

Rathdown Heritage Park Design Strategy



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1 Introduction

The subject site is strategically located between Redford Park, St. Crispin's housing estate and Greystones North Beach. It provides a great potential for creating a vibrant community and heritage park that provides safe pedestrian access to the waterfront and the Greystones-to-Bray Cliff Walk, while also protecting and promoting the site's historic significance and its natural environment. It is proposed that this park be named Rathdown Heritage Park.

Over the years the 'Friends of Historic Rathdown' have carried out research and produced a considerable amount of literature to record and celebrate the site's medieval heritage. The site gained attention in 2010 when a major clean-up was carried out by the local community, as organized by Councillor Simon Harris and supported by Wicklow County Council. 'No Dumping' signs were erected at the two entrances, with the sign at the northern entrance including a brief description of the site in an effort to educate users of its historical significance. Following the clean-up, local residents were invited to submit their ideas and opinions on the future use of the site.

Having lived in Redford Park for ten years, and with my background as an Urban Design and Planning Consultant, I prepared a first version of the present document in 2010 to express my views and opinions and to perhaps provide a basis upon which a final design strategy for the subject site could evolve.

In 2013 Greystones Tidy Towns was made aware of the document and adopted the principles of the proposed strategy. The Tidy Towns committee was particularly in favour of the strategy's promotion of community involvement and a phased implementation of works as funds become available. In early 2014, Tidy Towns in cooperation with Redford Park Residents' Association undertook another clean-up and inspection of the site and, based on their input, the strategy document has now been updated and modified to reflect the community's vision for the site.

The present document will first describe the location and history of the subject site and then discuss its planning context with regard to pertinent development plans. Subsequently, it will set out the challenges that the site faces and conclude with a list of interventions that could be implemented on a phased basis as funding is made available.

2 Site Location

The subject site is located between Greystones village and Bray Head. It is bounded by the Dublin-Wexford railway line to the east and, beyond this, Greystones north beach and the Irish Sea. The Grove road and The Grove residential area lie directly to the north of the site, and to the west the site is bounded by St. Crispin's housing estate. To the south and south west the site is bounded by Redford Park beyond which is Rathdown Park.

The location of the site is of particular importance due to the connections it provides between the surrounding housing estates and the natural amenities to the east. The Greystones to Bray Cliff Walk is a popular route that attracts several tourists and is also used by the local community. The site is also situated in close proximity to the beachfront which, despite recent erosion that led to the destruction of Gap Bridge, is frequently accessed at this point along the Cliff Walk. Furthermore, the site is located at the northern end of the Greystones Marina and SISPAR site which has been granted planning permission to be developed as a linear park and thus extend the reach of Greystones to better integrate with the housing estates to the north of the town.

Due to the strategic location of the site, it is considered that it can play a significant role in reinforcing connections and promoting permeability between the urban environment and the surrounding natural amenities, thus integrating otherwise detached and underutilised urban and rural elements in north Greystones.



3 Site Description

The subject site is owned by Wicklow County Council and managed by the Heritage Council. It is approximately 2ha and contains the protected ruins of St. Crispin's Cell and Captain Tarrant's farmhouse and outbuildings.

St. Crispin's Cell lies roughly in the middle of the southern half of the site while Captain Tarrant's farmhouse and outbuildings lie close to the northern boundary. These structures are very much in ruins with only their external walls remaining. While St. Crispin's Cell seems structurally stable and has been secured and reinforced in particular areas, the farmhouse and outbuildings may require some attention if they are to remain standing much longer.

