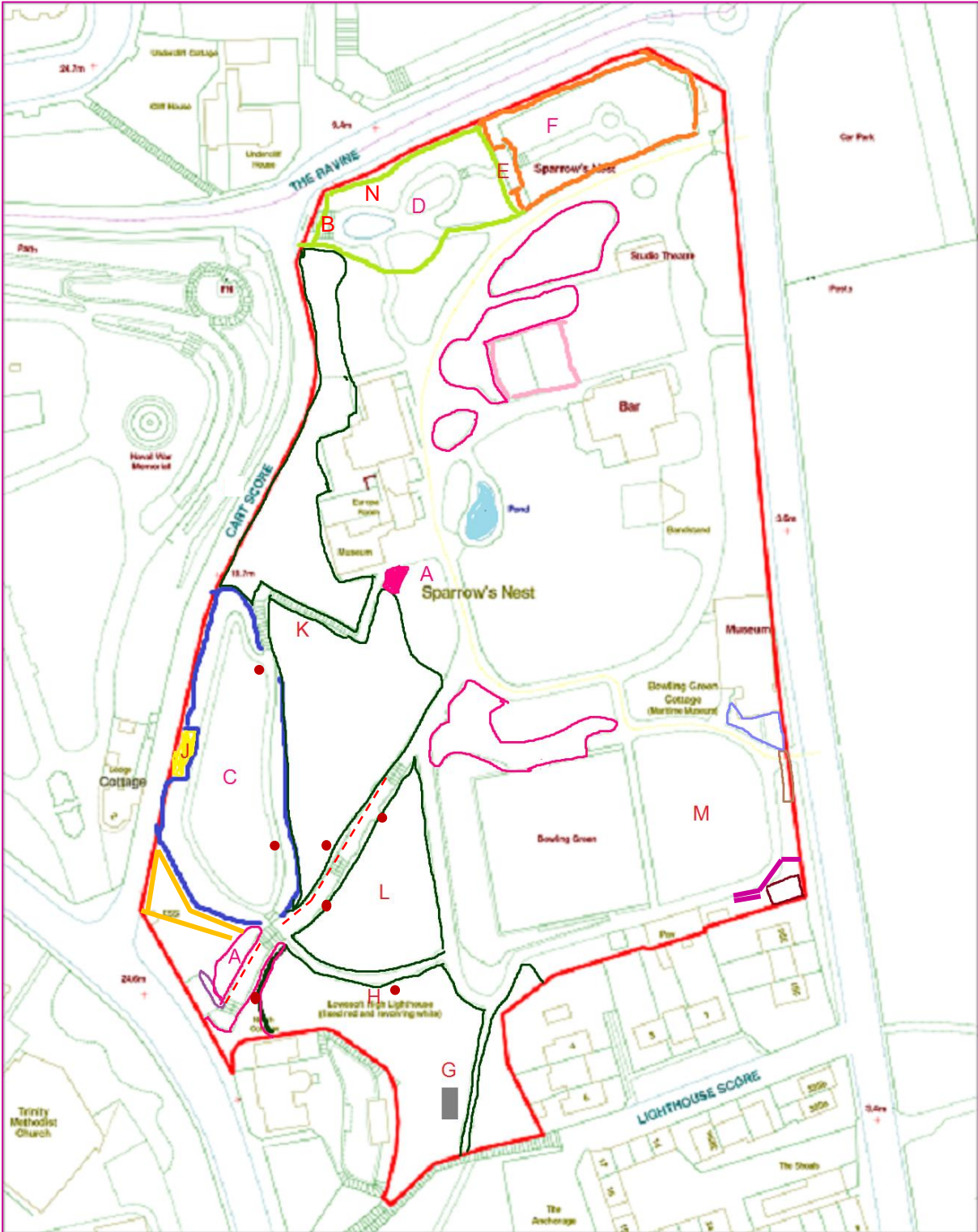
- Toilets – renovate existing toilet block
- CCTV
- Consider options for pond
- Seating
- Bins
- Bike Racks
- Alice Theme
- Winter Garden
- Sensory Garden
- Play area (Junior/Toddler)
- Railings and new entrance
- Handrails
- Rain water collection/storage
- Signage
- Drinking Water fountain
- Stakeholder group

