

Riverside Gardens refurbishment & improved access

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Improvements to the Riverside Gardens are being taken forward as part of the Council's Public Realm programme, to revitalise the setting of the Council House and knit together the Hydro, Riverlights, Corporation Street & Council House projects.
- 1.2 A key part of the brief for the Riverside Gardens refurbishment is to improve accessibility from Derwent Street and this is proposed through the provision of a ramp. The ramp needs a subtle approach alongside the existing stone steps, walls and piers, which are a part of the set piece 1930's design.
- 1.3 As a ramp was never part of this holistic design and would also be adjacent to the locally listed Council House, any ramp needs to be designed to be minimal as a foil to the composition whilst legible. To that end, the approach was to avoid any structure directly attached to or immediately adjacent to the Council House building, and additionally to be visually discrete from the steps.
- 1.4 The gradient on the ramp is 1:19.5, which is within Equalities Act compliance and considerably better than the minimum requirements of 1:12; the width is 2.6m. The neatest solution was for the ramp to be situated between the two existing piers along the Derwent Street wall. This will involve the breaking out of a small length, approximately 2.6m, of stone wall and railings at Derwent Street. The flood barrier wall on the riverside will also be broken, with it returning now to the Council House building to reinstate the flood defence – this has been agreed with EA.
- 1.5 The ramp needs to be designed with a void below the deck level, to be in line with the Environment Agency's flood risk requirement. Various options were considered for the ramp including a steel structure. However, due to long term maintenance and inspection issues a timber ramp was deemed as the most suitable option for this location. The main reasons behind the choice of a timber structure are for future maintenance as a timber deck can be easily removed without specialist equipment for inspection while the timber also fulfils the EA requirements. The ramp does not require planning permission.
- 1.6 In order for the ramp to blend seamlessly at surface level into the wider gardens, the approach to the ramp deck is to surface it using resin bonded gravel which will match that proposed in the remaining paved area. This will also achieve a good slip

resistance.

- 1.7 The ramp design must allow for regular inspection and occasional maintenance, and to that end has been designed with an easily removable deck and cladding system. The timber used will be treated for high marine exposure giving the ramp a design life of 40 + Years.
- 1.8 Whilst being discrete, the rails on the ramp need to be clearly visible to those with partial sight and so the tonal contrast of the colours/materials has been considered. Recommendation from the Equalities Impact Assessment process was to use dark rails/top rail against a light tonal deck, or to use a light rail/top rail against a darker deck. The current design uses a dark parapet (BS 18-B-29, public realm grey) with a stain steel hand rail.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report, comment on the approach, and give advice on colour and materials if appropriate.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Conservation Area Advisory Committee are kept informed of proposals and have influence over the detailed design of a ramp.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The ramp sketch scheme proposals are shown on drawings;
 - SD10095/01 – Location Plan
 - SD10095/02 – General Arrangement & Typical Sections
 - SD10095/03 – Timber, Connection & Footing Details
 - SD10095/04 – Parapet Details
 - SD10095/05 – Visualisations of the Proposed Ramp

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 An option for a ramp similar to the one at Derby Magistrate's Court, which was a later introduction to the listed building, has been considered however it was agreed that the steel structure posed long term maintenance issues. This is because as the ramp meets the ground it becomes impossible to inspect under the structure, the only feasible option then becomes the removal of the deck. With a steel deck specialist lifting equipment would have to be brought in for this operation, causing increased expense as well as the complete closure of the river side path.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	
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For more information contact: List of appendices:	Name: Helen Oakes 01332 641637 e-mail Helen.oakes@derby.gov.uk Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Riverside Path and Gardens Pedestrian Ramp
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Funding for the ramp will be found as part of the Riverside Gardens project, funded by the public realm programme. The design is deemed to be of high quality worthy of its sensitive location, but has the ability to be value engineered as a prefabricated modular system, to achieve value for money, in addition the design will require less specialist plant and therefore will have a lower impact on the traffic network as well as reducing construction costs.

Legal

- 2.1 There are no Legal implications as a result of this report.

Personnel

- 3.1 There are no Personnel implications as a result of this report.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out during the design stage and has helped to refine the design. All disabled attendees at the audit agreed that the positive impact of providing a ramp would be of prime importance to the project. People with mobility issues currently need to walk from the bus station, along Morledge and Corporation Street, to reach Derwent Street. However, it was accepted that for the west bank of the river to be more widely accessible between the Riverside Gardens and Cathedral Green, the former Magistrate's Court site would need to incorporate some complex detailing to achieve ramped access on the north side of Exeter bridge.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 The ramp has been designed as a safe means of access into the gardens and is in accordance with BS EN 1991-2:2003 & BS EN 1995:2006: these are the current design codes for public works.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 The ramp is designed to be easily maintained and has a design life of 40+ Years. Materials are treated softwood (FSC compliant for sustainability) for the main structure, along with mild and stainless steel for connections and parapets. The use of FSC approved timber along with the more simple construction requirements represents a significant carbon saving compared to either a concrete or steel

structure.

Asset Management

- 7.1 The ramp as an asset will become owned and maintained by Derby City Council.

Risk Management

- 8.1 The project has a Risk Log. There is a minor risk that the ramp will encourage cycling, which could be a danger to the public. However, it is deemed that this is outweighed by the improvement to pedestrian access, and a mitigation measure will be to give signage to cyclists to use the National Cycle Route Number 6 on the other side of the river.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The Riverside Gardens as a whole supports the Derby Plan by:

Helping people in Derby to enjoy a thriving sustainable economy,
Helping people in Derby to be safe and feel safe, and
Helping people in Derby to have an active cultural life.