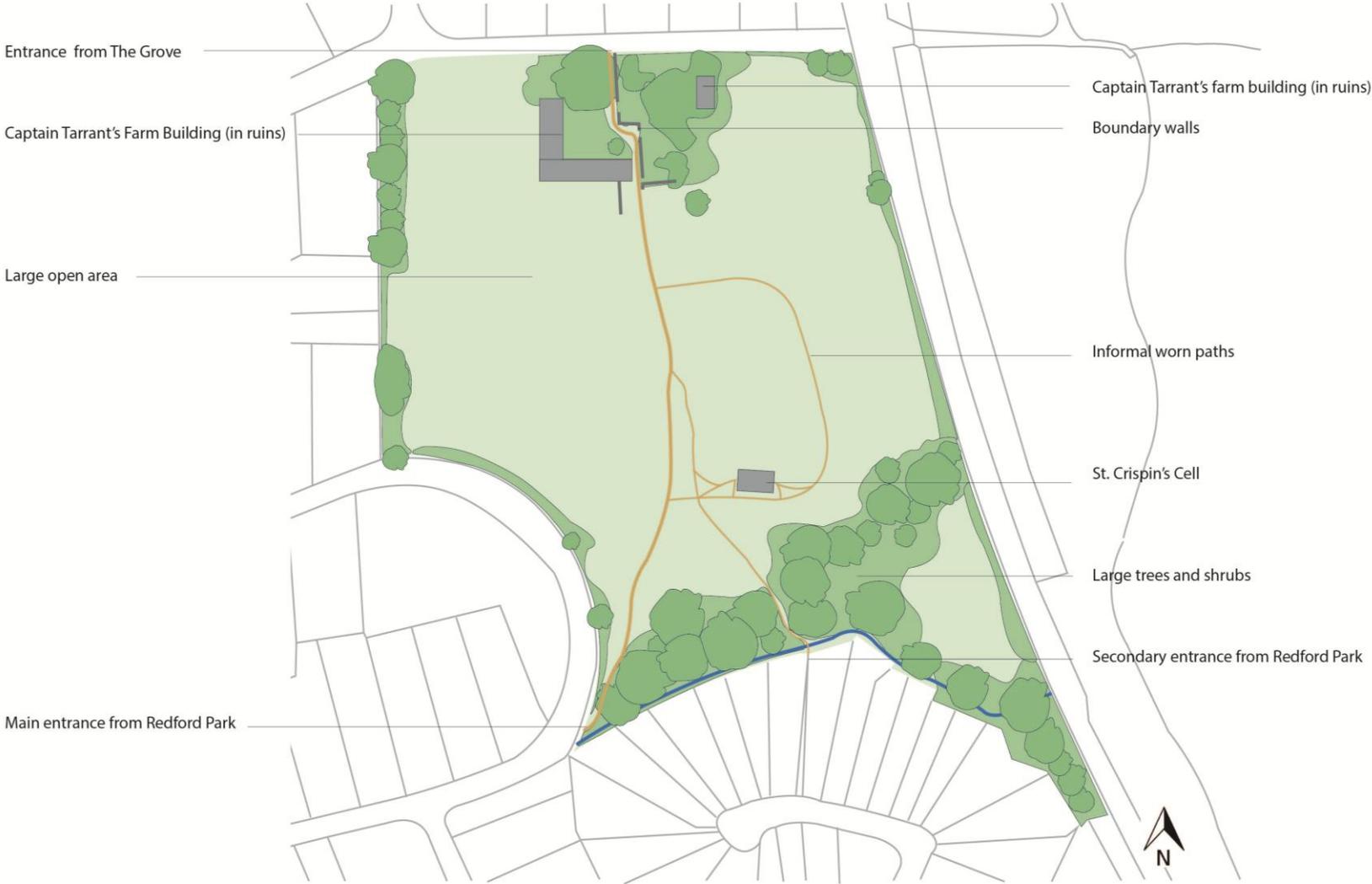
Apart from these historical buildings, this is a green field site with collections of trees and shrubs to the north around Captain Tarrant's farmhouse and outbuildings, and to the south along a stream and the southern boundary. The western boundary is contained by a fence and by a hedge and planted trees, while the eastern boundary is contained by a security fence for the railway line.

There are two main entrances to the site, one to the north from The Grove and the other to the south west from Redford Park. The site can also be accessed from Redford Park via a passageway to the south. This entrance, however, is less frequented.

A number of informal paths have been worn into the ground. The main path leads from Redford Park to the Grove - from where walkers can continue to a level crossing at the railway, join the Bray Head Cliff Walk, or walk onwards to Greystones North Beach.



Existing Site Layout



4 Historical Context

According to 'Ancient Rathdown and Saint Crispin's Cell – A Uniquely Historic Landscape' (1993) produced by the 'Friends of Historic Rathdown', the subject site had been worked and lived on as early as 3500 BCE. Flint implements and other tools including a javelin, axes, chisels and a grinding stone were found here, and it is possible that other archaeological items have yet to be uncovered.

A number of large stones, known as the Rathdown Slabs were also found on this land. These were carved with designs unique to Scandinavian craftsmen and are thought to be from the 11th or 12th Century.

During the medieval era, the subject site was part of a larger settlement which once contained a 13th century castle on lands to the east. At one stage the medieval settlement, apart from the castle, contained 20 housing plots, a watermill and a creek whose estuary may have formed a natural harbour.



The Rathdown Hoard – the largest 16th Century coin hoard found outside Ulster – was unearthed at this site. The hoard contains Spanish Reales, indicating overseas trading during this period, and are held in the National Museum along with many other historic findings from the site. The castle and surrounding settlement fell into ruins in the 1600s and while some artefacts have been uncovered (including 13th and 14th century pottery) there is much that remains buried beneath the soil. The subject site also contained St. Crispin's Cell (built in honour of the patron saint of shoemakers) and a graveyard which is said to have been removed by Captain Tarrant when he purchased the land to be used for agriculture. There is, however, a possibility that some remains from this graveyard are still in place.

5 Planning Context

The subject site lies within the administrative areas of Wicklow County Council and Greystones Delgany Kilcoole Municipal Area. It is mentioned specifically in the Greystones Delgany and Kilcoole Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019, and the Greystones Harbour and North Beach Action Area Plan (AAP). The following notes must therefore be taken into consideration:

- The site is protected under the Greystones LAP 2019 which seeks 'to protect the character of this area as a heritage and amenity area for public amenity and education'. As the site contains evidence of pre-historic, early Christian, medieval and post-medieval settlements, any proposals for the area must ensure the protection of this heritage.
- In the Greystones AAP, the site is designated 'Zone 3 – preservation of land and natural landscape for future archaeological study' and 'promotion by the Council of future development of a Heritage Park at the site of medieval Rathdown'. It is important to note that a large site to the east of the railway line is also included in Zone 3 and any future development should support the objectives for this zone.
- The site also contains the remains of Captain Tarrant's Farmhouse and the ruins of St. Crispin's Cell. These buildings are Protected Structures (registered as 08-68 and 08-67 respectively). St. Crispin's Cell is also a recorded monument/structure and must therefore be treated with even greater care. Suffice to say, these historic buildings must be protected in any future development of the site.
- The LAP shows an 'Indicative Green Route' running through the site, from the entrance at Redford Park to the entrance at The Grove. The Green Route provides local residents access to the natural amenities to the west of the site such as Bray Head, which is a designated Special Area of Conservation and proposed Natural Heritage Area. This green route should therefore be protected and promoted in a future design for the site.
- The LAP also states that 'the views (V3) seaward from Cliff Road, Rathdown Upper' are to be protected. While the vantage point indicated on the LAP's accompanying map does not lie within the subject site, the protection of this view must still be considered in any proposals within close proximity to Cliff Road (The Grove).