Resources Required:	Various
Funding Required:	Funding for toilets as agreed by council CCTV as part of future budget Sponsorship and council investment
Stakeholder Group	Yes
Friends Group	No

Current Benches, Bins and Bike Racks Inventory



Code	Item	Quantity	Potential Needed
●	Bin	14	To have bins at even entrance we would need a further four bins. One at the entrance by the Maritime Museum, one from the Ravine, one at the top entrance on Yarmouth Road and one at the entrance from Lighthouse Score.
●	Benches	32	There is no shortage of benches in the park however there are some areas where there is a deficit that should be considered when doing the new planting areas and also when reaching the higher areas of the park.
	Bike Rack	0	There are four potential locations which are: close to the Maritime Museum/Bowls Club, by the Moviemakers, near the rear of Giardino/bandstand and at the top entrance from Yarmouth Rd.



Colour Code

	Formal planting areas		Handrail
	Jack Rose Rose Garden		LiB Maritime Garden
	Winter Garden		Pond
	Sensory Garden		Play Area
	Woodland planting		Water tank
	Bluebell Walk		Fernery
	Castle Folly		Composting area
	Lavender Hedge		New Benches
	New entrance		

Alphabet Code

A	White Rabbit (with the rear end going down the hole at the top and the head appearing at the bottom)	H	The Fawn
B	Fountain with the head of the Cheshire Cat	J	The White Knight by the Castle Folly
C	Jabberwocky	K	The Caterpillar (curving it's way up alongside the steps, could be a mixture of round shrubs and sculpture)
D	Playing Card Hoops, Flamingo Croquet Mallets and Hedgehog balls all on a maze made up on different plants.	L	The Gryphon and the Mock Turtle
E	A picnic table on either side for public use but with the Mad Hatter at the far end on one side and March Hare on the other and maybe the dormouse and the teapot on one table.	M	A feature by the new entrance to invite into the park. Maybe a trawler design or a replica of the Albion/Excelsior planted up with sedums with low blue planting around to represent water.
F	The White Queen and the Red Queen standing by concrete chess tables	N	Living willow sculpture such as a half dome or tepee.
G	Disguising the water tank with rocks to make look like a rock pool with oysters and having the Walrus and the Carpenter.		

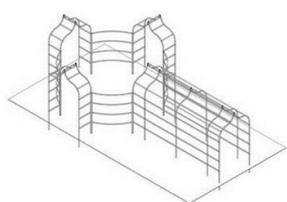
Action Plan Further Information

Play area

This has already been prioritised for 21-22 from the Play area budget and the theme of Alice in Wonderland is being explored so that it can tie in with the other areas of the park. The characters not used elsewhere which could be incorporated include Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Lion and the Unicorn, Tigerlily, Rose & Violet (talking flowers), Humpty Dumpty, Dodo, Duck, Lory and Eaglet (Caucus Race). Because of the amount of use that the park gets it might be an idea to increase the size of the play area and aim it towards toddlers and juniors.

Winter Garden

There is a working group dealing with this although it hasn't met for a while. There are three key structural elements which are required the sloping path up from the main path a curved path and two small seating areas and the pergola. As with other new paths it would probably be sensible to investigate the use of recycled material wherever possible and to avoid solid non-water-permeable paths. The planting will be of plants which mainly have either winter colour or interest however there also needs to be interest for the rest of the year as well. Any plants which are in location not required in the replanting will be lifted and replanted within the park with the exception of the memorial roses which will need to be retained wherever possible. There is the aim to add in a couple of chess tables in line with the culture nature of the park.



Sensory Garden

This is a plan to re-vitalise the old Japanese Garden and make it a more enticing space. The grass would be replaced with a maze made up of different plants such as chamomile, thyme, dutch clover or leptinella. The garden has a lot of rockery style planting so small pockets of sensory planting can be put in with larger planting on the banks above. A key feature here would be a fountain which would add to the sensory nature and restore the sound of water in this area of the park. This is dependent on electricity but could be solar powered. It would store the water in the tank and pump it up and out of the cats mouth and back into the tank which would have a grill fitted with pebbles so that there was no risk to children. It would sit in the recess of the steps and be softened with planting.



