

Parker's Piece Conservation Plan

2001



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BACKGROUND TO THE CONSERVATION PLANS

The municipal park was a nineteenth century creation of the British in response to the poor living conditions that resulted from the rapid population growth following the industrial revolution¹. The Select Committee for Public Walks presented a Report to Parliament in 1833, which concluded that the poorest people living in the worst conditions of overcrowding and poverty in the large cities had the greatest need for parks. The committee believed that public open space would refresh the air; would improve people's health and provide places for exercise; would be an alternative form of recreation to the tavern; and would provide beneficial contact with nature, so elevating the spirit. Since all members of society would use parks, social tensions would be reduced and the classes would learn from each other². This earliest use was envisaged as informal promenading but parks soon came to include sports such as cricket and football, and then children's play.

The first parks were frequently laid out on whatever land was available, often on the outskirts of towns and cities. However by 1880 it was realised that parks needed to be accessible and sites within the urban areas were favoured. The Town Improvements Act of 1847 allowed local authorities to provide places that could be used for 'resort or recreation'. However it was not until the Recreation Grounds Act of 1859 that provision for active recreation received separate legal acknowledgement³. The 1833 Select Committee had placed no emphasis on games or sport but by 1847 there were facilities for boating, cricket, archery, and a gymnasium in some of the newly opened parks, and bowling greens, tennis, and football pitches followed soon after. Active recreation was treated as one among a range of possible uses of public open space and the designs for parks attempted to integrate them into a horticultural setting which frequently shut out the urban surroundings by peripheral tree and shrub planting.

The idea of a park laid out primarily for sports crystallised in the sports parks of Wolverhampton (1880) and Altrincham (1881). Later the formation of the modern Olympic Games provided the impetus for the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act giving local authorities the extended powers to acquire land specifically for playing fields. The organizations that have formed during the twentieth century to promote the various sports have subsequently put pressure on parks to provide facilities for their particular interest group.

From 1974, following the Bains Report and the 1972 Local Government Act, the local authority Parks Departments were absorbed into Departments of Leisure and Amenity Services. This consolidated the bias towards active as opposed to passive recreation⁴. It is arguable whether this was a response to the need for reduced expenditure, or actually reflected the aspirations of most users of the majority of public parks. It is suggested that perhaps it was not so much the public interest in sports that had increased, as the effectiveness of the sporting lobby⁵.

Compulsory Competitive Tendering was introduced in the early 1990s as a means of providing the most cost effective maintenance for parks. This meant that staff were no longer a full time presence in a particular park. Under CCT mobile teams moved around various sites carrying out the maintenance work and one of the results of this has been a loss of the informal supervision that was provided and a consequent sense of vulnerability for some park users. The Best Value Review has now replaced CCT and it is assessing the needs of the different users and attempting to produce a balance between their competing requirements. The recent inquiry by the

¹ Hazel Conway 'Parks and people: the social functions', Ed Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, E and FN Spon, London, 2000.

² Hazel Conway 'Parks and people: the social functions', Ed Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, E and FN Spon, London, 2000.

³ Brent Elliot and Ken Fieldhouse, 'Play and sport', Ed Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, E and FN Spon, London, 2000.

⁴ Brent Elliot and Ken Fieldhouse, 'Play and sport', Ed Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, E and FN Spon, London, 2000.

⁵ Brent Elliot, 'From people's parks to green deserts', *Landscape Design*, no 171 (February 1988), 13-15.

Environment Sub-Committee of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons has focused political attention on the issues surrounding public parks and their significance, making recommendations about funding and their future management. The Urban White Paper (November 2000)⁶ shares the concerns expressed in this inquiry. It goes further than just supporting a halt to the decline, challenging everyone to think more imaginatively about the kind of open spaces that can make a difference to the quality of people's lives in urban settings. It sets out the government's intentions to lead and develop a shared vision for the future of our parks, play areas and open spaces; to improve information on their quality and quantity and on the way in which they are used and maintained. In addition it says the planning and design must be improved as well as the way that existing ones are managed and maintained. The Urban White paper proposed the setting up of an Urban Green Spaces Taskforce to take this process forward and it will report back in June 2002.

Local authority parks are therefore undergoing something of a reappraisal. A number of issues need to be addressed by today's park managers: the parks' special contribution to the character of an area; the value of the existing facilities; decisions on what provision is required to meet the needs of today's public; the contribution parks can make to urban regeneration and to the biodiversity of urban areas; the need to manage the aging tree stock and fabric of parks; and questions of personal security so that parks can be used by all those who would wish to. As part of this process it is important that there is an awareness of the value placed on the different facilities, features and characteristics of the open spaces by various groups and individuals. The parks' spatial, historical, environmental and ecological qualities and their connection with their surroundings and the memories attached to those places need to be properly understood if changes are to build successfully and appropriately on what has gone before.

Cambridge is fortunate in having developed as a city with large areas of public open space in its centre. The highly managed Parker's Piece, Christ's Pieces and Jesus Green along with the grounds of many of the colleges contrast with the informality of the semi-natural character of Coe Fen and Sheep's Green, parts of the Backs and Midsummer and Stourbridge Commons. These open spaces, public and private, formal and informal create the setting for the urban fabric and the interrelationship between them is fundamental to the character of the city.

This document is one of a series of Conservation Plans which are being written to assess the wide range of qualities these open spaces possess which it is believed should survive into the future. By considering the ways in which these qualities may be vulnerable to change it is possible to produce conservation policies to protect them. It should be emphasised that the plans do not oppose alteration or the evolution of the parks and commons but aim to guide such change in a way that the past and current value of a site is accommodated in any new proposals⁷.

Acknowledgement

Many people have provided useful information for inclusion in these Conservation Plans and made valuable comments during the consultation process. We thank them for their material and for taking the time to read the drafts. We are particularly grateful to the Cambridge Preservation Society which has not only made a financial contribution to the production of the plans but has acted as a partner in their preparation through the efforts of Joyce Baird, Christopher Bradford, Catherine Hall and John Wilkinson. The invaluable assistance of the staff of the Cambridgeshire Collection also deserves our appreciation.

⁶ The Urban White Paper: 'Our towns and cities: the future, delivering an urban renaissance', pp 74-76 DETR, Nov 2000.

⁷ David Jacques, 'Memory and value', Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, E and FN Spon, London, 2000.

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CAMBRIDGE RACES

Will commence precisely at Ten o'clock this Morning

On Parker's Piece.

Lord Charles Manners's Horse CONSTITUTION will run against Mr. Wells's Horse FOLLY.—Constitution is much admired by *English* Gentlemen as well as Foreigners.—Constitution is an aged Horse, of excellent form and of very great strength. Folly is in *high condition*, and has been in training for some time. On Wednesday last he was *backed* by an *Ostler* on the Market Hill, at Cambridge, and in consequence of the high spirit of the animal, considerable fears were entertained by the spectators, for the *Ostler's* safety, *owing to the weakness of his Poll*.

For further particulars apply to

F. K. BIRD,

Clerk of the Course.

N. B.—There will be a *Mountebank* performance on the Race Course, at Six o'clock in the evening, but no *Gentleman* will be allowed to speak without leave of the *Manager's Company*: the Manager is an itinerant Orator, and he will be attended by Mr. GAB, who will deliver a Lecture on Craneology.

Monday, June 26.

ROBINSON, PRINTER CAMBRIDGE 67

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSERVATION PLAN

1.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

- 1.1.1 The enormous development pressure being experienced by Cambridge has led to the need for a series of strategic studies to ensure that the essential character of the city is maintained.
- 1.1.2 At the broadest level is the Landscape Assessment, which looks at the geology and topography of Cambridge's environs and defines the different 'character areas' of the city. Although the Historic Core Appraisal is principally concerned with the city centre, it builds on the findings of the Landscape Assessment to examine how the city centre sits within its setting and how the different character areas interface with and affect the core area.
- 1.1.3 The Historic Core Appraisal then looks in detail at the city and provides the strategic framework for protecting and improving the core environment. The individual Conservation Plans for the open spaces fit beneath this umbrella document. They will be complemented by similar plans for major buildings such as the Colleges, guidelines for the development of key sites, proposals for street enhancement and thematic studies on particular topics such as a 'Street Design Guide'. In this way a logical framework from the broad-brush to the site specific is developed to guide the future of the city.
- 1.1.4 This conservation plan for Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common has been prepared to provide a basis for their management to safeguard the elements that a wide range of people consider should be conserved for the future. The plan has therefore been circulated to interested parties outside the Council for their comments. The plan will also assist planning decisions if any development of the surroundings is proposed that might have an impact on these open spaces.
- 1.1.5 This is one of a series of Conservation Plans for the city's central open spaces and sets out what needs conserving and why. Management plans will follow which will detail how these objectives will be met. They will propose projects such as tree planting, railings provision or in some cases more major changes. Funding for these works can be sought from various bodies outside the City Council. The Heritage Lottery Fund recommends that applications for funding should follow the Conservation Plan process in order to demonstrate that the proposals being put forward do not conflict with the heritage merit of the site. Heritage merit is considered to be those qualities and features that it is desirable to pass on to future generations.

1.2 Format of the plan

- 1.2.1 The Conservation Plan provides an analysis of the open spaces including their history so that the sites can be fully understood by those contemplating making changes to them or their surroundings

(*Understanding the site*, section 3). An assessment of the significance of each of their main components follows, to ensure that managers now and in the future are aware of the features that they should try to conserve in their management proposals (*Assessment of significance*, section 4). The defining issues are examined next. This section considers the issues that have affected the significance of the open spaces, affect it now or that may do so in the future (*Defining issues*, section 5). Guidance is then given on ways to conserve those aspects of significance identified earlier in view of this vulnerability (*Conservation guidance*, section 6). Finally the plan explains how, by whom and when the Conservation Plan will be implemented and reviewed (*Implementation and Review*, section 7).

- 1.2.2 There are a number of appendices including a summary table of the conservation guidance for each of the significant elements (appendix 6) and a gazetteer of the main structures and artefacts (appendix 7).

1.3 The site

- 1.3.1 Parker's Piece, and Petersfield measure 9.6ha and, 0.9ha respectively. They lie within the central area of the city in Conservation Area No1.
Grid Reference TL 455 581.

1.4 The Conservation Plan

- 1.4.1 The plan has been prepared by the Environment and Planning, and Community Services Departments of Cambridge City Council in partnership with the Cambridge Preservation Society.
- 1.4.2 The plan has been prepared taking account of :
Cambridge City Council's Leisure Strategy for 1996-2000. Relevant policies are: SR6 96; SR14 96; SR15 96; SR22 96.
- 1.4.3 *The City Wide Arboricultural Strategy 1996* pp 7-11, Cambridge City Council.
- 1.4.4 *The Cambridge Local Plan 1990* chapter 4, *The Natural Environment* and chapter 8 *Recreation and Leisure*.
- 1.4.5 *The Parks, Shelterbelts and Open Spaces Local Habitat Action Plan*, and the *Urban Forest Local Habitat Action Plan*.
- 1.4.6 *The Landscape Assessment of Cambridge*, Cambridge City Council, 2000.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

This section of the Conservation Plan gives a general description of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common so that those making management decisions on one aspect can have an understanding of the site as a whole.

2.1 Historical development

Early History and Improvements

- 2.1.1 From at least the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 mainly arable open fields surrounded Cambridge. These were the West or Cambridge Field; the East or Barnwell Field; and to the north the open fields of the manor of Chesterton. Parker's Piece was originally part of Middle Field in the Barnwell Field (fig1). It takes its name from Edward Parker a cook who had leased part of the land from Trinity College. In 1612-13 a transfer took place between Cambridge Corporation and Trinity College with Trinity acquiring an area of Long Green for its 'Backs' and the Corporation gaining the land that largely constitutes Parker's Piece today. The Corporation had already acted as if it owned Long Green by selling a large part to King's College but in reality the land belonged to the commonalty of Cambridge. The Corporation was only responsible for managing the grazing, fuel gathering and gravel digging, which were governed by ancient customary rules and rights, attached to certain families. However, through this transfer Parker's Piece entered the ownership of the Corporation in this questionable way. It was taken out of the arable and became pasture in perpetuity for the townsfolk⁸. Despite the levelling works that have taken place over the years it is said that traces of field strips are still visible when the evening sun is low.

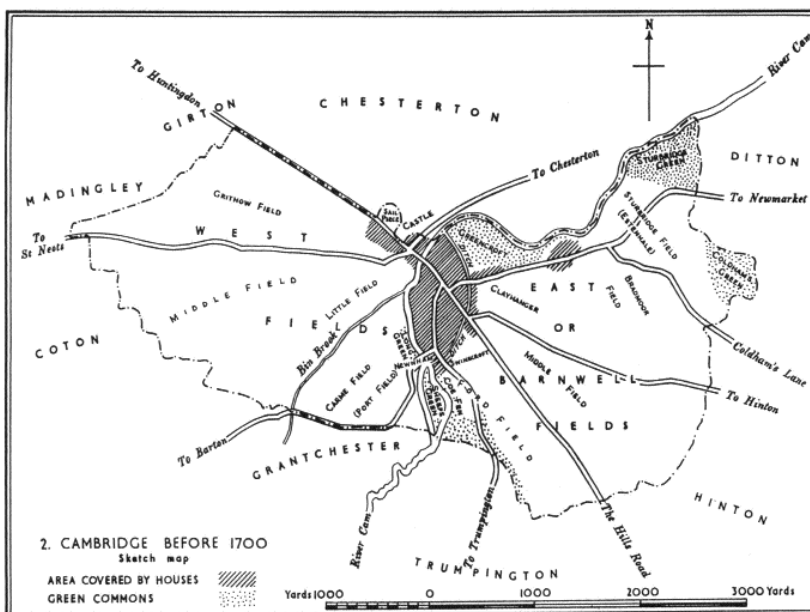


Fig1 *The Common Land of Cambridge.*
Cambridgeshire County Council 1956

⁸ Catherine Hall pers.com.

During the Civil War Cromwell erected defensive earth banks though Jesus Green, Christ's Pieces, Parker's Piece and along Lensfield Road but no trace of these remain today. A panoramic view of the city drawn c1690, from a viewpoint on the north of Parker's Piece shows the Piece as an open area of grazing land (fig2).



Fig2 View of Parker's Piece from the north side c1690, with arable in the foreground. Engraved by Loggan from an original.
By courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection

- 2.1.2 In 1811 the Barnwell Enclosure Award rationalised the scattered holdings of strips in the open East Field. As part of this reallocation of land three areas of common pasture close to Parker's Piece were allotted to the town, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Barnwell Allotments (fig 3). The first comprised a strip of land which lay between the east side of the original Parker's Piece and what is now Gonville Place; the second lay across the road where the Queen Anne Car Park and the swimming pool are; and finally the third lay diagonally north east across the junction with East Road and Mill Road where the Zion

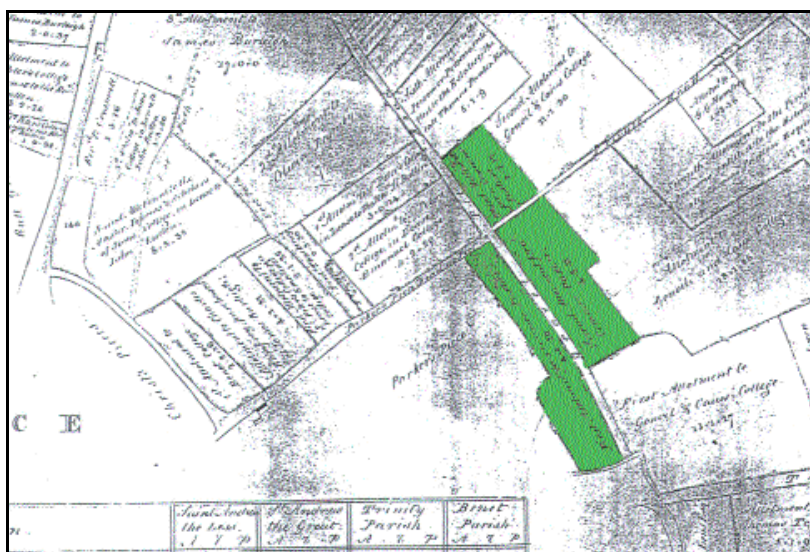


Fig3 Barnwell Enclosure Award Map 1811 showing the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Allotments.
By courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection

Chapel and Petersfield are today. The land for the Zion Chapel was taken in 1825 and two years later another Act of Parliament was passed allowing almost half of Donkey Common to be sold as the site for the new Town Gaol. Baker's map published in 1830 shows some of these changes.