This design strategy seeks to work toward achieving the above objectives in accordance with the various protections afforded the subject site and its surroundings. The strategy intends to be a first step toward the development of a Heritage Park as proposed in the Greystones Harbour AAP.

6 Problems and Challenges

6.1 Overgrowing

Perhaps the most visual of the subject site's problems is its overgrown nature. An overgrown site, particularly at its entrances, is uninviting, difficult to navigate and unsightly. Due to the lack of a formal maintenance plan, the site is overgrown for the majority of the year and is almost impassable during the summer months. In the winter, the paths are particularly muddy and are difficult and unpleasant to walk on. The entrances are as good as invisible from both directions and only those who know the site will enter it.

Although some improvements have been made since the site was brought to attention in 2010, the cutting back of vegetation has mostly been undertaken by the local community who have little time, money and manpower to keep the invasive vegetation at bay. While their efforts are commendable, the local community's maintenance is simply not frequent or significant enough to keep the paths open year round. At best, the cutting back that occurs, only ever allows access through the site from one end to the other and does little to actually realise the full potential of the site. As the rest of the site often remains overgrown, people tend to just walk through it rather than being encouraged to stop and enjoy the view, the site's historical significance, and its architectural heritage.



6.2 Litter and Antisocial Behaviour

The two major clean-ups of the site in recent years uncovered massive amounts of litter (and dog waste along the paths) and highlighted the misuse of the site. One of the old farm buildings at the north of the site was found (in 2010) to be completely covered with bottles, cans, cigarette ends and broken glass. The interior walls of this protected structure were also covered with graffiti. Now this building is completely overgrown and inaccessible.

This antisocial behaviour also used to occur in St. Crispin's Cell until steel bars were constructed to prevent access. However, a stone has been removed from the rear of the structure and it is now possible to squeeze into this space once again. The interior of St. Crispin's Cell therefore continues to be misused and littered with bottles and cans.

The area along the southern border of the site appears to be the greatest challenge with the illegal dumping of building and household waste adding to the graffiti and general litter. The pollution of this watercourse and the unsightly appearance of the area will be difficult to resolve.

6.3 Management, Ownership and Pride

It is suggested that the aforementioned problems and challenges may be due to poor management of the site. There is no formal management plan and no overall vision for the site. Without anybody taking responsibility, the site wastes away and the potential of this valuable amenity is lost.

The site is owned by the Wicklow County Council and is therefore open to the public. 'The public', in this context, would mostly refer to residents of Redford Park, St. Crispin's housing estate, the Grove and to a lesser extent Rathdown Park - perhaps 2000 people in total. The site should therefore be treated as a community park. A place to be proud of, cared for and respected.

At present, however, the local community have no sense of ownership and very little sense of pride for this space. Fostering such sense of ownership and pride is a serious challenge – but not necessarily an insurmountable one.



7 Design Approach

Instead of providing a top-down once-for-all masterplan for the site, this document suggests a bottom-up phased approach that can be carried out as funding becomes available and as the site matures. Such an approach is considered more flexible and more realistic than a masterplan and therefore more likely to be undertaken and to succeed. The phases are ordered to ensure that the most needed work is undertaken first. However, they are also arranged somewhat according to cost - as the phases progress, so too does the ambition and the subsequent requirement for funding.

It should be noted that the proposals contained herein will require continuous consideration by the local community, the Heritage Council, the Municipal District Councillors and the County Council. Only through public consultation will the site be best developed to meet the needs of all interested parties. As such, the present proposals provide points for discussion and should be developed further to respond to the needs and interests of all those involved.

It is considered particularly important that the local community - the end-users - get involved in the design process. As previously indicated, a sense of ownership and pride is lacking, and by getting the local community involved, a new mindset that promotes passive care of the site can be fostered - for example by picking up one or two pieces of litter when walking the dog or visiting the beach. If locals are not involved in the process, they will not care for the site and it will quickly fall back into disrepair. To start the process of further community involvement, a leaflet summarising the present proposals and inviting comments could be distributed to all households in the area.

8 Phase One Interventions

This phase proposes interventions that are considered the absolute minimum for the subject site. While they are relatively simple and straight-forward, they should be undertaken with great care and attention to detail. For instance, the initial cutting back of vegetation should not be done haphazardly, but to a plan which is in accordance with the overall vision for the site. Similarly, the route of the proposed footpath and its construction methods and materials, should be carefully considered to ensure not only a positive visual impact on the site, but also the protection of possible archaeological burials.

8.1 Managing Vegetation

As previously stated, parts of the site are completely overgrown and require significant cutting back. The most important areas to address in this regard are around the entrances and along the main path. Recent efforts by members of the Greystones Tidy Towns and the Redford Park Residents Association have helped to improve the entrance from The Grove in particular, but there is much more that can and should be done.