Toilets

The toilets have already been scheduled for work in 21-22 and will come out of the toilet budget.

Bluebell Walk

This area has been under development for a couple of years already and we annually add to the blue bulbs that are in this area. Additionally, some perennials such as geranium Johnson's Blue could be added. This area is quite a natural area so planting should be appropriate to that. Within this area there are two sub areas which can be developed separately. They are:

- **Fernery** – there is a hollow at the entrance to the Bluebell Walk which stretches up towards Yarmouth Road which would make a natural area for a fernery.
- **Folly and Knight** – this is a level area which has no use at the moment and is up a slight slope. Adding in a castle folly and the White Knight would work here.

There is actually no seating on this level which should be addressed however the formal seating in the rest of the park would not work here. Something more rustic would be preferable.



Woodland Area

This is a large area of the park which is very natural. The proposal would be to gradually add in woodland planting such as foxgloves, geraniums, ferns, spring bulbs etc to add colour and interest whilst retaining the current aspect.

Formal Planting

There are areas of the park which already have some formal planting and it is proposed that these remain such as by the café and at the Yarmouth Road entrance to the park, plants can be added to these areas from other parts of the park to develop and where desired slightly enlarge the beds. The only two potentially new planting areas would be in the south end of the park which would include a shrub and perennial bed to protect the bowling green from the main lawn area, possible planting around the enhanced entrance and some planting to hide a potential compost area.

Compost area

There is an old Norse storage area by the bowls club which Norse have suggested could be used for leaf composting. This would be very practical but it would be useful to disguise it with planting.

Fencing

We had originally hoped that we were going to be donated with some wrought iron fencing for along Whapload Road which would have allowed visibility into the park. This could remain as a long term possibility however for now we have the fence and it needs to have a maintenance regime set up for it in order to preserve it as much as possible. For the fence on the Yarmouth Road entrance it is proposed to treat it with Sadolin Extra in Ebony along with the main entrance to maintain the style of the frontage. New poster frames can be added to match for the Marina advertisements. For the fence on Whapload Road, it would be preferable to use either Ebony or a dark brown shade. This is used in gardening as it recedes from the eye and also is more difficult to mark.

Lavender Hedge

It is proposed to remove the old privet hedge, behind the Yarmouth Road entrance, which is past its best and plant a lavender hedge in its place. This will have three uses, it will be lower and allow a view down the hill, secondly it will be beneficial to wildlife and finally its aroma may help to disguise any misuse of the entrance area.

Handrail

This is a very important feature to bring back into the park. In the past there was a handrail which went down the centre of the path from the Yarmouth Road entrance to the bottom of the steps. As we found it is invaluable to anyone who is not strong on their legs and also to those who are in winter if the natural streams freeze and make the path slippery. The other key element to this is to re-instate the benches in their alcoves on the path as this allows people to take the slope in stages and have a rest which widens the use of the park.

New Entrance from the Ness

It was discussed about adding a new entrance in place of the current entrance by the Maritime Museum to encourage links with the Ness. This could be achieved by building new brick piers and adding an arch or by installing a complete new entrance



It might be that the entrance ties into the Maritime history and links to a new feature in front of the bowling green to entice visitor in.

Pond

A key necessity is to get a greater range of plants back into the pond in Sparrow's Nest to turn it back into the feature that it once was. Once planting is balanced there may also be the possibility of adding fish back into the pond.

Environmental Issues

We should take advantage of the natural springs in the park and investigate underground water storage solutions for watering this park and, with a bowser, other parks. This could be combined with exploring the strength of the flat roof on the main building to investigate whether solar panels could be added and tied into the electricity supply for the café and museum. We should also investigate whether more efficient energy saving adaptations could be made to the building such as double glazing and insulation etc. Consideration also needs to be given to the spring water egress at the rear of the main building and potential diversions/soakaways. Planting should be designed to reduce the need for weeding and pesticides and mulch should be used as per the Mulching Policy. Leaf mulch can be produced on site.

5 year plan schedule of works				
Year	Item/project	Cost	Existing Budget	To be budget for that year.
2021-22				
2022-23				
2023-24				
2024-25				
2025-26				
Longer Term				