- 2.1.3 The flooded foundations of the new gaol led to a drain being laid across Parker's Piece, Butt Green and Midsummer Common. This proved useful for the houses of Park Terrace being built from 1831 along the northwest side of the Piece. As part of this housing development a small exchange of land between the Corporation and Jesus College allowed the rationalisation of the north western edge of Parker's Piece. The straight boundary achieved was protected by post and rails paid for by the college.
- 2.1.4 In 1832 a plan was put forward for improvements to Parker's Piece by Mr Watford of Gonville Place⁹ (fig4). Insufficient funds were raised to carry out the whole programme of works but the creation of a further cricket pitch was agreed to. In addition the bank was levelled and the ditch between Parker's Piece and the 1st Barnwell Allotment infilled on condition that posts preserved the boundary between the two. The walk along the northwest side of the Piece was also to be widened to eight feet, so long as it did not become a horse or carriage road. Mr Watford's plan included a 'horseway' around the whole site after the amalgamation of the 1st Barnwell Allotment and Parker's Piece. This was presumably for exercising horses although we know from advertisements of the time that races were sometimes held on Parker's Piece before this.

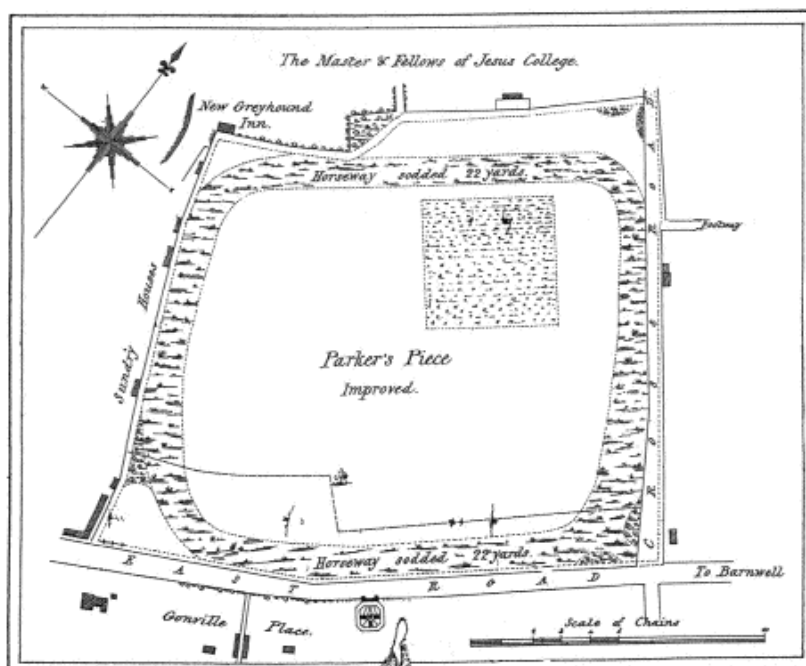


Fig4 Mr Watford's suggestions for improvements to Parker's Piece.
By courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection

⁹ The levelling and improving of Parker's Piece, Cambridge Chronicle, 10 May 1832.

- 2.1.5 On 11 May 1839 Charles Humfrey, a significant landowner in the area and former mayor, wrote to the Cambridge Chronicle detailing more improvements which were planned for Parker's Piece. A broad footpath was to be made on all four sides of the Common, separated by an oak post and rail fence to protect those using the path from the horses and cattle and to keep the walkway clean. The surface of the Common was to be levelled and drained into the new drain that had been laid after the Gaol was built. A single row of elms spaced 40 feet apart were to be planted around three sides. The houses on the north side, probably Parkside, were to be allowed an uninterrupted view over the common. In February 1868 the Council recorded its thanks to a Mr John Odell Pain for planting at his own expense the 30 lime trees along Parkside. Of all these trees only the limes still stand today.
- 2.1.6 A report of the evidence given in 1833 to the Commission enquiring into the existing state of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales stated with regards to Parker's Piece, 'that all the inhabitant householders have a right of common'. This implied that all the inhabitants of the town had a right to graze their animals on the Piece. This conflicts with Cooper who suggests that only the common rights associated with the land in the original exchange with Trinity College were transferred to Parker's Piece¹⁰.
- 2.1.7 Between the years 1841 and 1876 various attempts were made to resolve the problems caused by the overuse of the Cambridge Commons by those who had no legal rights to graze them. Attempts to trace the true holders of these rights proved too difficult and various plans were put forward which would have released some land for building or allotment gardens. Other land suitable only for pasture was to have been divided and let out for rent and the remainder including Parker's Piece was to have been retained forever as public land. The public was fiercely opposed to the enclosure of the Commons however and little real progress was made until the 1876 Commons Act made it possible for the Council to apply to the Enclosure Commissioners for an order for the regulation of the commons, as distinct from their enclosure. This meant that new regulations could be introduced through by-laws and changes in land management brought about in this way. In due course the Commons Committee was authorised to take the necessary steps to obtain the appropriate by-laws in 1878. Parker's Piece was to be kept solely for recreation and no horses were to be exercised or cattle grazed there.
- 2.1.8 Over time various attempts were made to carry out further improvements to Parker's Piece by hard surfacing the paths that crossed it, replacing the timber post and rail fence with metal railings and by planting trees. Although approval was given to some of these proposals it appears that they were not necessarily carried out because the same issues seem to reappear over the years. The decision to install an iron fence around the Piece was made in October 1878, 12 years after it was first considered. There was opposition from some to the proposal to formalise the worn tracks



¹⁰ Coopers Annals III, pp 57-59.

over the turf by laying limestone paths. In all 2014 people signed a petition to oppose the idea because they felt it would destroy the unity of the Piece, however the decision to form the paths was made despite this in December 1880, (Appendix 1). The open uninterrupted character of Parker's Piece has clearly been a consistently valued quality over the years.

- 2.1.9 In 1881 it was agreed that the turf was to be kept short by grazing it with sheep from 1 May to 30 November from sunset to 11am. A 'Curator of Parker's Piece' was appointed to take charge of the cricket and other games and to ensure the paths were kept clean and the turf repaired as necessary. A shed for the custodian's tools, a water fountain and urinal were installed the following year.
- 2.1.10 More improvements were agreed to in 1890 with the widening and drainage of the paths. A horse mower and roller were to be purchased for Parker's Piece and Christ's Pieces and in 1893 the Council agreed the installation of an electric lamp for the centre of the Piece. It became known by students in the 1960s as Reality Checkpoint and has retained this name informally. The lamp, which is a listed structure, underwent a major refurbishment in 1999.
- 2.1.11 Improvements to Donkey Common began to take place when during the winter of 1882 the Council gave its agreement to plant trees with guards. In March 1883 the Commons Committee recommended that two limestone and tar paths should be laid across Donkey Common and Petersfield. One ran from Queen Anne Terrace to Mill Road and the other from the Zion Chapel to Mill Road. In August 1896 the Commons Committee was directed to prepare plans for the 'beautification' of Donkey Common and Petersfield. No by-laws were ever passed excluding animals from grazing them, possibly because of the difficulty of tracing the owners of the original rights. However the principle that they should be used as open space for recreation seems to have been established. Later there were proposals to build on Donkey Common and Petersfield but the General Purposes Committee turned these down in 1931.
- 2.1.12 Besides limiting the University's powers of arrest following the Spinning House scandal, the 1894 Cambridge University and Corporation Act gave the Corporation considerable powers over the regulation of the Commons and the open spaces of the town. The distinction between 'common for recreation only' and 'recreation ground' seems to have become obscured between the time of this Act and 1908 when the Commons Committee recommended that facilities should be given for the playing of both tennis and bowls on the public recreation grounds. Tennis was recommended for Parker's Piece but no courts were laid out. In 1911 Parker's Piece was listed as a recreation ground and yet in June 1922 it was treated as a Common by the Town Clerk in his confirmation that no permission was necessary for the holding of meetings on the Commons including Parker's Piece. However whether necessary or not, permission was regularly sought for a range of religious and secular meetings on Parker's Piece.



- 2.1.13 In 1922 the Cambridge Corporation Act gave further regulatory powers over the Commons in addition to those in the 1894 Act. None of these affected Parker's Piece since it was already established as being 'a common for recreation only'. In the Corporation's Year Book neither it nor Donkey Common or Petersfield appear in the list of Common Lands within the Borough. Instead they are listed as Recreation Grounds, indicating that confusion seems to have developed over the status of these open spaces.

Uses

- 2.1.14 Entries in the minutes of the Corporation's Council meetings of the 1820s give an impression of Parker's Piece as an area which was struggling to accommodate a range of uses. It was a grassed open space still with vestiges of the ridge and furrow of its earlier arable days. An embankment and ditch surrounded part of it and in 1820 near the southwest corner there was a pond that had been dug for the cattle and horses that grazed the Piece until 1878. This was useless for part of the year, being dry or unfit to drink and a treacherous hazard in winter for children playing near it. Permission was given in June 1827 for the pond to be filled and in 1831 the levelling of a 60 yards square for a cricket ground. A committee was set up the following year to 'inspect the proceedings now taking place on Parker's Piece as to digging gravel and cutting trees there'.

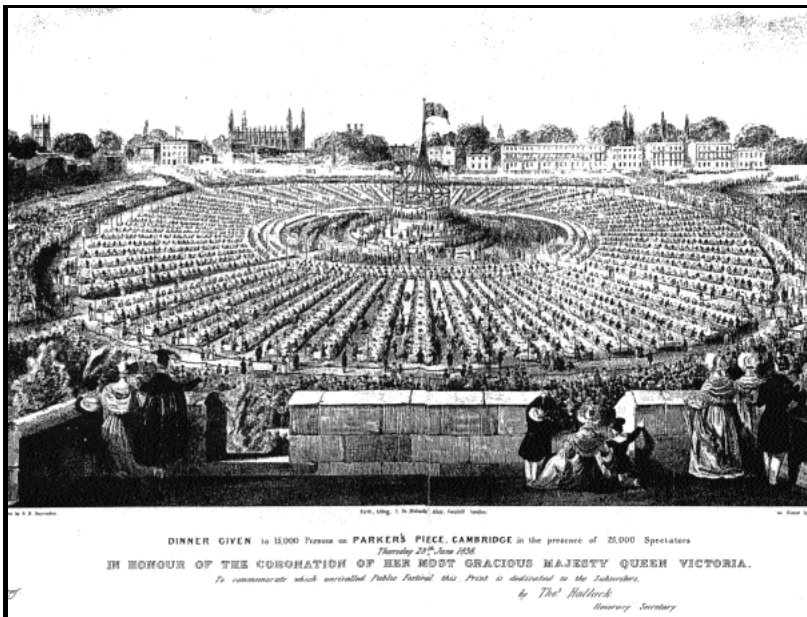


Fig5 Illustration of the dinner given for 15,000 people to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria.
 By courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection

- 2.1.15 Council records show that Parker's Piece was used throughout the 19th century for religious services, public meetings, election hustings and celebrations, games both organised and informal, in addition to the drilling of soldiers during the First World War. A celebratory meal was held on Parker's Piece for over 5000 people to mark the return of peace following the entry of the Allies into Paris on 12 July 1814, the year Napoleon abdicated¹¹. On 28 June 1838 the coronation of

¹¹ A narrative of the celebration of peace at Cambridge, printed by J Smith for W Gibson 1814, in Cambridge University Library.

Queen Victoria was celebrated by another dinner in which approximately 15,000 took part (fig 5) and it provided the site for the Royal Agricultural show two years later. Parker's Piece played a major part in the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. These took place over several days and involved a Royal salute of 60 maroons; military bands; a release of pigeons; variety entertainments; fireworks; an Old Folks' Dinner and a Treat for School Children that involved tea and amusements for 5000 children¹². In June 1911 the Coronation of King George V was celebrated by bands, a concert and a fireworks display were held to finish the day. Parker's Piece continues to be used for annual events such as Pop in the Park each summer and about 40,000 people gathered there on New Year's Eve 1999 to celebrate the new Millennium.

- 2.1.16 Parker's Piece has a connection with the origins of the world's most widely played game. In 1848 Henry Charles Malden a student at Trinity College called friends together to rationalise the different football rules which they had brought with them from their individual public schools. These came to be known as the Cambridge Rules, which were subsequently adopted in 1856 with only minor changes at the formation meeting of the Football Association. In the spring of 2000 a game in period costume was played to publicise this connection with the city.
- 2.1.17 In the late 19th century football seems to have been tolerated but applications for games of hockey were refused permission on a number of occasions due to the damage they caused to the turf. Cricket was always a very important sport on Parker's Piece with the town regularly voting small sums of money for the repair of the turf. Before Fenners was opened in 1846 all the County and University matches were played on Parker's Piece. An old army hut was acquired to serve as a refreshment hut in 1919. There continued to be conflict for space between the demands of the football and cricket clubs at this time. Applications from hockey clubs still seem to have been frequently unsuccessful. Many famous cricketers have played on Parker's Piece, including the legendary Jack Hobbs who was born in Cambridge, and a pavilion on the Piece was opened in his honour in 1930.
- 2.1.18 There seems to have been an emphasis on organised sport in the interpretation of the term recreation in the early part of the 20th century. In 1912 an application to wheel a perambulator on Parker's Piece was turned down and later in 1916 the Commons Committee refused a request for the gate to be opened so that a Mr Bullock could go on to the Piece in a bath chair. However wounded soldiers were to be allowed to enjoy it. In September 1919 another request for an opening for prams in the Gonville Road fence was turned down. Finally in December 1919 it was agreed that openings should be made near the University Arms Hotel, Melbourne Place and Gonville Place in order that perambulators could use Parker's Piece. This perhaps reflects a change in attitude to disabled people and young children in prams at this time, or at least recognition of Parker's Piece's wider role as an informal recreational amenity.

¹² *The official programme for the Great Jubilee Celebrations in Cambridge, Tuesday June 22, 1897.* Cambridgeshire Collection.

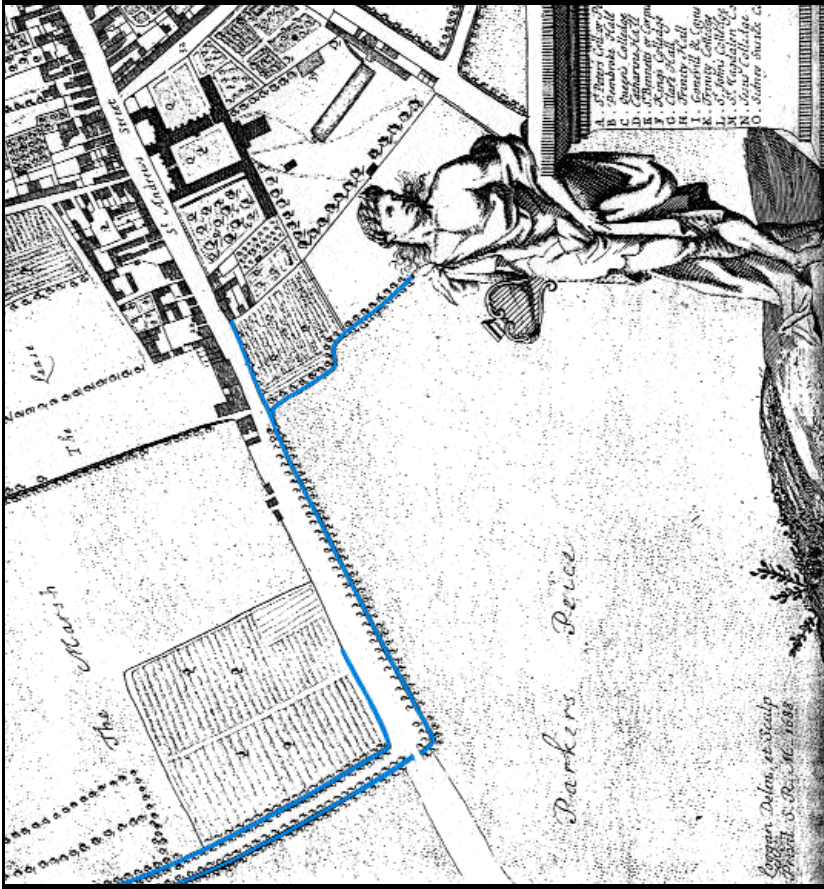
2.1.19 The increase in motor traffic following the war led to a proposal in 1951 for part of Parker's Piece to be taken to widen Regent Terrace for a car park. Jack Hobbs joined in the protest against the idea. In 1957 a plan was put forward to build a car park for 800 cars beneath Parker's Piece. Objectors pointed out that parts of the Piece would be taken up with entrance and exit ramps and ventilation shafts. In addition it was likely to be three years before the reinstatement of the surface was completed. The project did not receive the support of the Council. In 1963 the scheme was revived and this time the Commons Committee raised no objections but asked for certain safeguards. However a petition was launched against the project and once again the plan was rejected. The underground car park plan was revisited in October 1968 but again the idea was dismissed. The following year came proposals to build a multi storey car park on the site of Queen Anne Terrace and 0.09a of land was to be taken from the Gonville Place side of Parker's Piece to allow for the necessary access ramps. The plan was later modified so that Parker's Piece was unaffected. A series of maps traces the main changes that have occurred over the years (fig 6).