The mature sycamore tree at the northern entrance to the site should be protected in accordance with the designated protected view (V3) in the Greystones-Delgany and Kilcoole Local Area Plan. However, it must also be considered that the overhang and shade of this tree at the entrance can be intimidating when coupled with the uncontrolled invasion of bramble and other fast growing vegetation. It is therefore suggested that, while protecting this tree, major cutting back of this area should be undertaken to ensure a brighter, more open, and inviting entrance.

The entrance at Redford Park is one of the most important areas to work on as the narrow path becomes overgrown more quickly than anywhere else on the site. There are several large trees here that overshadow the path and significant clumps of bramble and other vegetation, including stinging nettles, that encroach on this main thoroughfare and impede access to the site. To the right of the entrance, the ground slopes down to a ditch and this area is often used for dumping of household waste and building material. It is considered that the overgrown nature of this area helps to conceal this illegal activity - easily carried out in broad daylight without anyone knowing until it is too late. While the larger trees at this location should be kept, cutting back should be undertaken to allow better access and to improve passive surveillance – helping to deter illegal dumping.

In addition to cutting back around the entrances, the main path should be better maintained as vegetation quickly reduces its width during summer months. Between June and September, the path can be as narrow as 30cm, making it very difficult to navigate comfortably – particularly when stinging nettles are in bloom. There is also a need to cut back around the secondary entrance to Redford Park which, apart from funnelling people through a daunting passageway, is almost completely covered by dense foliage - and therefore one of the darkest and most littered and ill-respected area in the site.

As previously mentioned, this cutting back should be planned strategically and with careful consideration for the site's overall vision as well as the protection of significant wildlife habitats. Therefore, before any work is undertaken, a plan should be agreed to determine exactly which trees and shrubs should be retained, which should be removed, which should be cut back and where new ones may be planted. It may be wise to consult with an arborist and/or ecologist during this process to ensure the protection of wildlife habitats etc.

Most of the site is left in meadows, but the ground and grasses are quite uneven and not at their most attractive. Investigations should be made aiming at a richer, greener and more attractive vision being created – perhaps including a sprinkling of wild flowers and an area with higher grasses where a maze could be grown for children to explore. Also here it may be wise to consult with experts.

While another overhaul of the site would have a great positive impact and is very much advised, it is as important to develop a management plan to ensure year-round maintenance of the meadows, shrubs and trees. In the summer months, the foliage can grow back to a unsightly mass within weeks and it is therefore necessary to undertake frequent trimming during this period. Much can be done as part of a voluntary agreement with Greystones Tidy Towns and the Redford Park Residents Association, but it is considered absolutely necessary to have a plan which sets out exactly what is to be done, how frequently it is to be done, and who will do it.

8.2 Construction of Footpath

While the cutting back of vegetation will make a great difference to passing though the site with ease, it is considered that Phase One of this project should also include an upgrade to the main path. As simple as this may seem, the historic significance of the site and the potential below-surface archaeological burials and artefacts require that the footpath should not disturb the subsoil. The design and materials of the path should therefore be approved by an archaeologist. The archaeologist should also be present during construction to supervise any digging that will be necessary.

As funding is always an issue, it is proposed that the path should initially be constructed with a simple weed-barrier and a thick layer of gravel. However, this could be upgraded to a raised wooden boardwalk (or something similar) as funds become available. While the other worn paths throughout the site could also benefit from more formal surfacing, these are less important and can be left to a later stage of the project. In accordance with planning guidelines, the path should be at least 1.5m wide to allow wheelchair access and should have turning areas incorporated into the design. To reduce the visual impact on the site, this 1.5m minimum width is also suggested to be a maximum width.

The path will constitute a noticeable visual element of the site and, considering the proposed materials and construction methods, it will also be quite a permanent element. It is therefore vitally important that the chosen line for the path is visually appealing, attracting people and encouraging them to stop and enjoy the views and the site's historic heritage.

The current worn path is about the shortest and easiest route connecting the two main entrances – in design terms, this is known as a 'desire line' and is a good indicator of what end users will want from a proposed path. If there are great deviations to an existing desire line, people tend not to use it and will instead wear their own shortcut to bypass such deviation. As such, the proposed path should not deviate too far from the existing worn path. It is recommended that the path should not follow the deviation of the path to the east, this being a very new desire line that was created by ad hoc cutting back.

However, to follow the current desire line may result in laying straight lines - a motorway style path which is undesirable as it will create a cold and lifeless tunnel effect. Subtle curves on the other hand are widely accepted to be more visually appealing and will encourage exploration by drawing the eye around the bends and promote more frequent stopping – to enjoy the views and elements of the site's historic heritage. Curves are also more in keeping with the natural feel of the site and will blend in better with the surroundings. A balance between following the current desire line and providing a more interesting line must therefore be achieved.

Having established the main path at a good standard, it is recommended that the path from the south east entrance of Redford Park is upgraded. In recent years, a line of concrete was poured in an attempt to improve access over the muddy ground at this location. This is obviously unacceptable and should be removed and replaced with a more appropriate material. Where this path crosses the stream at the south east entrance to Redford Park, it is proposed that a wooden bridge or boardwalk be built to improve access and visual impact.

