

Sunshine Corner – improvements underway

Sunshine Corner is a public open space at the end of Heathgate and connects the Suburb to the Heath Extension. It is part of the original planning layout of the Garden Suburb. As part of the Great Wall it was designed by Charles Wade who worked in Parker and Unwin's office. The retaining walls, steps and benches are listed Grade II.

After 100 years of minimal maintenance the area had fallen into disrepair and earlier this year a programme of repair and conservation work was initiated by the Trust. This included structural improvements such as new foundations and measures to properly consolidate brick walls and paving.

Specifications and a scope of work were drawn up and the whole scheme split into phases. These were prioritised according to the urgency of the works required:

- Phase 1 – The steps from Heathgate had been subject to a

great deal of movement and were considered dangerous.

- Phase 2 – The path from Heathgate had many trip hazards and needed to be re-laid on a firm base with particularly wide joints closed up. Both phases one and two are now complete.

- Phase 3a – The bench immediately to the east of the inner steps, including the boundary wall with No. 2 Heathgate, was rebuilt. Phase 3b will be the opposite bench and wall to the west. Phase 3a is currently in progress.

Further phases will include the covered benches to the east and west; the central path and lower steps; the low wall on the boundary with the Heath Extension; new planting and repairs to the boundary walls to either side of the path from Heathgate. Finally, new landscaping within the present grassed area.

A proper conservation approach has been adopted using building lime

rather than cement (which harms traditional brickwork – see the article on pointing) with the intervention of some modern materials such as stainless steel ties where necessary.

Each phase of work is put out to tender and it is hoped that as much as possible will be completed this year, including both covered benches, with the rest of the work following in 2010.

Work on the steps at Sunshine Corner



Central Square update

Progress on the restoration of the Central Squares (North, Central and South Squares) continues to make progress, albeit slowly. Following the successful Heritage Lottery Funded exhibition and preparation of landscaping and management reports by Land Use Consultants, the Trust has been considering the long term management of the Squares. A second application for funding to develop proposals and carry out the work will have to wait until the principles have been agreed.

The Trust is concerned that Barnet's maintenance budget for the Squares will continue to be squeezed as it is not a priority park for the local authority, having few facilities for visitors from the wider Borough.

Consideration is being given to terms on which the Trust might contemplate taking over the running of the

Squares. It is hoped that they could be handed over with a dowry for ongoing maintenance. The Trust could then put a further application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for drainage and landscaping works.

The Trust may need to contribute towards the funding of the redesign and the consequent capital and maintenance costs. All this, however, continues to be speculation until there are formal discussions with Barnet Council.

When we are closer to identifying practical proposals they will be included in the Trust's long-term estate management programme which is in preparation. Residents will then be informed and have the opportunity to consider the substance, timing and cost of what is proposed.