History of the Registration of Common Land Process

2.1.20 Ena Mitchell does not say whether it was this car park proposal which kindled her interest in researching the history of the Cambridge Commons, but her subsequent work (on which much of this history is based) uncovered how close they came to not being registered at all. She draws attention specifically the discrepancy within the County Council's Survey Report of 1956 on *The Common Lands of Cambridgeshire*¹³. Parker's Piece is omitted from the City Commons Map facing page 12 and on page 15 it states that Parker's Piece 'contrary to general belief, is not common land'. The by-law number 20 in the Appendix B however states, 'Every person placing any animal on Parker's Piece (such common being for purposes of recreation only) shall be guilty of an offence'. This by-law was made before 1887 and probably in 1881 following the 1876 Commons Act. The County Council report claimed to have no authority but only to have the object of reviewing the position of the commons. However because there was no other recent work, it did indeed have status and in due course perhaps led to the confusion which caused Parker's Piece to be omitted from the registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

¹³ E Mitchell, *Notes on the History of Parker's Piece, Cambridge*.

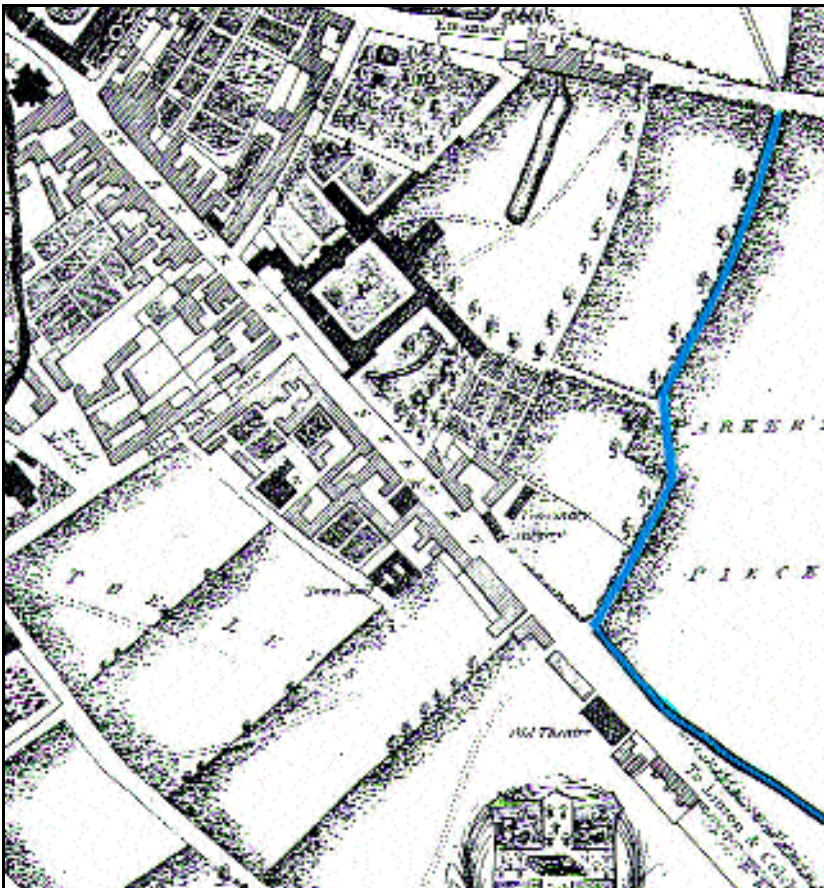
Fig6 A series of maps showing the changes that have taken place on Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common between 1688 and 2000.



LOGGAN 1688

Significant additions

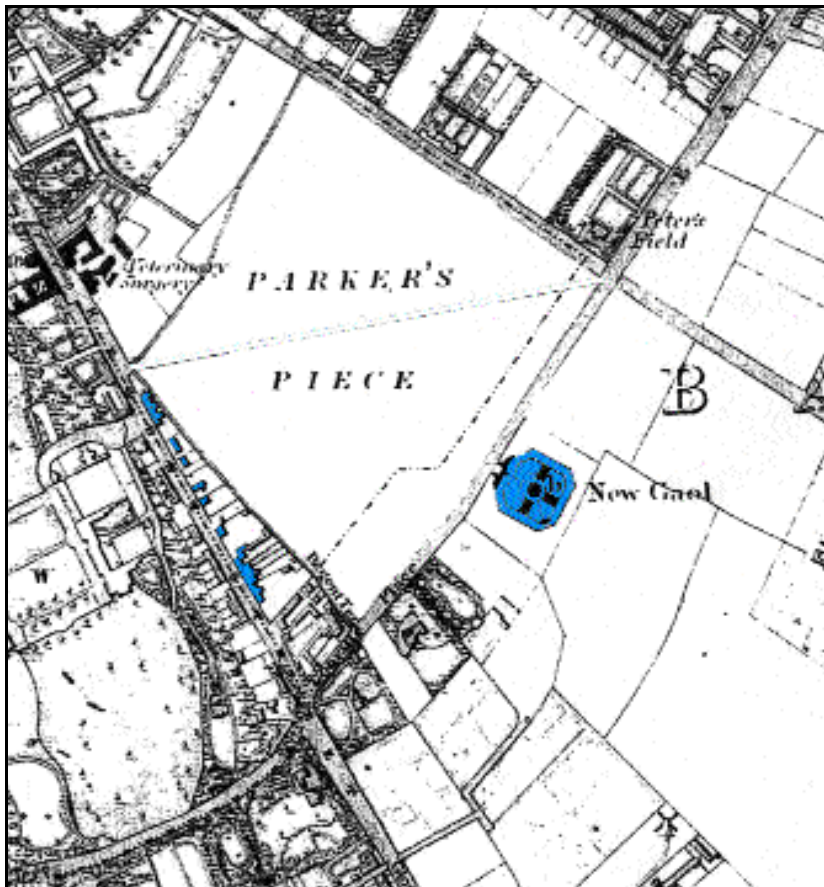
- Hobson's Conduit (inaugurated 1610) with trees planted on each side.



CUSTANCE 1798

Significant additions

- Part of Hobson's Conduit buried along the approximate line of Regent's Terrace.

**BAKER 1830****Significant additions**

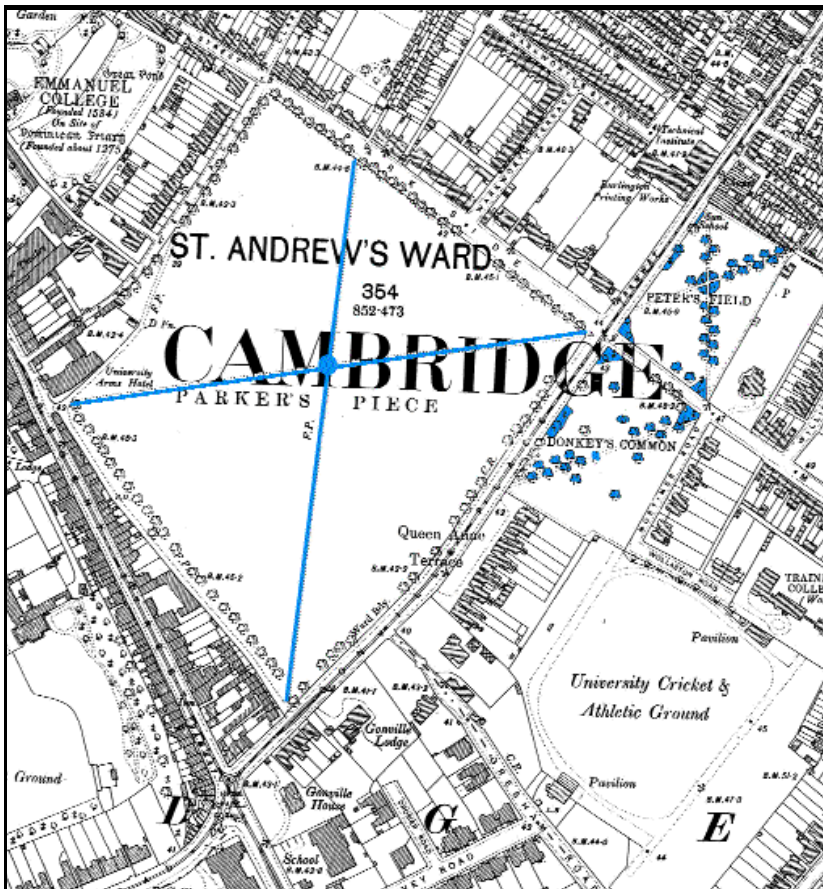
- Town Gaol built on land acquired from Donkey Common.
- Land between Regent Street and Regent Terrace beginning to be developed.

**1886 ORDNANCE SURVEY****Significant additions**

- Houses in Park Terrace (built 1831) benefit from the sewer laid to drain flooded foundations of the Town Gaol. NW side of Parker's Piece rationalised.
- Queen Anne Terrace replaces Town Gaol.
- Ground levelled for a cricket pitch (1831 and 1832).
- Surfaced footpath on all four sides of the common separated from the horses and cattle by an oak post and rail fence.
- Surface of PP levelled and drained into new sewer; single row of elms to be planted on three sides (proposed 1839).
- 30 lime trees planted on NE side of Parker's Piece (1868).
- Iron fence to be installed around Parker's Piece (Council decision 1878).
- Worn tracks over the grass formalised by limestone paths on Parker's Piece (decision 1880).
- Shed, water fountain and urinal installed on Parker's Piece 1882.
- Trees with guards planted on Donkey Common (1882 decision).
- Limestone and tar paths laid across Donkey Common and Petersfield (1883 decision).
- Horse drawn trams running along Gonville Place and East Road.
- Zion Chapel and Bradmore Lane built.

Significant losses

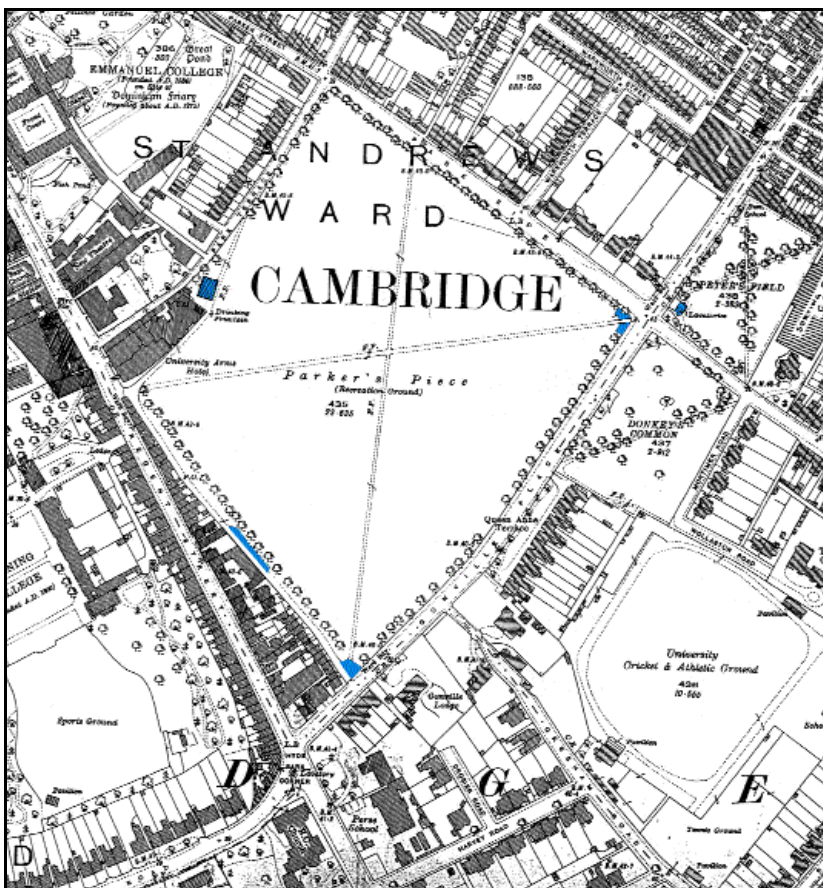
- Bank and ditch between Parker's Piece and 1st Barnwell Allotment levelled and infilled, boundary marked by posts (1832).
- By-laws sought to exclude horses and cattle from Parker's Piece (1878).



1903 ORDNANCE SURVEY

Significant additions

- Paths on Parker's Piece widened and drained (decision 1890).
- Electric lamp installed at centre of Parker's Piece (Reality Checkpoint) (decision 1893).
- Lime trees planted along the paths crossing Petersfield and Donkey Common and some planting beds laid out.



1927 ORDNANCE SURVEY

Significant additions

- Hobbs Pavilion built on Parkers Piece.
- Public lavatories installed on Petersfield.
- Paths widened at corners and lay-by created in Regents Terrace.

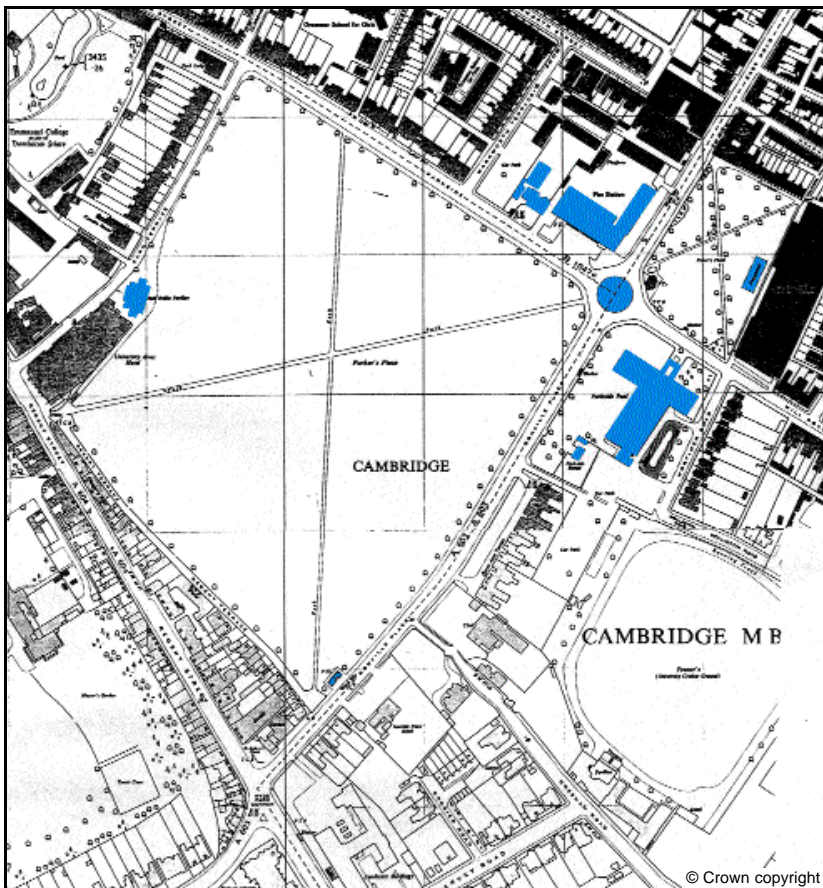
Significant losses

- Rails for horsedrawn trams have been removed.



1951 ORDNANCE SURVEY

No major changes.