Primary Path Options



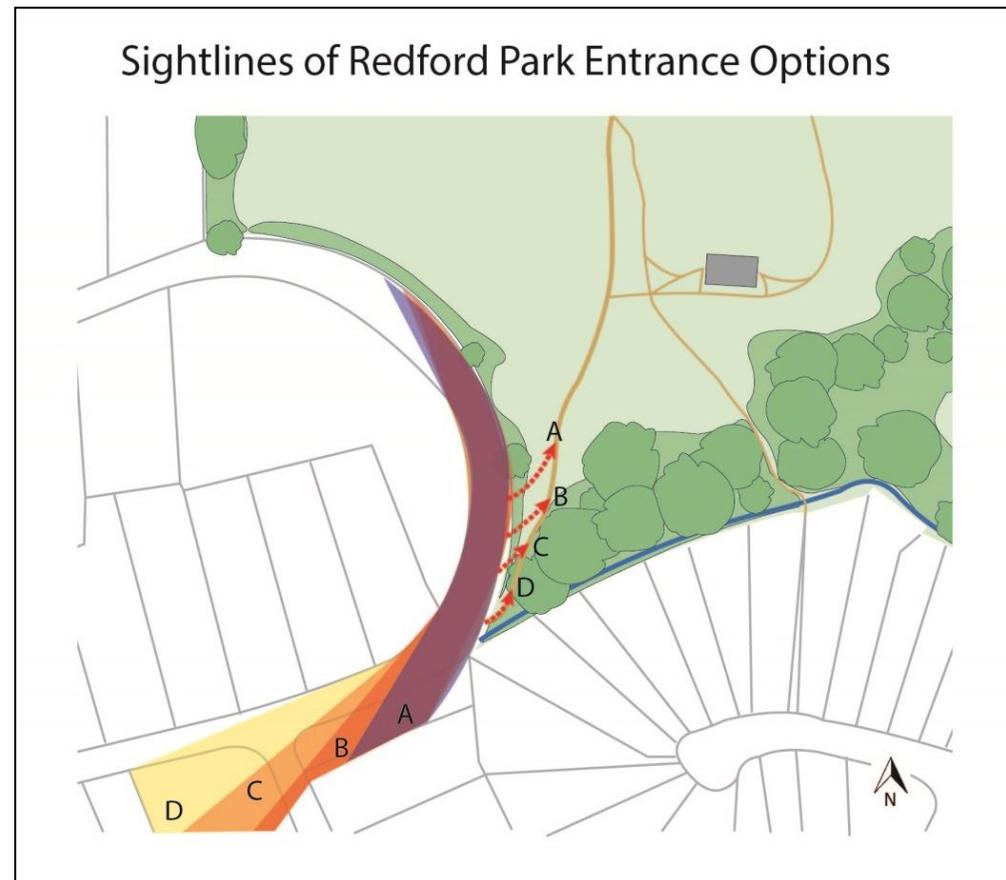
8.3 Relocation and Widening of Entrances

The third major work to be undertaken during this phase should be the development of wider and more visible entrances. It is suggested that the vegetation at the main entrance to the north should be significantly cut back and the actual entrance made to look more inviting by opening or removing the gate and erecting bollards in its place. This will improve pedestrian access while preventing cars and other large vehicles to enter. The bollards should be removable for maintenance purposes.

It is suggested that the south western entrance at Redford Park should be moved slightly to the north. By moving it away from the dense foliage around the ditch, illegal dumping into this area is made more difficult and is therefore less likely to occur.

It is important that the entrance only be moved north by a couple of meters so that it will still be visible from the junction in Redford Park and therefore continue to attract passersby. As shown in the adjacent map, the area from which the current entrance can be seen (D) extends beyond the road junction and is therefore the most visible location.

The further north this entrance is moved, the smaller the area in which the entrance becomes visible (C, B and A respectively). To avoid the dense foliage in the southern corner of the site, it is proposed that Option C (approximately 2 metres north of the current location) will be the best compromise. The relocated entrance should be widened, cut back, and marked clearly to make it feel more open and inviting.



9 Phase Two Interventions

While phase one seeks to address the site's primary problems, phase two will aim to make the Heritage Park more worthy of its name and more inviting to spend time in. Additional funding for this phase will be needed and each project will require some research and involvement. However, with the cooperation of the Municipal District Councillors, the County Council and the Heritage Council, the following interventions can be achieved.

9.1 Seating Areas and Bins

The simplest of these interventions consists of a number of benches along the main pathway for walkers to sit and enjoy the view. It is suggested that the location of these benches should not only take in a view, but also blend in with the surroundings. Attention to detail is important here as the benches may stand out in the otherwise open site. If the location and design of the benches are not chosen properly, they could deter attention from St. Crispin's Cell and lead to visual cluttering.

It is suggested that the benches are integrated into the wheelchair turning areas that will be constructed as part of the upgraded main path. A timeless wooden design will be in keeping with the heritage of the site, and some light foliage behind the benches will better integrate them into their surroundings. Some suggested locations for the benches are shown on the proposed layout plan.

It is also suggested that bins are provided and that a collection service is organised as this will significantly reduce litter. Bins for dog waste in particular would be a welcome addition and the best locations for these would be at the three entrances to the site. While the placement of bins would be relatively easy to arrange and also quite



affordable, the setting up of a regular collection service may present a bigger challenge.

9.2 Erection of New Signage

For reasons unknown, the signage erected at the entrances to the site in 2010 have since been removed. It is considered that new signage should be erected at key nodes to inform passersby of the site's unique heritage. The proposed locations for new signage are shown in the following map.