1967 ORDNANCE SURVEY

Significant additions

- Hobbs Pavilion extended.
- Police and fire station built.
- Roundabout installed at junction of Parkside and East Road taking the corner of Parker's Piece.
- Parkside Pool built on Donkey Common.
- Public lavatories built at south end of Parker's Piece.
- Play area laid out on Petersfield.

- 2.1.21 In January 1957 the Town Clerk appeared before the Royal Commission on Common Land as a witness for the Association of Municipal Corporations. When asked if Parker's Piece was a common he is minuted as saying 'It is not a common, oddly enough. It is an open space.' Presumably basing his information on the 1956 report. The commons and town greens were to be registered by the County Council as the Registering Authority in consultation with the City Council. It appears the registration just made the first deadline of 31 December 1969 but the list did not include Parker's Piece, Petersfield or Donkey Common. The Town Clerk explained the reasoning for the omission of Parker's Piece in correspondence replying to the enquiry of Mr D'Alton, a resident of the city. He explained that under the criteria set out by the act he did not consider that Parker's Piece was a town green since it had not been allotted under any Act for the exercise or recreation of the inhabitants of any locality. However Coopers Annals (III, pp 57-59) describe how the town acquired Parker's Piece in 1613 in an exchange of common land with Trinity College and the formerly arable land was to become common pasture for the Town and University at all seasons of the year.
- 2.1.22 Over the intervening years Parker's Piece had acquired a multi use role as a pasture and as a place for games, meetings and celebrations. In the late 19th and 20th century games had become organised and standards demanded pitches of a quality that required regular maintenance. The Council then imposed charges in order to finance the necessary upkeep and so the Town Clerk's interpretation was that the public took recreation not as a right within the meaning of the Act of 1965 but by the implied consent of the Council when they hired a pitch. It could however be argued that informal games also took place and probably always had done. An example from the Council minutes records how use by 30 youths over the winter of 1964/65 had been sufficiently heavy for the Council to attempt to direct them elsewhere to save the wear on the turf around the central lamp. The status and value placed on informal recreation hopefully receives better recognition today.
- 2.1.23 In 1970 the County Council failed to act on the suggestion that there was one final opportunity to register Parker's Piece within the second prescribed time limit. Ena Mitchell's research and commitment led her to apply to the County Council to try to register it as a new town green. In July 1979 almost five years later they gave their view that, 'The rights claimed by the applicant on behalf of the local inhabitants existed prior to the 2 January 1970 and thus any application to register land under the Act should have been made by that date.' Disappointing, as this was, the County Council did at least recognise the validity of the claim for common status even though the time for registration of the category of existing commons had already expired. Miss Mitchell concludes her book on the history of Parker's Piece with a statement of confidence that the County and City will continue to respect Parker's Piece as a world famous town-green. However she offers the suggestion that should the City ever promote another local Act of Parliament it may be possible to rectify the omission of Parker's Piece from the Register of Commons.

- 2.1.24 Recognising that much of the legislation affecting common land and greens is in need of review, in 2000 the Government set up a consultation process proposing legislative and non-legislative amendments to the existing legislation. Amongst them is the suggested simplification of the designation of greens, under which Parker's Piece could at last be legally designated as a town green and therefore its status as common land formally acknowledged.
- 2.1.25 The late 19th century tree and shrub planting on Petersfield and Donkey Common had matured by the time of the 1965 Commons Registration Act 1965. Petersfield had taken on a more ornamental character and presumably this was why it was omitted from the registration. The first indoor swimming pool was opened on Donkey Common in March 1963. The central location was considered appropriate and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government had given the necessary permission in 1959. Interestingly the Cambridge University Corporation Act 1894 states that from time to time the Corporation may (on common land) 'Erect baths wash-houses and lavatories, provided that baths and wash-houses shall only be erected on the banks of or within thirty yards from any stream and shall be constructed of wood.' Needless to say Donkey Common was also omitted from the registration of commons. How much influence the confusion on common status that arose at the time of the 1922 Cambridge Corporation Act had on these subsequent decisions is not clear.

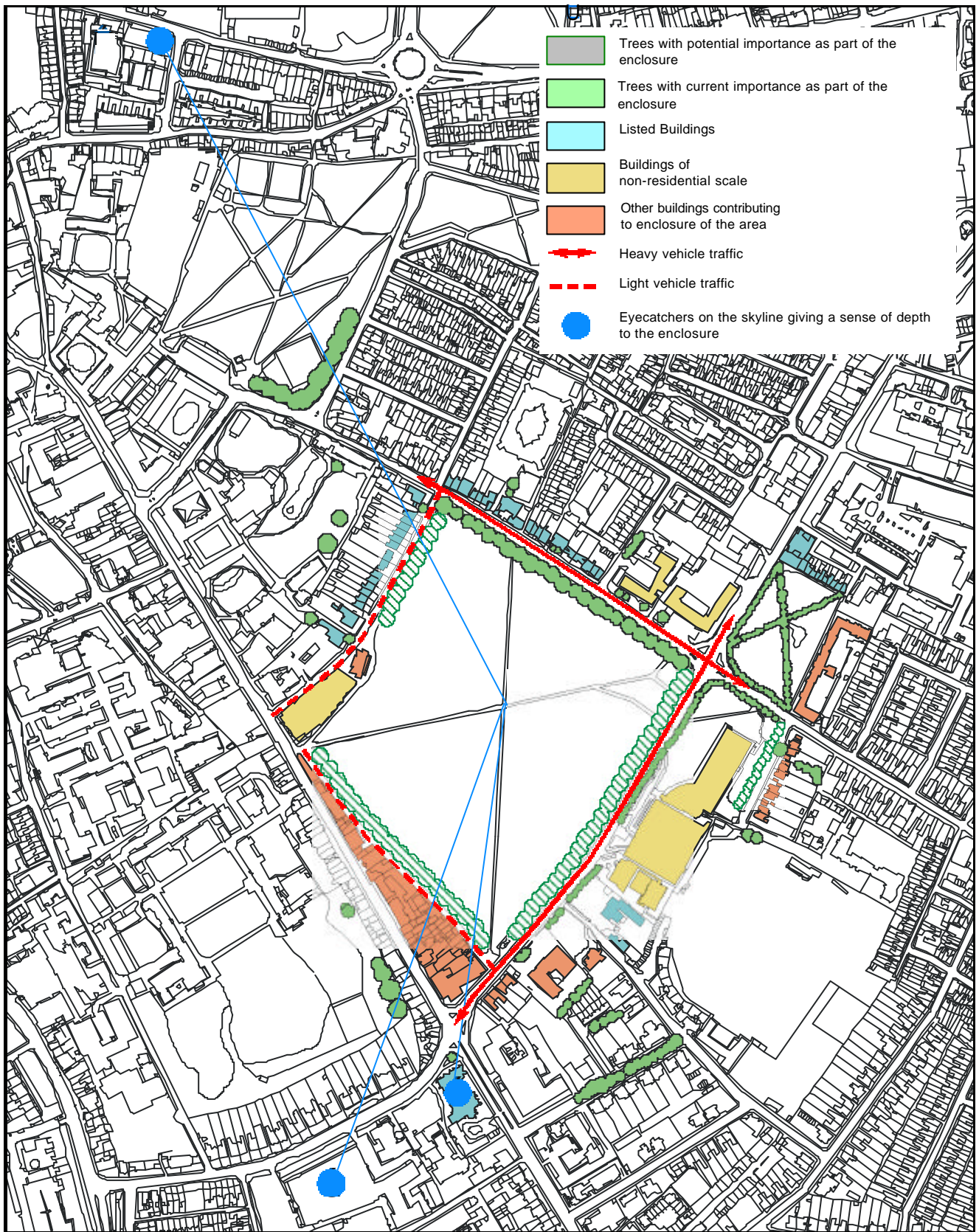


Fig7 Enclosure

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2.2 Design structure and townscape role

- 2.2.1 Parker's Piece is enclosed by a combination of distant trees in the grounds of Downing and Emmanuel Colleges as well as by the buildings lining Park Terrace, Parkside, Regent Terrace, Gonville Place with its own trees and the trees of Petersfield and Donkey Common. Finally within them is the encircling line of trees around the actual perimeter of the grass. Although many of these buildings and trees are not tall, the depth and in places height of these combined enclosing elements helps to balance the scale and emptiness of the open space. In time as the younger trees mature the skyline will be broken by the tops of the inner perimeter trees rather than by the buildings beyond (fig7).
- 2.2.2 In winter when the trees are bare it is easier to appreciate the diversity of the buildings around Parker's Piece. Many are high quality and residential in character even if they no longer have this use. There is a maximum of four storeys along Parkside. The Fire and Police Stations, the swimming pool, multi-storey car park and YMCA although not enormously tall, have an entirely different scale. The University Arms Hotel breaks into the rectangle of the Piece. Its hybrid of old and new buildings are taller than any of the surrounding buildings and the decorative quality of its architecture contrasts with the geometric solidity of these others. The listed buildings are shown in Appendix 2.
- 2.2.3 Seasons of the year, time of day and changes in weather bring the different sides of Parker's Piece to life. Morning autumn sunshine is reflected off the University Arms Hotel and the houses in Park Terrace. The trees by this time of year have been reduced to a filigree of bare branches rather than the leafy buffer they become in summer. At night when the Piece is in darkness apart from the centre and the perimeter street lighting, there is the welcome glow from the swimming pool on Donkey Common. The grass itself may be emerald green in a damp summer or scorched straw colour in drought. It can be brilliantly reflective on a sunny day or its exposed expanse something to be crossed in winter with head down and collar up.
- 2.2.4 The trees are an important part of this dynamic relationship. Much of the earlier tree planting proposed for three sides of Parker's Piece used elm and consequently was lost between 1981 and 1985. The 1868 limes on Parkside have survived remarkably well however with only one loss. Even before the devastating effects of Dutch elm disease, photographs show that at first the elms did not succeed in the same way as the limes and the replacements resulted in trees of different ages and even forms as at one point Lombardy poplars appear to have been planted opposite Donkey Common¹⁴. However by the time of their demise a regularly spaced single line had been established.
- 2.2.5 Petersfield has a more intimate feel with its shady lime avenues and remnants of Victorian shrubberies. These protect the small park from the impact of East Road and Mill Road, while still allowing in views from the vehicles waiting at the nearby traffic lights and passing pedestrians. The lime trees on each create strong visual links

¹⁴ Barr Ellison photograph.

between Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common where the swimming pool with its remodelled landscape is built. The spire of the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs is an important landmark from Parker's Piece and the London plane tree at its front is a potentially significant part of this view. The Lombardy poplars along Gonville Place echo the verticality of the spire.

- 2.2.6 Increased traffic restrictions in Regent Street has pushed the office car parking onto Regent Terrace leading to conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The south west view from Parker's Piece is predominantly of the backs of buildings, garages and parking. The backs and flanks of the buildings in Regent Terrace are in some cases unfortunate, poorly detailed and over scaled. Being on the shady side of the Piece compounds this rather depressing collection of rear views. In contrast Park Terrace to the north west has the University Arms Hotel and a fine listed terrace of houses. Parkside on the north east side is a busy road with a line of early to mid 19th century houses, also listed, ending abruptly with the Police and Fire Stations. The periodic drama of sirens adds to the sense of activity around the perimeter. The glazed frontage of the new swimming pool on the south east side takes full advantage of its site overlooking Donkey Common and Parker's Piece. The trees that line Gonville Place help to integrate the Kelsey Kerridge sports Centre, the Queen Anne Car Park and the YMCA building. These and the trees on Parker's Piece itself are very important in resolving the range of building scales which surrounds the Piece.
- 2.2.7 There are important views on to Parker's Piece from the end of Park Terrace, Regent Street at the corner of the University Arms Hotel, down Melbourne Place, Warkworth Terrace, and Gresham Road. The bright reflective surface of the short grass is a positive asset to the area at all times of the year. Figure 8 summarises these characteristics.

Fig8 Summary of the Design Structure and Townscape Role of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common and their surroundings.



The visual enclosure of Parker's Piece is made up of several layers: the immediate perimeter trees, the trees and buildings on the surrounding streets, and the trees in the college grounds beyond.



The Grade II listed buildings of Park Terrace, Parkside and Owen Webb House and Gresham House in Gresham Road overlook Parker's Piece.



There are strong visual links between Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common, with important views towards Petersfield's lime avenues from Parker's Piece.



Petersfield has a garden character, with shrubs and other planting reducing the impact of East Road while still allowing views in from the adjacent streets.



The distinctive architecture of the new swimming pool takes advantage of its aspect overlooking Parker's Piece and Petersfield in contrast to buildings in Regent Terrace, the Queen Anne Car Park or the Police Station.



Increased traffic restrictions in Regent Street have pushed parking on to Regent Terrace leading to conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The view is predominantly of rear elevations, garages and parking.



The grass is a constantly changing canvas of activities visible from the surrounding streets between the perimeter trees.



The Lombardy poplars echo the verticality of the Catholic Church Spire. Along with the plane tree at the Gonville Hotel, the limes on Petersfield and Donkey Common help to integrate the various building lines and heights on the south east side of Parker's Piece.

2.3 Recreational facilities

- 2.3.1 Parker's Piece is a large area of high quality amenity turf. Sports pitches are marked out for cricket (1 square with several wickets); mini football pitches (2-3); football pitches (2) in winter; rounders (2) and a running track in summer. There are also 9x9m grids for sports skills training in winter. Parkside Community College and St Albans primary school use Parker's Piece for sports, having no playing fields of their own. However they do not use it for school break times. The *Assessment of Open Space in Cambridge 1999* showed that there is a shortage of pitches in secure public use. Parker's Piece therefore makes an important contribution to such pitches as well as being important for informal recreation. However, this dual use does lead to conflicts including abuse of the playing surface and disrupted matches.
- 2.3.2 Informal games of football are played at all times of year and the local language schools erect volleyball nets and play rounders for summer entertainment. In fine weather there are large numbers using the space for sunbathing and picnics. There is remarkably little usable shade at the middle of the day because of the modest size of the tree crowns and their proximity to the edge of the grass. Parker's Piece is also used for a certain amount of dog exercising and on the whole people respect the law and clear dog waste.
- 2.3.3 Having been a focus for organised as well as informal games, well-maintained pitches have been required and the space needed to rotate them for repair. Since cricket was one of the most popular games and required a considerable area, division by avenue planting as seen on Christ's Pieces or Petersfield never took place.
- 2.3.4 The children's play area on Petersfield was refurbished in 1996, providing equipment for the younger age group.
- 2.3.5 The new swimming pool on Donkey Common was opened in 1999. Unlike the neighbouring buildings it exploits its position overlooking the open space. Swimmers have the sensation of being surrounded by grass and trees, protected from the elements by extensive glass walls. At night, particularly in winter, the pool offers welcome illumination ahead to those crossing Parker's Piece on their way home from work.

2.4 Structures and artefacts

- 2.4.1 The former cricket pavilion named after Jack Hobbs is now leased from the Council as a restaurant. However it still provides sport's changing facilities in part of the building.
- 2.4.2 There are toilets built in the 1960s in the south east corner with a lay-by in Gonville Place so that they can be used by road users as well as people visiting Parker's Piece.



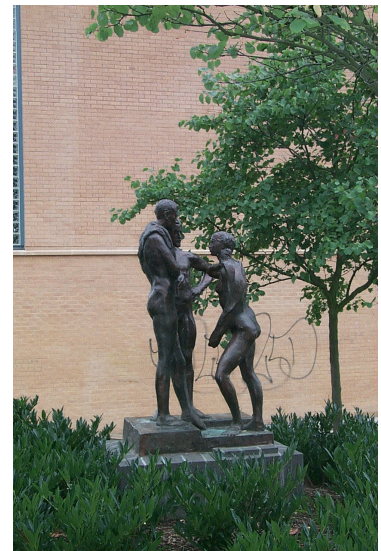
- 2.4.3 The central cast iron lamp is a Grade II listed structure (667-/6/10064) and was refurbished in 1999. Its exact date is unknown but Council minutes record the decision to accept the estimate of the Electric Supply Company in December 1893.
- 2.4.4 The old gas lamp dating from c 1900 at the centre of Petersfield is also a Grade II listed structure (667-/8/10065). Until recently the gas apparatus was in working order but it was damaged when it caught fire.
- 2.4.5 Parts of the perimeter of Parker's Piece are enclosed by cast iron rails of the three rail 'Cambridge' and the low single rail designs, a timber rail along Regent Terrace and a steel highways style pedestrian rail to channel people to the appropriate crossing points at the pedestrian lights. There is a short length of timber rail within Parker's Piece itself, designed to ease the wear on the grass at the Regent Street entrance. Pedestrian traffic across to the Queen Anne Car Park has been reduced by infilling the gap in the railings, possibly making this rail redundant.
- 2.4.6 The seats are the Wicksteed 'Huntingdon' design used widely elsewhere in the city and the litter bins a cylindrical design using vertical timber slats.