At the two main entrances to the site, a brief history and relevant photographs and maps should be displayed. It is also suggested that a sign be erected on the Greystones-Bray Cliff Walk to encourage hill walkers to take a quick detour to visit the site and enjoy its historic and architectural heritage.

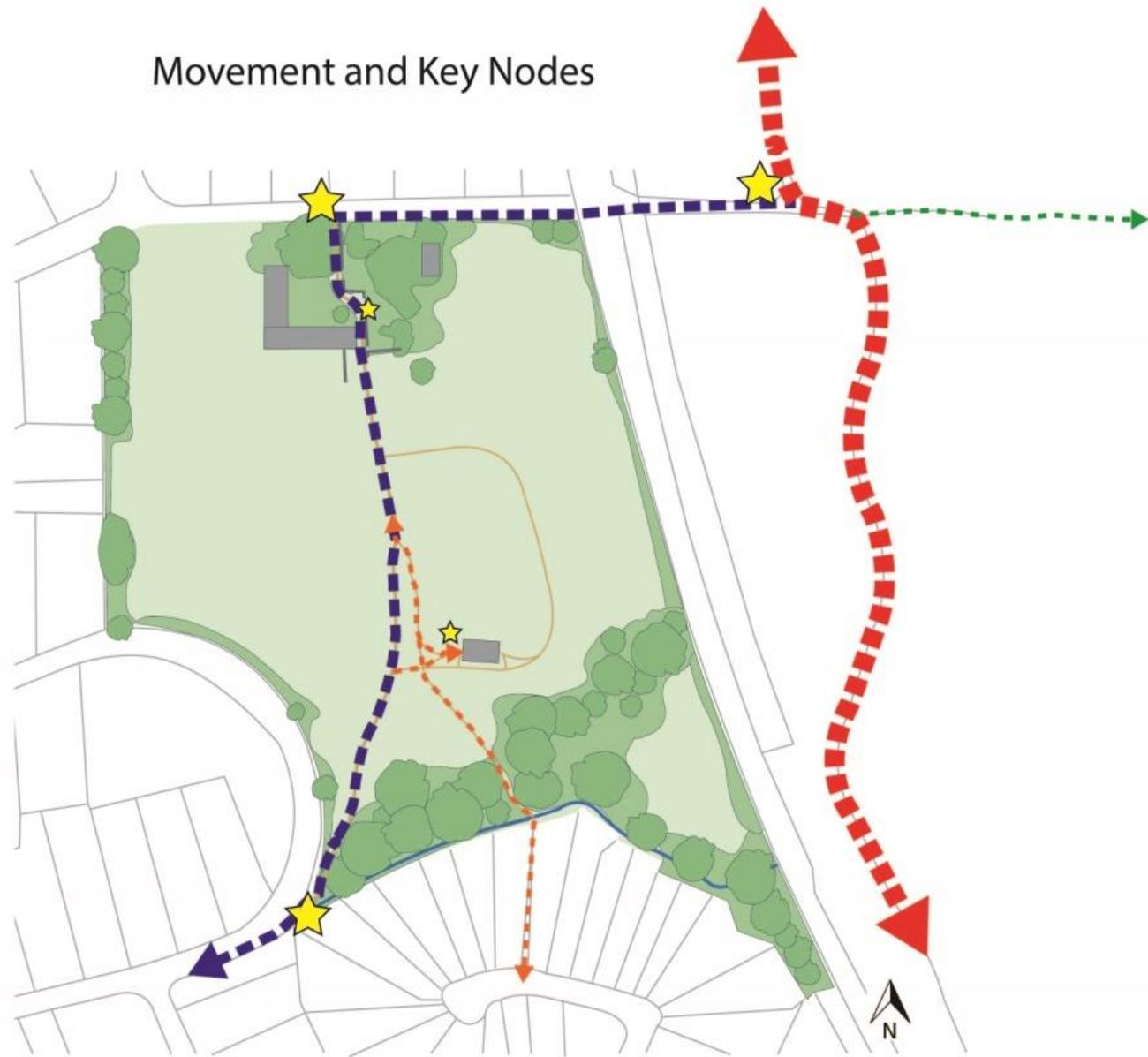
It is recommended that the weighting of information be reversed from that previously erected - i.e. the 'no dumping' sign should be smaller than that of the historical information in order to place an emphasis on 'positive education' rather than 'negative deterrent'. Better still, the 'no dumping' element could be scrapped altogether as it only serves to advertise the site as an ideal spot for illegal dumping.

If funding can be found, literature could also be made available at nearby tourist information centres. A leaflet could be distributed by local shops and further signage at the start and end of the Cliff Walk could be placed to draw attention to the site.



Movement and Key Nodes

- Greystones to Bray Cliffwalk
- Primary Path through subject site - connecting to Greystones/Bray
- Old path to beachfront
- Secondary paths on the subject site
- Minor paths on the subject site
- Key node and potential location of site heritage information
- Key node and Potential location of specific structure information



9.3 Archaeological Study

The physical interventions of Phase One and Two have been designed to minimise the impact on the site's archaeological potential. Before progressing to Phase Three (which contains interventions that may disturb the subsoil), it is suggested that an archaeological study is undertaken. If funding is available, this can be undertaken as part of a larger study of the greater medieval village site. Depending on what is found, it may be worthwhile to reassess the proposed interventions for Phase Three. For instance, if an old wall or foundations for a structure of historic significance are found, it may be interesting to unearth this as a point of interest, with further interpretive signage erected at its location.