2.5 Infrastructure

- 2.5.1 The asphalt paths lie more or less diagonally, from corner to corner. The definitive footpaths are shown in Appendix 3. There is one semi-redundant path leading to the east corner.
- 2.5.2 The open space is lit from the road lamps in the surrounding street and the single lamp in the centre of Parker's Piece.
- 2.5.3 A branch of Hobson's Conduit runs under Regent's Terrace and under the backs of the buildings between Regent's Street and Regent's Terrace¹⁵. There are various services buried beneath the surface of the parks but the most significant is probably the Granta Backbone Network Cable. Checks for services should always be made before any excavations.

2.6 Ornamental planting

- 2.6.1 Apart from the trees there is no ornamental planting on Parker's Piece other than some spring bulb planting of crocus and daffodils. Additional bulb, herbaceous perennial and shrub planting were carried out in the early 1990s on Petersfield when the roundabout at the intersection of Mill Road and East Road was replaced by traffic lights. This supplemented remnants of the original shrub layout dating from the 19th century. Some shrub planting around the relocated bathers sculpture was included as part of the landscape works associated with the new swimming pool development on Donkey Common in 1999.



¹⁵ WD Bushell, *Hobson's Conduit*, p16. Cambridge 1938.

2.7 Trees

2.7.1. A photograph in the reception of the offices of Bar Ellison in Cambridge, taken c1889 from the spire of the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs, shows the trees along Park Terrace to be uniformly small, those on Parkside to be a medium height, up to the height of the eaves of the buildings, those in Gonville Place to be large trees including some Lombardy poplars, and those in Regent's Terrace to be a mix of trees taller than roof height with some small specimens. This suggests that there were successive tree plantings perhaps following some failures in the earlier planting on Gonville Place and Regent's Terrace, while the Parkside planting was more successful. There were no trees on Petersfield or Donkey Common at this date. It appears therefore that Parker's Piece has never had a uniform perimeter planting in terms of age or species choice. Only later as the elm trees matured did some uniformity emerge. Growing conditions around Parker's Piece may not be uniformly good and ground compaction should be investigated and its causes reduced as far as possible.

2.7. Condition of the trees
(see Appendix 4 for BS and PSULE assessments)

2.7.1 *Parker's Piece*
The Parkside boundary has mature, apparently even aged limes growing close to the highway footpath mainly on slightly elevated land. It is unclear why a number of the trees have very large wounds where limbs have been lost but this may relate to the development of Parkside as a major highway. As a result of this, with the restricted root zone on the footpath side and quite probably significant soil compaction beneath the grass to the south, the trees are not in prime condition for their age. They are not generally pruned but dead wood is removed on a three to four year cycle, basal and trunk growth is removed annually to a height of four metres. An attempt was made to plant an additional row of lime trees along Parkside but the trees failed to thrive due to roof and canopy competition on a very dry site.

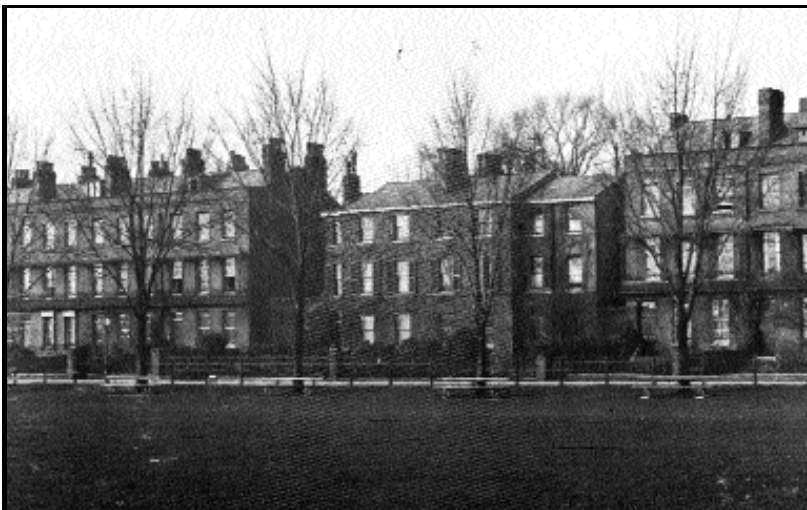


Fig9 The townhouse of park Terrace and the elm trees on Parker's Piece (1901).
By courtesy of the Cambridgeshire Collection.

- 2.7.2 As the mature elms succumbed one by one to Dutch Elm disease between 1981 and 1985 replacement planting was carried out with alternative species. Caucasian limes were planted on the Gonville Place boundary and the ends of Parkside and Regent Terrace. These trees are widely spaced and have as a result formed relatively low domed crowns. Caucasian lime is difficult to interpret for formative pruning and this may be why so little has occurred in the past. In several trees the branch structures are now irredeemably poor whilst in others the opportunity still exists to start a programme of pruning to form a strong long-term limb structure. This variation in quality and potential growth means that a cohesive, even aged row of trees along this boundary is unlikely to be achieved. Removal of poor specimens and additional planting, either of groups or a double line of trees, might enable the better ones to be capitalised on.
- 2.7.3 The Regent's Terrace boundary has a few limes at its eastern end but is otherwise a mixture of London plane and Oriental plane to no particular pattern. The majority of these trees have been wind damaged, some beyond recovery. However a very small number could be grown to maturity although they have been planted too close to the Regent Terrace buildings for naturally formed crowns to be allowed to develop.
- 2.7.4 The Park Terrace boundary has no trees along the side of the hotel. A single London plane stands to the south of Hobbs Pavilion and to the north of this, the row of trees is predominantly London planes with two Oriental planes and two Caucasian limes mixed in. From a distance the trees and architecture beyond appear to compliment each other, however the illusion will be short lived in that only a small number of these trees will grow to natural maturity. Additional and replacement planting should be considered.
- 2.7.5 *Petersfield*
The cruciform avenues of limes dominate this site. Most of the trees are in reasonable condition and need little other maintenance than the removal of dead wood and lower growths. The few trees along the Mill Road boundary are in similar condition. Some of the planting, particularly the limes has established well. However the potential size of the Raywood ash trees planted in front of the Petersfield Terrace east of the Zion Church puts them in potential conflict with the dwellings. The ash are already significantly wind damaged and structurally flawed so there is no long term future for these particular trees.
- 2.7.6 *Donkey Common*
The lime tree group at the southern end is mostly in reasonable condition, in spite of the nearby construction of the two swimming pools in the last 30 years. The tree at the footpath edge is declining and when eventually felled should not be replaced. The row of London planes planted to follow the railings on the Gonville Place side are growing well. Those remaining from the original fairly dense planting are the best forms but not all will necessarily need to be grown to maturity. Unfortunately one of the better quality trees has at



its base the gas main for the pool. This was an avoidable conflict but it now means that this tree is unlikely to survive to maturity as there are likely to be concerns that the tree may fracture the gas main in the future as its root system develops. Common limes (*Tilia x europaea* 'Pallida') were chosen for the Mill Road and Mortimer Road tree planting in 1999 with the intention that the same species and clone could be used eventually to replace the existing common limes along Parkside.

- 2.7.7 The mature trees along the north boundary with Mill Road are lime with the exception of two large London planes. The planes were cable braced decades ago to a very poor standard and lack of attention since has led to severe damage to the upper main limbs. For this reason the trees are of poor quality. On the south side of the trees a row of replacement common limes (*Tilia x europaea* 'Pallida') has been planted. The old trees will need to be pruned and generally maintained to achieve an even growth of the new row of trees. At the same time the opportunity was taken to plant trees along the Mortimer Road boundary. Common lime was chosen to produce a high crown, which will eventually be seen above the roofline of the swimming pool from Parker's Piece.

2.8 Soil

- 2.81 The main area of Parker's Piece is on gault clay with the edge of the 2nd terrace of the river gravels running close to the line of Regent Terrace. Petersfield and Donkey Common are on the 3rd terrace of the river gravels (Appendix 5).

2.9 Ecological importance

- 2.9.1 The range of habitats on Parker's Piece is very limited. The grassland is species poor through essential herbicide and fertilizer application and has been oversown with hardwearing amenity species such as 'Barlinda' and 'Bardessa'. The cutting regimes and use of the site generally inhibit the wildlife potential. However the short grass provides a feeding opportunity for birds when the ground is soft and there has been the occasional nest in the perimeter trees. The limes along Parkside date from 1868 but they have not been examined to assess any wildlife value.
- 2.9.2 Petersfield has a wider range of vegetation structure with grass, shrubs and mature trees, providing roosting, nesting and feeding opportunities for birds. All these areas are part of the broader mosaic of public and private open spaces that support the urban wildlife of the city.

2.10 Archaeology

- 2.10.1 Parker's Piece and Petersfield lie on the south east edge of the historic core of the city. Records indicate that the site was subject to strip cultivation until 1612. An area was levelled for cricket in 1812 and grazing was finally ended in 1878 when by-laws were introduced forbidding the grazing of cattle and horses. Faint traces of the ridge and furrow cultivation can still be seen in oblique sunlight (SMR 10102).

2.11 Current management practice

- 2.11.1 Apart from the cricket square and outfield which are subject to a much more detailed specification, the grass is maintained as Parkland grass under the Grounds Maintenance contract with a delay in cutting at the start of the season where the spring bulbs are planted. The turf is subject to vertidrainage and overseeding as necessary and other repair work following major events such as the Millennium celebrations.

2.12 Legal ownership and status

- 2.12.1 Confusion over the commons status of Parker's Piece in the past has resulted in its omission from registration as a town green under the 1965 Commons Registration Act. However more recent research by Ena Mitchell has clarified the historical background and its status as a place of recreation. Under the criteria set out in the recent DETR consultation paper reviewing common land it would seem that there is a good case for designating Parker's Piece as a town green when the changes in legislation are made¹⁶.
- 2.12.2 Petersfield and Donkey Common were not registered as common land under the Registration of Commons Act 1965.

2.13 Statutory designations

2.13.1 Conservation Area status

Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common lie in the Historic Core Sector of Conservation Area No1. Any development works require planning permission and are required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. The trees have protection afforded to them by being located within a Conservation Area.

2.13.2 Local Plan Policies

Parker's Piece and Petersfield and Donkey Common as public open space are subject to the following Local Plan Policies:

- NE6: Development will not be permitted which would result in the loss or partial loss of open spaces of environmental and/or recreational importance. These areas are identified on the Proposals Map. A review of open space protected under policy NE6 confirmed the environmental and recreational importance of this area.

¹⁶ DETR, *Greater Protection and Better Management of Common Land in England and Wales, 2000*.

RL 2: The City Council will encourage existing open spaces to be used for a mixture of formal and informal activities and will encourage the improvement of facilities and safety measures to improve access for people to a wide range of recreational and sporting activities.

2.13.3 Definitive footpaths

The Definitive Footpaths are as follows:

Parker's Piece: 26, 27, 28, 29, and 44.

Petersfield: 57.

Donkey Common: 55.

3. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This section aims to make an assessment of the value of the main components and characteristics of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common to ensure that managers now and in the future are aware of the features they should try to conserve in their management proposals. A table summarising the significance, its vulnerability and the conservation guidance to protect it is set out in Appendix 6.

3.1 Summary of the heritage significance of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common

- 3.1.1 Parker's Piece was acquired by the town in 1612/13 and it was to be 'common pasture for the Town and University at all seasons of the year.' It has retained its open character providing a versatile public space for games, meetings and celebrations over the subsequent years. Along with Petersfield and Donkey Common it provides the setting for a number of listed buildings around its perimeter and contributes to the townscape character of the area, contrasting dramatically with the density of some of its surroundings.

3.2 Archaeological potential or importance

- 3.2.1 As a nearly 400 year old public open space on the south east edge of the central area, Parker's Piece may have buried artefacts following several centuries of informal use of the area. It is worth bearing in mind that any excavations for renewing underground services etc could expose such artefacts. When the sun is low it is apparently still possible to detect faint traces of the earlier ridge and furrow cultivation.

3.3 Architectural history or design significance

- 3.3.1 The major design significance of Parker's Piece is its simplicity as an unobstructed area of open space, with grass maintained to a high standard, enclosed by forest scale trees and some high quality buildings. This is a layout that has evolved around the grazing and recreational uses it has supported since 1612. The space derives its design significance from its scale and emptiness, but also from the quality of its enclosure. The immediate perimeter and more distant tree planting together go some way to resolving the varied styles and scales of the buildings surrounding Parker's Piece.
- 3.3.2 It seems that the transformation of Petersfield and Donkey Common from grazing common took place gradually following Council agreement for tree planting in 1882, the laying of limestone and tar paths in 1883, and instructions for their 'beautification' in 1886. Presumably the latter referred to shrub and other ornamental planting. Petersfield retains much of its Victorian layout with extra planting beds, trees and the children's play area having been refurbished in the 1990s. All these spaces in 2001 are in their own ways formal, with the forest scale trees constituting important enclosing elements.

3.4 Contribution to townscape character

- 3.4.1 Parker's Piece provides the setting for the listed buildings along Park Terrace, Parkside and Gonville Place. The winter transparency of the trees, and indeed the weather, alter the relationship between each of these groups of surrounding buildings, and the relationship between them and the Piece.
- 3.4.2 The distant trees in the grounds of Emmanuel and Downing Colleges, the trees of Petersfield, Donkey Common and those along the frontage of the buildings on the east side of Gonville Place play an important part in resolving the diverse styles and sizes of the buildings surrounding Parker's Piece. They combine with these buildings to produce a depth of enclosure that is more likely to satisfactorily balance the scale of the open space.
- 3.4.3 The openness of Parker's Piece contrasts dramatically with the dense layout of parts of the residential area around it. The large area of highly reflective grass on a sunny day is uplifting for those on the Piece as well as those passing around its perimeter. There is a more intimate relationship between the tree and shrub planting areas of Petersfield and Donkey Common and the spaces they enclose, providing a total contrast to the character of Parker's Piece. Petersfield strikes a balance between offering interesting views into this small park from the traffic filled surrounding streets, and a refuge within the space itself. Donkey Common with its forest scale trees today provides the setting and in time will form the backdrop to the swimming pool. All give pedestrians the opportunity to walk through a green space and make shortcuts to avoid busy road junctions.
- 3.4.4 The formality of the lime tree planting on Petersfield and Donkey Common is echoed by the slightly later planting of Christ's Pieces and New Square. All are the product of a national movement to improve the open spaces of urban areas for recreational purposes in the second half of the 19th century, coupled with the appropriate legislation around that time which enabled the Council to bring in by-laws to make these improvements on common land. This has left a legacy of tree planting and remnants of some of the Victorian shrub beds. A common character of grassed areas crossed by closely spaced avenues and enclosing perimeter lime trees links these city centre open spaces.

3.5 History of the open space

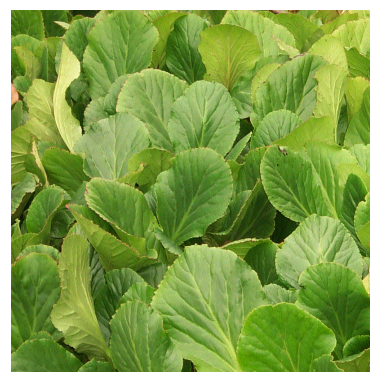
- 3.5.1 Along with its role as grazing common until 1878, Parker's Piece has a long history as a place of meetings, celebrations, formal and informal recreation. Although not officially recognised as a town green it is expected to fulfil the criteria required for this designation when the current legislation is amended.

3.6 Community, commemorative or social value

- 3.6.1 Parker's Piece has performed the same function for nearly four hundred years. Its central position in the city and unobstructed openness has enabled it to provide the canvas for a wide range of activities to be played out on.
- 3.6.2 Close connection with the famous cricketer Jack Hobbs and the first use of the original Association Football Rules on Parker's Piece give it strong links with the history of sport.