10 Phase Three Interventions

While the first two phases are considered necessary, they are not particularly ambitious and are the types of interventions that one would expect of this site regardless. Phase three, however, consists of more ambitious interventions that require greater funding, planning and maintenance, but would really start to make the most of the site as a heritage park.

10.1 Captain Tarrant's Farmhouse

The future of Captain Tarrant's Farmhouse and its outbuildings will have to be considered. If the buildings are left as they are, they will continue to deteriorate and will soon be nothing but an eyesore. Physical interventions regarding the buildings are likely to be the last to be completed, but relevant investigations and planning should start at an early stage. The following options may be considered:

- Ideally the buildings would be restored to their former architectural glory and used as a visitors' centre for education, tourism and community uses. However, considering the cost and the present economic situation, this is not likely to happen before it is too late.
- The buildings could be made safe (which is not the case now), part-restored and maintained as the ruins they are, but continue to stand testament to their heritage. Considering the initial cost and the need for continued maintenance, this option may also be difficult to implement.



- The farmhouse could be sold to a private individual and permission given to undertake the renovations needed to turn it into a family home. Strict restrictions could be imposed in regard to the appearance and visibility of such home, the aim being to largely retain the original 18th century look. Such sale and restoration is considered the best solution as the buildings will still project their heritage and the proceeds could be used toward implementing other interventions suggested in this proposal.

While the specifics of this undertaking requires further investigation, options for the proposed site boundaries have been explored and are set out in the following map. Whatever boundary is chosen, a new site entrance will need to be constructed. The final layout plan for the subject site (p.29) illustrates how this may work with respect to the other proposed interventions.

10.2 East Farmhouse Outbuilding

While Captain Tarrant's main farmhouse and outbuildings are in very poor repair, the separate outbuilding to the east (perhaps used as a shed for animals) is in an even more ruinous state. It has no roof, has suffered greatly from anti-social behaviour and is completely overgrown. Two options may be considered for this building:

- It could be cleared of vegetation and sealed off like St. Crispin's Cell. While this is an easy and cheap option, it will not exploit the full potential of the building.
- It may be restored/converted to become an open, semi-sheltered information centre with four or five large signs mounted to the walls to illustrate the history of the site. Displays of other artefacts belonging to the area may also be arranged, though naturally the possibility of vandalism would have to be considered. If the main farmhouse buildings are sold and restored as suggested previously, this option is recommended.

The design specifics need to be further developed, but meanwhile the above option – the information centre – together with the changed entrance and path, is shown in the proposed layout plan (p.29).

Captain Tarrant's Site Boundary Options



11 Phase Four Interventions

The first three phases have focused on the heritage aspects of the park. The interventions proposed for Phase Four aim to extend the appeal of the heritage park by installing features that will benefit the local community.

11.1 Sheltered Area and Playground

To encourage the local community to make more use of the site, a communal sheltered area should be considered. It could take the form of a pavilion or a gazebo around which smaller meetings and events could be arranged, where a family could share a picnic, where neighbours could meet for a chat, and where walkers could stop to get out of the rain.

It is recommended that this sheltered area be designed carefully so as not to distract from St. Crispin's Cell. The structure does not need to be particularly large, and should be open and constructed from durable materials. Inspiration for the design could be drawn from bronze age thatched huts that may have been built on the site years ago.

To further serve the local community a children's playground with a slide, swing-set and similar outdoor activity equipment should be considered. Again, this facility does not need to be particularly large and should be constructed from natural materials that harmonise with the



surrounding environment. A rustic wooden structure would be more fitting than a brightly coloured plastic structure. For the roughly 600 families living in surrounding housing estates, this would be the nearest place to bring their children for a healthy outdoor experience and should therefore be a welcome addition.

It is suggested that if a future playground is constructed, it should be located next to the sheltered area so that parents can supervise their children while comfortably sitting in this space. As shown in the following map, there are a number of potential locations for this family oriented area.

Option A shows the community shelter (yellow) near the Redford Park entrance and the playground (orange) to the north of this. This location does not distract from any existing views, is accessible from the main path and close to the residents of Redford Park. However, it is also possible that the sheltered area and playground can be integrated into the existing outbuilding to the east of the main farm buildings (Option B). This is the preferred option as it will utilise an already developed section of the site and provide a strong entrance from the Greystones to Bray Cliff Walk.

If a sheltered area and playground are to be constructed, it is suggested that a more detailed study be undertaken to establish the best possible location and design.





11.2 Community Garden

During the past year, a local resident has taken it upon himself to establish a flower bed on a small patch of land on the southern side of St. Crispin's Cell. While the chosen location is most unfortunate, the interest in developing a small garden is worth noting. Notwithstanding the above development, it is considered that the development of a more formal community garden with allotments for the use of local residents should be considered.