3.7 Ecological value

- 3.7.1 Individually Parker's Piece, Petersfield and the remains of Donkey Common have a low ecological value however together they contribute to the mosaic of green spaces made up from the city's other public and private open spaces. Because of the different vegetation structure some wildlife will exploit aspects of these at different times of day and seasons of the year. There is the potential to grow large forest scale trees well into their mature phase of life. With proper management and protection of their growing environment they may be able to survive for several hundred years, supporting the wildlife associated with old trees.



3.8 Educational or public potential, public or recreational value

- 3.8.1 Parker's Piece provides the playing fields for Parkside Community College and St Albans Primary School. It also enables organised cricket and football clubs to play and train for their sports in this city centre location. An assessment of open space in Cambridge in June 1999 showed that there is a shortage of publicly owned sports pitches in Cambridge as a whole. Protection of any existing pitches is therefore vital.
- 3.8.2 Parker's Piece is also an important place for informal team games. Its large size enables ball games to be played safely without any enclosure. Individuals gather to chat, sunbathe or read, stretched out on the grass. Small children can run around with some freedom without the risk of roads close by. It is a central meeting place on summer afternoons and for young people in the evenings throughout the year.
- 3.8.3 Parker's Piece is a space for large-scale public entertainments and celebratory events such as the millennium fireworks display.
- 3.8.4 The history of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common are well documented and should be more widely known. Interpretation material and details of information sources could be made available to schools so that the next generation understands its origins and values this public place. This is important because Parker's Piece is such a unique space and does not necessarily have a conventional aesthetic appeal.

- 3.8.5 An understanding of the diverse role it has played in the life of the city over the years will perhaps prevent its use becoming biased towards one group in the future. Its robustness and flexibility as a space should continue to be exploited, without compromising the existing valued uses.
- 3.8.6 The public toilets are an important facility for those travellers and pedestrians passing by Parker's Piece as well as those people involved in activities on the Piece itself.
- 3.8.7 The designated cycle paths across Parker's Piece enables people to avoid the busy junction between Gonville Place and Hills Road. Similarly pedestrians are able to avoid the Mill Road/East Road junction by cutting through Petersfield and Donkey Common.
- 3.8.8 Petersfield provides a children's playground in a part of the city that has few play facilities. It is on the main route between a large area of housing and the city centre and Grafton Centre. It is therefore well placed to enliven the more mundane outings initiated by adults. The relatively enclosed garden environment makes it a pleasant place to sit on a windy day in contrast to Parker's Piece. It provides the setting for the adjacent flats and houses and protects them from the busy road junction.
- 3.8.9 The swimming pool on Donkey Common provides a valuable facility which serves both local and regional needs in an accessible central location.



4. DEFINING ISSUES

This section identifies the issues that have affected the significance of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common; affect them now or may do so in the future. These are the issues that may make the significant features vulnerable.

4.1 Ownership and present management

- 4.1.1 Since Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common are in the ownership of the City Council their future security from development is in the hands of the City Council and through them the electorate. However taking the opportunity to designate Parker's Piece as a town green when the appropriate legislation is finalised would enhance this protection. (See sections 2.1.20 - 25.)
- 4.1.2 The present grounds maintenance is specified by the Council's Horticultural Officers and implemented by the City Council's own City Services Department. The resources available limit the level of maintenance that is possible and the mobile maintenance teams means that there is no Council staff member on site for much of the time. There is therefore no official supervision of the parks.
- 4.1.3 Tree management is specified by the Council's Arboricultural Team on behalf of Community Services. Specialist contractors implement the practical work.

4.2 Use

- 4.2.1 Some conflict inevitably results between the wide range of activities which take place on Parker's Piece. There is clearly a need to protect the cricket wicket from damage when events such as major celebrations and concerts are held. The shortage of public sports pitches in the city means that there may be conflict between demand for pitches and the desire to hold events that prevent their normal use. Large organised training sessions are often held without authorisation on Parker's Piece during wet weather when the Colleges' own pitches are closed to protect them during wet weather. This causes an unacceptable level of wear and damage to the turf. The trees' rooting zones also need protection from compaction caused by vehicles entering the site. Unofficial use by sports clubs wearing studded shoes can also result in damage to the general playing surface. These conflicts require a balancing of different needs and uses.
- 4.2.2 There are other conflicts that could be avoided simply by the general public behaving in a considerate way. Dog walkers who fail to clean up after their pets clearly disregard the consequences for those playing sports or wanting to enjoy sitting on the grass. Although the operation is costly much of the litter that is abandoned at the end of each summer evening can be relatively easily cleared up the following morning. However fragments of broken glass and metal ring pulls from canned drinks are not easily seen on an area the size of Parker's

Piece and they gradually become partly embedded in the grass. Inevitably they pose a hazard for sports players skidding around on the turf. Small bonfires are often made from the packaging of the takeaway food and portable barbeques also damage the surface. Considering the punishment it receives, the grass on Parker's Piece is remarkably resilient and its appearance is a tribute to those responsible for its care.

- 4.2.3 It is important to maintain the traditions of Parker's Piece as a versatile space and not to allow the condition of the turf to become too precious and therefore the use too restrictive. Provided tree rooting zones and cricket wickets are protected the use of modern machinery, seed cultivars and groundsmanship techniques, made possible with adequate investment, should enable many of these legitimate conflicting uses to be accommodated.

4.3 Physical condition

4.3.1 Archaeology

A lack of awareness of the long history as an open space could mean that artefacts exposed during routine excavations for eg. drain repairs might be missed and the opportunity to add to the archaeological knowledge of the area would be lost.

4.3.2 Trees

4.3.2.1 *Parker's Piece*

Defects particularly associated with certain clones of London plane have unfortunately developed as the trees have matured, making them vulnerable to limb loss in high winds. This combined with the difficulties associated with formative pruning needed on some of the 1980s lime trees means that some of this apparently established recent tree planting does not in fact have a long term future. The row of limes along Parkside is in relatively good condition but will need careful management as an entity over the next few decades. Those trees forming the remaining boundaries are not likely to produce a cohesive or interlocking canopy, due in part to their spacing but largely to wind damage. In a site so vulnerable to such damage as this, it may be better to grow trees in groups to achieve a more aerodynamic form. Success of the planting would not then be so reliant on the survival of high quality individual trees as it would be in a uniform perimeter design. This type of planting strategy would enable the range of existing sizes and species to be accommodated in future tree planting designs and allow the tree groupings to be related to the architectural changes around Parker's Piece. This would however be a deviation from the attempts at formal perimeter planting of both earlier and more recent years. It is unlikely that much adjustment of the pitch positions would be necessary as the overall area is so large. The additional shade generated would be valuable in the summer as there is very little at midday currently.

4.3.2.2 In order to provide an efficient cost effective litter clearance service the vans drive around the inner perimeter of Parker's Piece to visit each bin. The positions of the bins and the method of collection from them should be reviewed in order to avoid ground compaction of the tree rooting zones of current and future trees. Compaction has also been caused by repeated pedestrian traffic passing over the rooting zone of some trees. Similarly vehicles involved in the setting up for events, particularly in wet conditions also compact the soil. Consequently there have been different degrees of compaction around the perimeter of Parker's Piece leading to a range of good and poor tree rooting conditions. This has and will affect the successful uniformity of future formal planting, therefore moving to a less formal design than previously tried should be seriously considered.

4.3.2.3 *Petersfield*

The Raywood ash trees are unlikely to have a long term future due to the tendency of this clone to break limbs and form distorted branch structures.

4.3.2.4 *Donkey Common*

The effects of earlier cable bracing on the two London plane trees means that these large trees on the Mill Road boundary do not have a long term future.

4.3.3 Ornamental planting

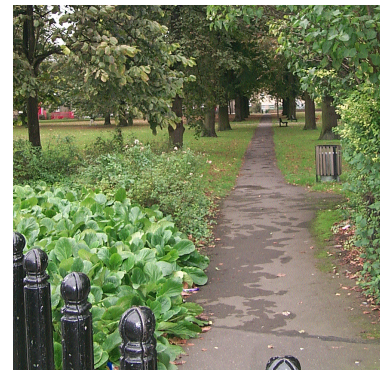
There is a small amount of bulb planting on Parker's Piece and its appropriateness should perhaps be reconsidered. The shrubbery around Petersfield needs height in places to provide a buffer from the roads, with other planting being kept low to allow views into the small park from passing pedestrians and those in cars.

4.3.4. Structures and artefacts

4.3.4.1 The toilet block on Parker's Piece tends to be a focus for alcohol abuse and drug taking. However properly maintained public toilets that people feel secure using is for some elderly people an essential facility without which they would not have the confidence to leave their homes and make the trip into the town centre. They are also important for those who work outside or are travelling around the city.

4.3.4.2 Repair of the Definitive Footpaths is a County Council responsibility and it is important that there is a coordinated approach between the two authorities towards the layout, design and choice of materials used. The lighting around these parks is designed primarily for illuminating the road and is also a County responsibility. However the columns also light the edges of the parks at night and the columns have a physical presence during the day. If possible their design and potential to improve these spaces should recognise this.

4.3.4.3 Timber post and rail is used along Regent Terrace rather than the more expensive cast iron rails used elsewhere around Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common. Its replacement to match the other rails is highly desirable. Similarly the railing used around the north eastern corner to guide pedestrians to the appropriate crossing points is a standard guard rail design and consideration should be given to replacing it with something that combines its functional and aesthetic roles.



4.3.5 Maintenance

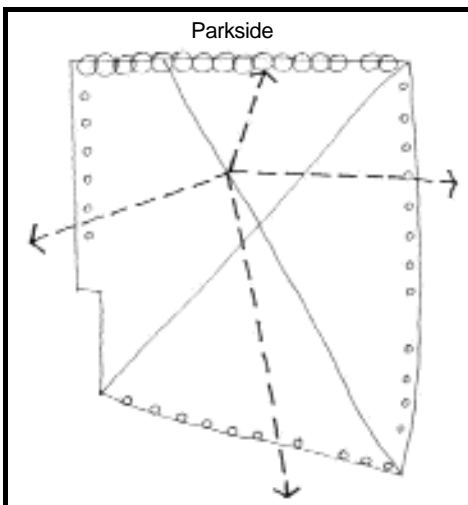
The 'Best Value' review that is replacing compulsory competitive tendering provides the opportunity to consider the way in which the maintenance is managed and delivered by the City Council, and how that might beneficially affect the day-to-day presentation of the parks and their long-term condition.

4.4 **Area and Boundaries**

- 4.4.1 Parker's Piece is a simple open area of grass but its character is derived in a large part from the way it is enclosed by trees, buildings and the sky. The quality of any new development in the surrounding area is obviously very important and planning briefs should be produced for key sites to ensure that they respect the importance of the location; understand the part they will play in the enclosure of this important space and their relationship with the other buildings. Opportunities should be taken to improve Regent Terrace. Buildings with a double aspect would allow them to form a frontage onto Regent Street and take advantage of this prime site overlooking Parker's Piece, altering the service entrance view that currently presents itself. Imaginative solutions are needed to solve its vehicle access and car parking problems. There is the possibility of major development change beyond the north east side if the Fire Station is relocated and perhaps at some time in the future the Police Headquarters. Redevelopment should take account of the domestic scale of the majority of the listed buildings surrounding Parker's Piece and Petersfield. Because of the size of the open space the skyline is highly vulnerable to the quality of any tall buildings inserted into it over a considerable distance from Parker's Piece.
- 4.4.2 Similarly the part played in these relationships by the perimeter tree planting requires an arboricultural strategy to produce a satisfactory long-term solution. Producing a cohesive tree planting scheme has to take account of the legacy of the 1868 lime tree planting along Parkside; the varied forms and vigour of the 1970s Gonville Place limes; and finally the inevitable gaps that are going to develop on the lines of Oriental and London plane trees along Regent Terrace and Park Terrace. In addition, the trees on Donkey Common and Petersfield, the Lombardy poplars along the frontage of Gresham House and the Gonville Hotel's plane tree also make a major contribution due to their scale and maturity.

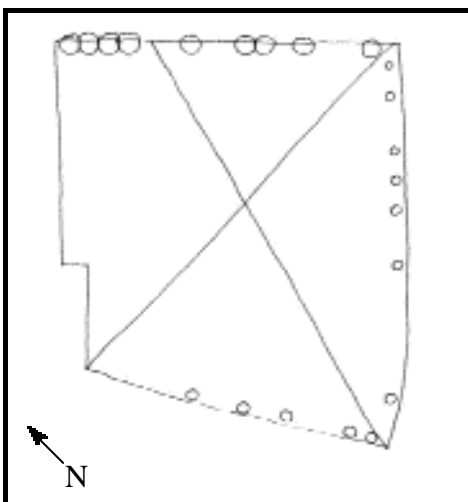
4.4.3 There are a number of possible layouts for future tree planting, some which would involve removal of existing trees and others which would build on the present planting (fig 10). The formal solutions would involve the most radical changes and would in summer produce a buffer of foliage between the surrounding buildings and the open space. To achieve a single species, uniform aged planting would mean felling the 1970s trees despite the potential of some to make long term trees. Felling the remainder of the 1868 limes along Parkside is unlikely to be acceptable to the public until there have been a significant number of losses. This would mean delaying such a replanting plan until this time, with the other more recent trees continuing to mature, or alternatively accepting that the trees on one side would eventually be replanted after the other three. There would need to be a commitment to protection of the rooting zone so that all the trees develop at the same pace as each other; and the selection of uniform, high quality stock so that 30 years after the initial planting no gaps appear. This is clearly a harder challenge and will be less resilient to the abuses likely to be experienced on such a well-used site.

Fig10 Some tree planting options for Parker's Piece.



Trees at 2000 (schematic)

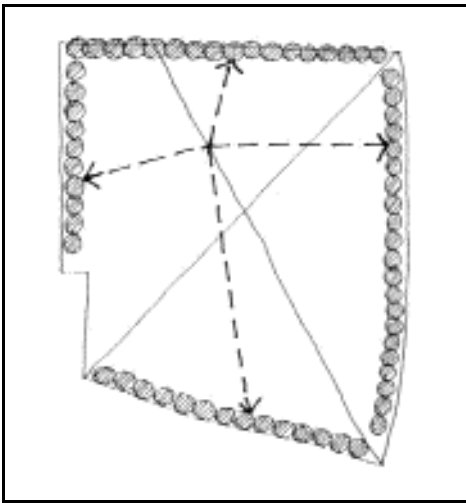
- Mature lime trees planted in 1868 form a uniform screen along Parkside.
 - Views over and through the 1980s trees and gaps on the other three sides allow the buildings to relate to the open space.
- represents views from a random point along one of the paths.



Losses anticipated in 20 years due to:

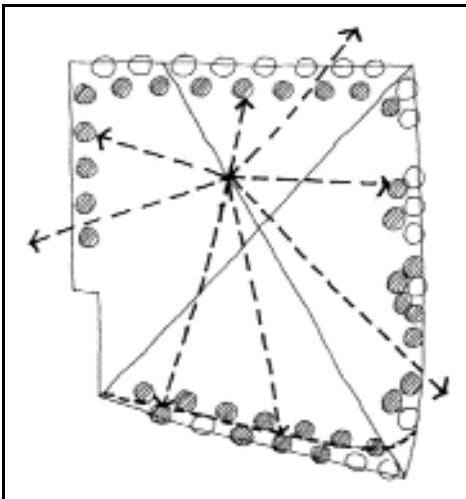
- structural problems making them vulnerable to wind damage, ageing and the removal of trees with poor prospects.

Possible planting strategies:



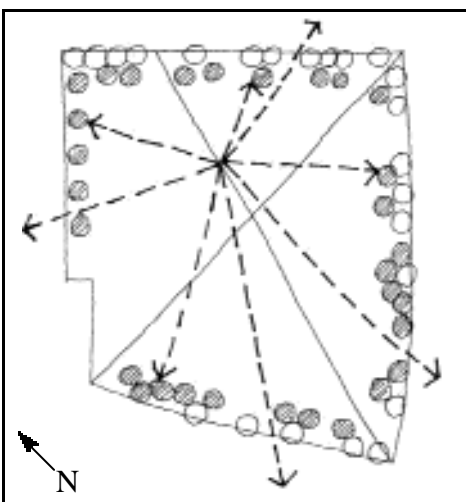
A

- Allow the mature limes to decline until a point is reached when the remaining trees are felled and a new line can be planted.
- Fell and replant along the line of the 1980s trees using uniform forest scale species after decompacting the ground well.
- Views are largely contained within the trees, distant trees and features on the skyline obscured.



B

- Fell alternate trees along Parkside and plant a second row 3-4m within the original one to line up with the new planting on Donkey Common. As the original lime trees decline they can be replaced to maintain the double row.
- A widely spaced row along Park Terrace allows views of the listed buildings.
- Informal groupings along the Gonville Place side build on the good trees that remain from the 1980s planting, forming substantial screening in places and views through in others.
- Parallel with Regent's Terrace, a new path solely for pedestrians forms the focus for new tree planting that is well spaced and sited slightly further into Parker's Piece.



C

- Build groups of new forest scale planting on to the remaining trees that have a long-term future.
- Some views terminate at the tree planting on Parker's Piece and other views extend to the surrounding buildings, distant trees and skyline, enabling the built form to relate to the open space in summer as well as winter.
- In the future trees can be lost and replacements incorporated without major disruption to the overall layout, producing an uneven aged tree stock.

- ◐ Notional new tree planting
- Notional existing planting

- 4.4.4 An alternative (strategy B) would be to fell alternate trees along Parkside now and plant a second row in the gaps between the existing ones, three to four metres inside the existing row. This would line up with the new planting on Donkey Common but would mean the loss of some healthy trees to avoid the new trees being overshadowed.
- 4.4.5 Some might argue that this is a formal space and only a formal solution will do, however it should also be recognised that there simply is no suitable tree species that could achieve the necessary scale at maturity to adequately visually contain an area of grass the size of Parker's Piece. A double row of planting might have the necessary substance but in summer they would obscure the perimeter buildings and exclude them from their relationships with the central space.
- 4.4.6 If achieving a sense of depth to the enclosing elements is considered a more satisfactory solution, there need to be some distant views of the Emmanuel and Downing College trees and some views of the surrounding buildings from within Parker's Piece. Removal of the trees without a long-term future would leave those around which new groupings could be formed (strategy C). The mix of ages and therefore sizes, initially at least, would allow views through to the surrounding buildings between the groups of trees and over some of the younger ones. This would help to integrate the range of buildings with each other and with the open space. There would be the added advantage of accommodating the inevitable piecemeal decline of the Parkside limes. It would also simplify the management of future losses and replanting in the long-term future and produce a mixed aged tree population.
- 4.4.7 The interplay between the shade cast by the tall trees and the sunlit grass of Petersfield is made possible by the relatively narrow crowns of the lime trees. Planting of trees with broader crowns in this restricted area could increase the shade levels and alter the formal character of the space. The relationship with Christ's Pieces and New Square derived from their similar use of lime trees would also be lost.
- 4.4.8 The restrictions on parking in Regent Street has led the businesses which back on to Regent Terrace to focus their car parking arrangements on this side of their buildings. This has turned parts of Regent Terrace into car and garage space rather than exploiting its position overlooking Parker's Piece. Cars travel too fast in the restricted space and particularly in the early morning there is conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and large vehicles such as dustcarts. Consideration should be given to creating a parallel footpath for pedestrians only, some 15m within Parker's Piece. This could run between trees planted on its inner side to provide successors to many of the trees along Regent Terrace.



- 4.4.9 The blocking of the desire line between the University Arms Hotel corner and the Queen Anne Car Park by railings recently erected along the Gonville Place side, denies people the opportunity to cross Parker's Piece unless they can stoop under or climb over them. This has certainly reduced the wear on the grass at the ends of this short cut, but the enjoyment of Parker's Piece has undoubtedly been affected for some.
- 4.4.10 These open spaces connect with their wider surroundings at the ends of streets and at gaps between buildings. It is important that unnecessary street furniture and visual clutter do not detract from these framed views.

4.5 Resources

- 4.5.1 Adequate resources are needed to prepare a management plan for these commons. This will detail how the policies of the Conservation Plan can be implemented through the regular maintenance of the open spaces and individual projects.
- 4.5.2 When it is neither possible nor desirable for the finance derived from Section 106 Agreements to be spent on providing open space on the particular development site concerned, that funding may be used on other open space which benefits residents throughout the city. It is possible to combine smaller sums to finance large projects and Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common would be eligible for such funding.
- 4.5.3 Successful sourcing of additional funding through applications to the National Lottery Distribution bodies, sponsorship, grants, landfill tax rebates and voluntary partnership trust contributions could increase the investment available to regenerate these and other city open spaces.



5. CONSERVATION POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

This section provides guidance for the conservation of those features and qualities which are considered significant. These are summarised in Appendix 6

5.1 **Conserve and enhance the relationship between Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common and their urban surroundings.**

- 5.1.1 Prepare planning briefs for any new developments in the area to ensure that all the issues concerning the sites' interrelationships with Parker's Piece and its surroundings are taken account of. Require new development to be of high quality and worthy of this historic location. Consider what impact tall developments, even at a considerable distance, will have on the skyline around these open spaces.
- 5.1.2 Retain the open character of the central area of Parker's Piece. Avoid introducing tree planting there, additional lighting, other structures or artefacts. Aim for a simple relationship between trees and closely mown grass, avoiding any ornamental planting. At pedestrian eye level maintain the transparent edges around Parker's Piece and Donkey Common so that the spaces can be enjoyed from the surrounding roads and buildings, in particular the new swimming pool. Aim to achieve a balance between the views into Petersfield permitted by low planting between the trees surrounding it, and a sense of seclusion and protection provided by the taller shrubbery. Achieve a high quality environment around the entrances to these open spaces and at viewpoints from adjacent areas.
- 5.1.3 Recognise and enhance the close relationship between these three spaces derived from their past history, their location and their present tree planting. In addition be aware of the links with Christ's Pieces and New Square through the same species choice and style of tree planting.
- 5.1.4 Devise a tree planting strategy which integrates the range of building scales and types with each other, achieving the most favourable relationship between the scale of Parker's Piece and the elements which enclose it.

5.2 **Secure the future of the open spaces**

- 5.2.1 When the anticipated legislative changes are made take steps to register Parker's Piece as a Town Green to establish its common land status.
- 5.2.2 In order to keep the spaces relevant to public needs today, maintain a balance between the existing range of uses and be ready to consider new suggestions and demands without compromising the qualities and facilities valued currently.
- 5.2.3 Ensure access and enjoyment of the spaces is possible for disabled people.

- 5.2.4 Encourage any interest in the formation of a Friends Group to enable the open spaces to respond to the needs of the local community while recognising that they may not necessarily represent the views of all the parks' users.

5.3 Maintain Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common as high quality spaces.

- 5.3.1 Produce a management plan to set out how the significance identified in chapter 3 should be conserved. Include ways of avoiding deterioration of the fabric and make recommendations for any refurbishments and new works, devising programmes for their maintenance. As part of the management plan draw up an arboricultural strategy to ensure appropriate new tree planting takes place and to give guidance on the management of the existing and future tree stock. Ensure that good growing conditions are achieved so that the trees can produce fine long-lived specimens.
- 5.3.2 Coordinate the objectives and actions of the various authorities which have responsibilities for maintaining different parts of the fabric of these open spaces.
- 5.3.3 Ensure the litter collection services respond to periods of high visitor usage.
- 5.3.4 Ensure dog fouling is actively discouraged using the dog warden service.
- 5.3.5 Ensure the open spaces and their toilet facilities feel safe places to visit by their design and high standard of maintenance. Provide a ranger service to increase the sense of security of visitors by discouraging undesirable activities, and through education reduce the antisocial behaviour of some users.
- 5.3.6 Manage the large volume of pedestrian and cycle traffic that crosses Parker's Piece each day so that users of the Piece can move around safely.
- 5.3.7 Provide adequate investment for the use of modern machinery, seed cultivars, and grounds maintenance techniques to enable Parker's Piece to sustain the high levels of wear that result from the many activities it supports.
- 5.3.8 As a reflection of the importance of these historic spaces, provide adequate resources for appropriate, high quality materials and designs for artefacts such as seats, paths and lights, and their future maintenance.
- 5.3.9 Retain and develop qualified and skilled staff in landscape management, recreation provision, arboriculture, horticulture, community development and landscape architecture, so that maintenance, enhancement and change are implemented in an appropriate way.
- 5.3.10 Utilise finance available from Section 106 Agreements and secure additional funding through applications to the National Lottery distribution bodies, sponsorship, grants, landfill tax rebates and voluntary partnership contributions.
- 5.3.11 Review the way pedestrians and cyclist circulation takes place on Parker's Piece to see what improvements could be made.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 6.1 The Conservation Plan will be a material consideration in determining planning applications that have an impact on these open spaces.
- 6.2 In determining a planning application consideration will be given to the impact of the development on the open space. If a development is likely to have a negative impact than it may be appropriate to see if mitigation measures are possible or if necessary to secure these through planning conditions or as planning obligations. (Section 106 Agreements.)
- 6.3 The conservation plan should be reviewed every five to seven years to assess whether the management objectives have changed. New conflicts may develop between significant features of the site; changes in conservation philosophy may take place; or further information may become available making this reappraisal necessary. The review should reassess the significance of the sites to establish whether it is still valid. In addition it should examine the issues that have affected the significance of the sites over that period, are affecting it currently and will affect it in the future. Taking this into account the review should then confirm whether the conservation guidance is still appropriate.
- 6.4 A project team representing the main internal stakeholders responsible for the management of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common should carry out this review. They are currently the Parks and Recreation Section of the Community Services Department and the Policy and Projects Section of the Environment and Planning Department.

7. SUMMARY

7.1 Purpose of the Conservation Plan

- 7.1.1 After a general description of Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common which aims to give a broad understanding of the past history and present context, the conservation plan attempts to set down all the significant features and qualities that it is considered desirable to pass on to future generations. There follows an examination of the issues that have threatened this significance in the past, do so at the present and may do in the future. Finally conservation guidance is provided so that as change inevitably takes place, this past value is accommodated in any new proposals. Applications for Heritage Lottery funding are recommended to follow this process.

7.2 The heritage merit of the sites

- 7.2.1 Parker's Piece was acquired by the town in 1613 when a land transfer took place exchanging an area of arable land belonging to Trinity College for an area of common pasture in Long Green adjacent to the College. Since a cook named Parker had leased the former Trinity land it came to be known by his name. The land then became pasture for the use of the town and the Council minutes show that over the years it provided a public space for meetings, fairs, events and celebrations as well as for informal and latterly formal games. The famous cricketer Jack Hobbs played there frequently and it was the focus for the game until Fenners was laid out. Parker's Piece also has strong connections with the game of football since it was there that the original Football Association Rules were first played having been drawn up by a group of undergraduates led by Henry Maldon in 1848.
- 7.2.2 When the Barnwell Field was enclosed in the early 19th century the strip of common land immediately west of what is now Gonville Place was amalgamated with the rest of Parker's Piece. Two other areas of common land opposite provided the land for the new Town Gaol where the Queen Anne Car Park and Kelsey Kerridge Sports Centre now stand, and later the Zion Chapel and its adjacent terrace of houses. Petersfield and Donkey Common are what remains of these two parcels of land today, Donkey Common having later become the site of the City's main swimming pools.
- 7.2.3 Parker's Piece has played an important part in the social history of the city over the years and continues to provide this large, versatile open area, which is heavily used throughout the year in a formal and informal way. As a small park Petersfield provides some of the shelter and amenity that Parker's Piece lacks, with its children's play area and ornamental planting. The three areas are linked by their formal layout of lime tree planting echoing the formality of Christ's Pieces and New Square close by. Parker's Piece is surrounded by contrasting styles of architecture of varying quality and scale, distant trees in addition to ones around the immediate perimeter. The combination of these elements produces an enclosure whose quality is a fundamental part of the character of Parker's Piece. The large scale and emptiness of the space means the skyline is a very important component.



7.3 How that merit is sensitive or vulnerable (section 5)

- 7.3.1 The conflicting uses on Parker's Piece poses maintenance challenges in protecting and repairing the grass between activities and events and they need the resources to ensure maximum use of the space can be made. Some of the conflicts could be easily avoided if users were more considerate in always clearing up after their pets and avoiding leaving litter which could injure others when it becomes embedded in the turf.
- 7.3.2 The existing perimeter tree planting is not forming a uniform cohesive enclosure because of the age and species variation; soil compaction; and problems associated with some of the trees which will prevent them becoming long term trees.
- 7.3.3 A replacement building for the existing Fire Station site which fails to understand its context and the interrelationships within it, would miss the opportunity to positively influence the character of the three open spaces and their environment. In addition it is necessary for new tree planting to be in scale with the open spaces, integrating the range of building sizes, and reinforcing the existing connections between Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common, as well as between Christ's Pieces and New Square. The quality of the enclosure provided to Parker's Piece by the distant trees, the buildings and the immediate perimeter trees is vulnerable to the loss of trees, unsympathetic new buildings around it and to poor quality tall buildings being inserted into the surrounding skyline.

7.4 Conservation guidance (section 6)

7.4.1 Conserve and enhance the relationship between Parker's Piece, Petersfield, and Donkey Common and their urban surroundings.

Produce planning briefs for developers to ensure that all new development is high quality and worthy of this important location, in order to conserve and enhance the special relationship that exists between Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common, and between them and their urban surroundings. In addition plant forest scale trees to integrate the surrounding buildings with each other and the three spaces, rationalising the different scales and uses. Maintain the trees in such a way that views from one space to another are possible at eye level while still achieving a balance between the secluded nature of Petersfield and its contribution to the street.

Retain the open character of Parker's Piece avoiding additional artefacts, structures or tree planting in the central area. Avoid any ornamental planting to disturb the relationship between the short grass and tree planting on Parker's Piece.

7.4.2 Secure the future of the parks

Take steps to register Parker's Piece as a Town Green when the anticipated legislative changes are made in order to confirm its common land status. Maintain a balance between the existing range of uses and be ready to respond to new emerging suggestions and demands to keep the spaces relevant to public needs today. Encourage any interest in the formation of a Friends Group as a link between local users and the Council, recognising that they will not necessarily represent all interest groups. Ensure access and enjoyment of the open spaces is possible for disabled people.

7.4.3 Maintain Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common as high quality spaces.

Draw up a management plan that sets out how the significance identified in chapter 3 will be conserved and the deterioration of the fabric of the parks avoided. Include an arboricultural strategy to give guidance on the management of the existing tree stock and ensure appropriate tree planting takes place in the future. Coordinate the objectives and actions of the various authorities that have responsibilities for maintaining different aspects of the open spaces. Provide adequate investment for the use of modern machinery, seed cultivars and grounds maintenance techniques to enable Parker's Piece to sustain the high levels of wear that results from the many activities it supports. Ensure that the litter collection service responds to periods of high visitor usage and that dog fouling is actively discouraged using the dog warden service. Maintain the toilets in good condition so that they feel safe places to visit.

Increase the sense of security of visitors by discouraging drug and alcohol abuse, and antisocial behaviour of some of the users possibly through use of a ranger service or CCTV. Enhance this by good design and high maintenance standards. Manage the large volumes of pedestrians and cyclists that cross Parker's Piece daily so that other users of the Piece can move around safely. Retain and develop skilled staff so that maintenance, enhancement and change are implemented in an appropriate way. Supplement the normal maintenance funding by securing additional finance through applications to the National Lottery distribution bodies, sponsorship, grants, landfill tax rebates and voluntary partnership contributions for capital projects.

7.5 Implementation and Review

7.5.1 Following adoption by the Community Development and Leisure Committee the plan will provide guidance for managers of the open spaces. Endorsement by the Environment Committee will enable the plan to be considered as material consideration on planning matters concerning the development of sites around these open spaces.

7.5.2 A project team representing the main internal stakeholders should review the conservation plan every five to seven years to ensure that the conservation guidance is still relevant in view of any changes which may have taken place or any new information which has become available.

APPENDICES

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PARKER'S PIECE.

To the Editor of the Cambridge Chronicle.
SIR:- I find that at a meeting of the Town Council held on the 9th inst. it was resolved to attempt the improvement of this famous spot in the following manner.
First. By returning, where necessary, about 6 acres that is one fourth of the whole-at a cost of £168.
Second. The making of two lime stone paths 6 feet in width from corner to corner and crossing each other in the centre at right angles, the additional cost being estimated at about £160.