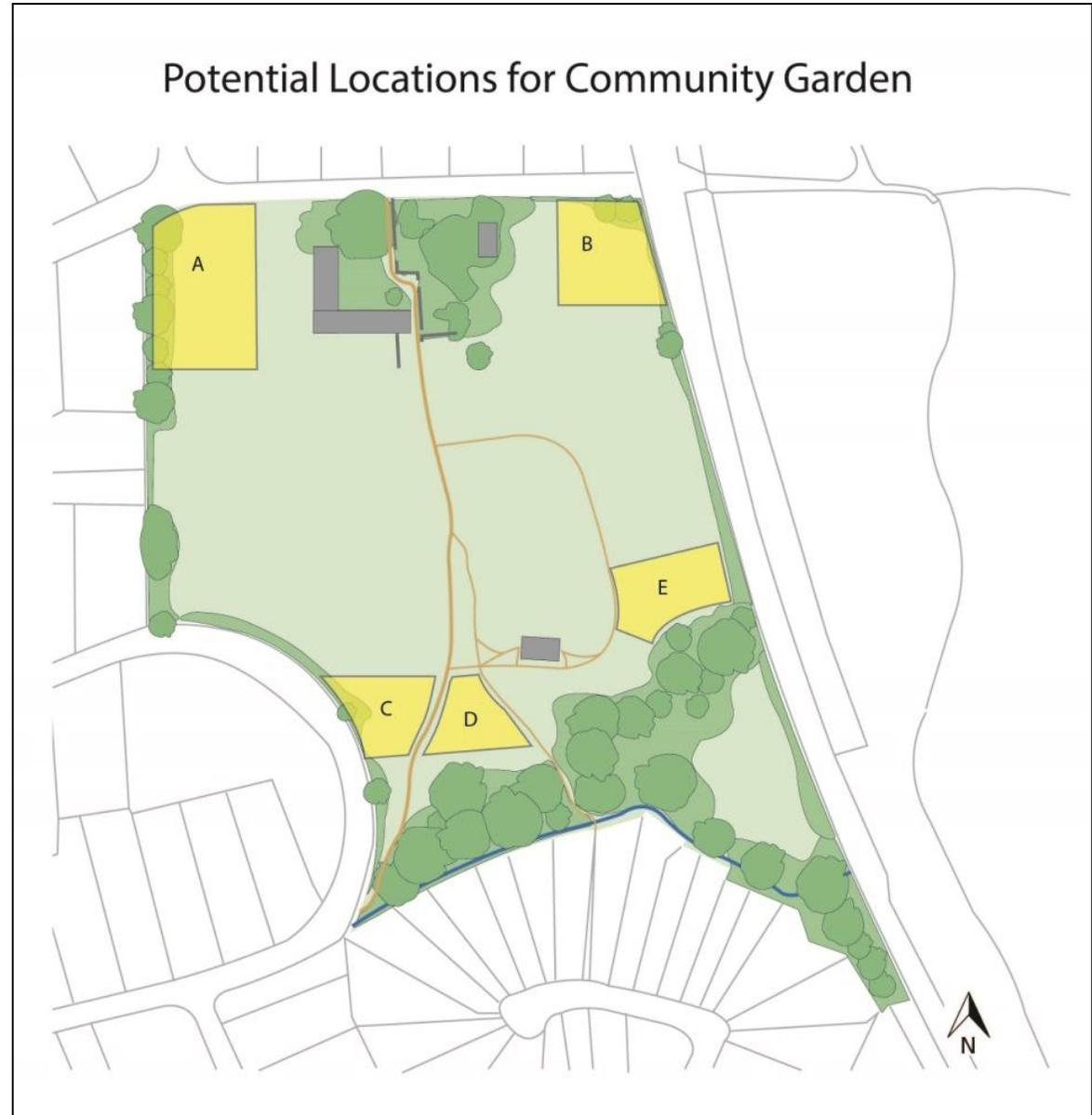
A small area of the site could be set aside for this purpose and the allotments could be rented out for a minimal annual charge which would cover the costs of necessary installations. This would further expand the use of the park and would contribute to the feeling of ownership and pride for the site.

The community garden can be constructed in raised planting beds so as not to disturb any archaeological potential. This will also help to control weeds and pests, as well as make the garden accessible without bending down to tend to the soil. A communal shed could be constructed for tools and equipment, and access restricted to plot owners only. Furthermore, a tap could be installed for water, benches could be integrated into the design and a small covered area to allow gardeners to escape any sudden downfalls of rain.

Potential locations for this community garden are illustrated on the following map. While several locations were considered, it is suggested that the garden should be located off the main path to deter vandalism, and should be positioned so as not to spoil any views or deter from St. Crispin's Cell. The location should also be close to a water mains so that a tap can easily be installed.



It is considered that Option A would best suit the site and would fill in the liminal space behind Captain Tarrant's Farmhouse. This location may also lend itself to the creation of a small entrance from the road which can be used by gardeners to drive heavier materials closer to their allotment. Such an entrance, if constructed, could be restricted for their use only.



12 Summary – Proposed Layout Plan

New entrance from The Grove

Captain Tarrant's Farm Buildings - privately owned and restored to respect architectural heritage

New community garden with communal shed, water supply and compost bin. Raised planting boxes to ensure archaeological heritage remains undisturbed

Large open areas left to grow as meadows

Main path slightly realigned and made wheelchair accessible. Seating areas to enjoy views of the sea

Realigned and widened Redford Park entrance



Restored farm buildings to be used as a communal sheltered area and information centre for Rathdown Heritage Park, with adjoining playground

Large open areas left to grow as meadows

Clearly defined paths

St. Crispin's Cell secured and made safe

Major cutting back of trees and shrubs as approved by ecologist

Wooden bridge over stream to improve access from Redford Park