The first of these propositions will certainly meet with the approval of every inhabitant; but, if I mistake not, the second will be as generally condemned.

Some time ago a public meeting was convened by the then Mayor, the late Mr. Ald. Barlow, to consider the question, at which after full and free discussion two resolutions were passed: the first affirming generally the need of improvement, the second deprecating altogether the construction of paths.

After so decided an expression of public feeling it is difficult to understand why the innovation should be again attempted.

It is not clear what is intended by "Limestone Paths." I presume a paving of irregular fragments of stone, to which, in such a situation, a host of objections readily suggest themselves-amongst them the following:

- a) They would destroy the unity of the plot, by cutting it up into sections, as in the case of Christ College Pieces.
- b) They would be generally avoided by pedestrians who, weary of the hard paved streets, would turn with enjoyment to the greenward.
- c) They would certainly tend to increase rather than diminish the tracks complained of.
- d) They would prove a source of danger to those engaged in sport, and scarcely in a lesser degree to the passers by.
- e) If we create public foot-paths within the Borough, they must be lighted.

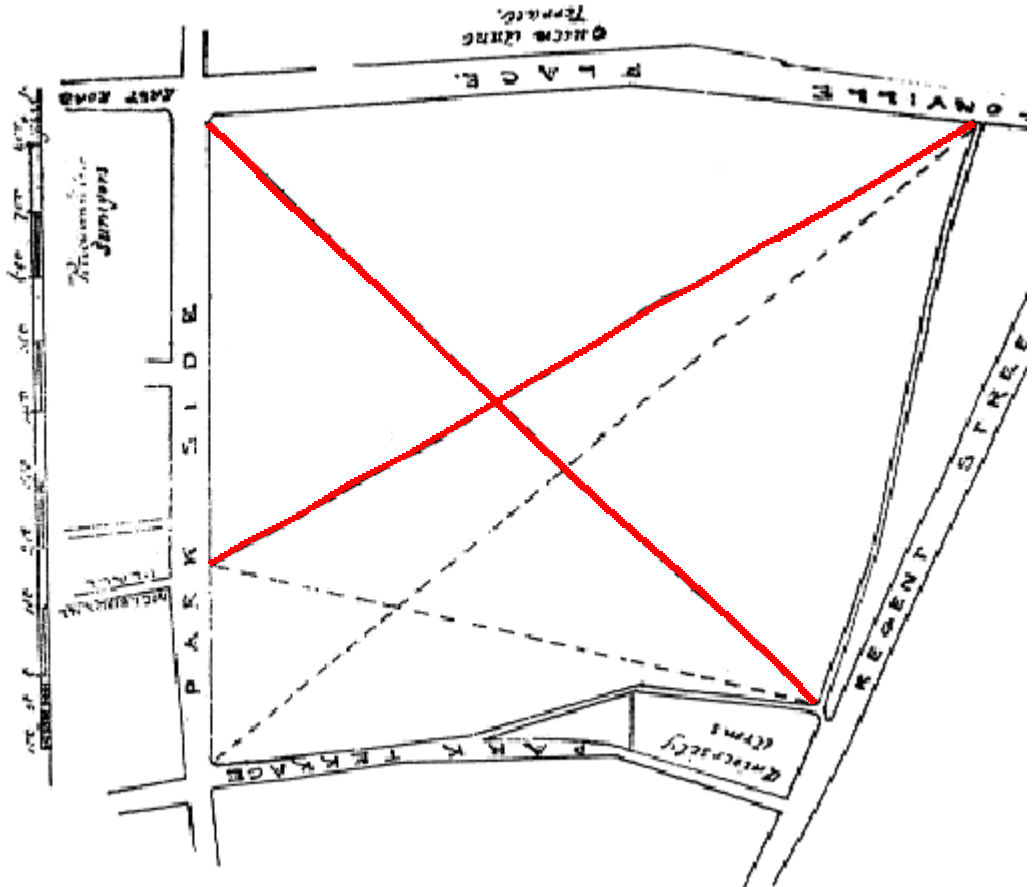
I am sure that both the University and Town will heartily thank the Corporation for carrying out the proposed returning. The present tracks, which are the work of years, will thus be obliterated, and the judicious expenditure of a little money in mending the worn turf & very spring-probably not more than would be required for the maintenance of stone paths, will suffice for a time.

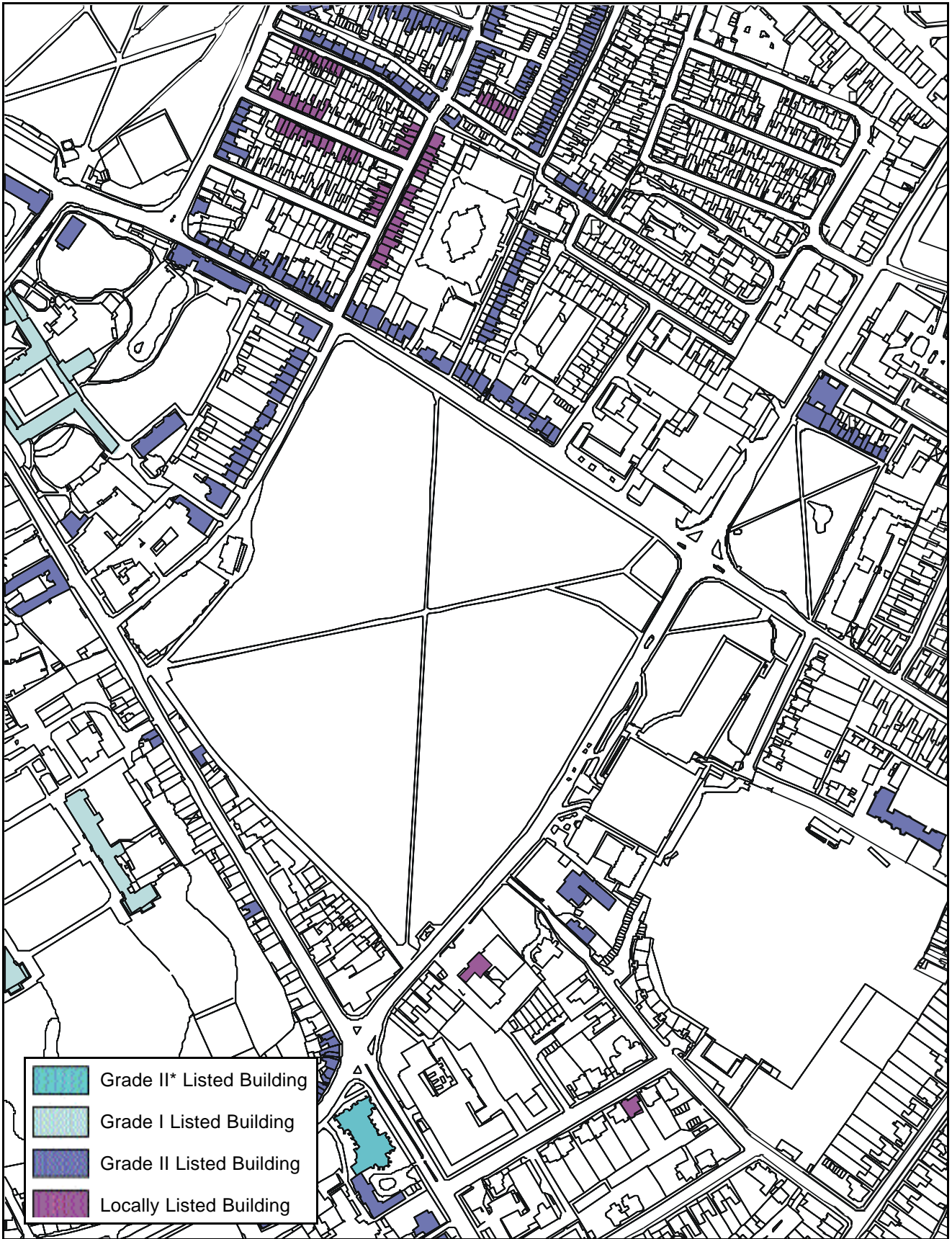
If the present generation does nothing more for this priceless inheritance of the town that prevent its being whittled away by the encroachment of short cuts, I think it probable the next may awake to a better appreciation of its value and make it, what everybody feels it should be, a well-ordered Park for the healthful recreation of the people.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
H. J. WETENHALL
Cambridge Nov. 17, 1880 (retyped for clarity).

PARKER'S PIECE

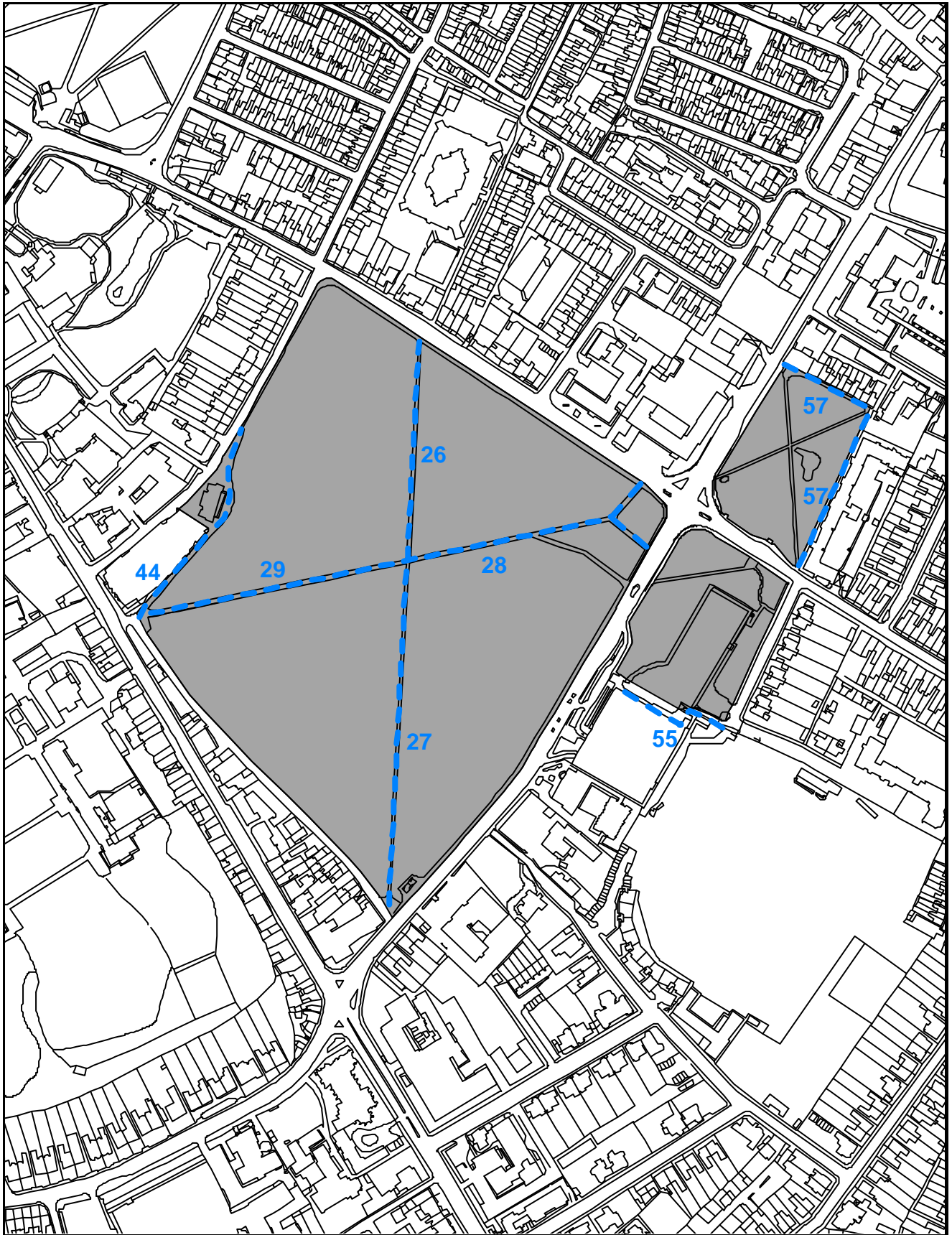
Plan of paths rejected at Town Meeting 24 April 1877.
The RED lines show the plan adopted by the Town Council 17th November 1880 now rejected by the Corporation.





APPENDIX 2 Listed Buildings around Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common

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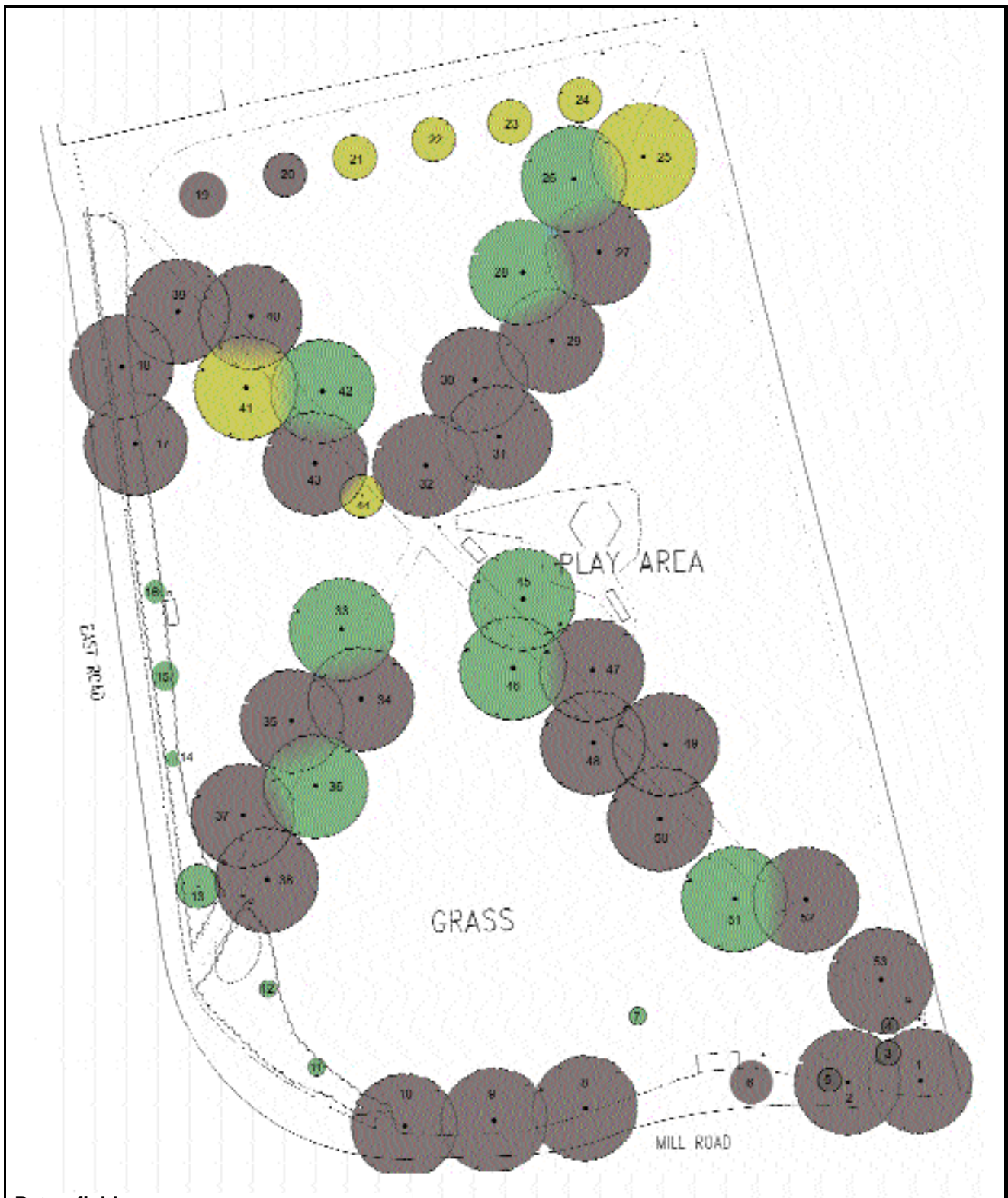


APPENDIX 3 Definitive footpaths on Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common

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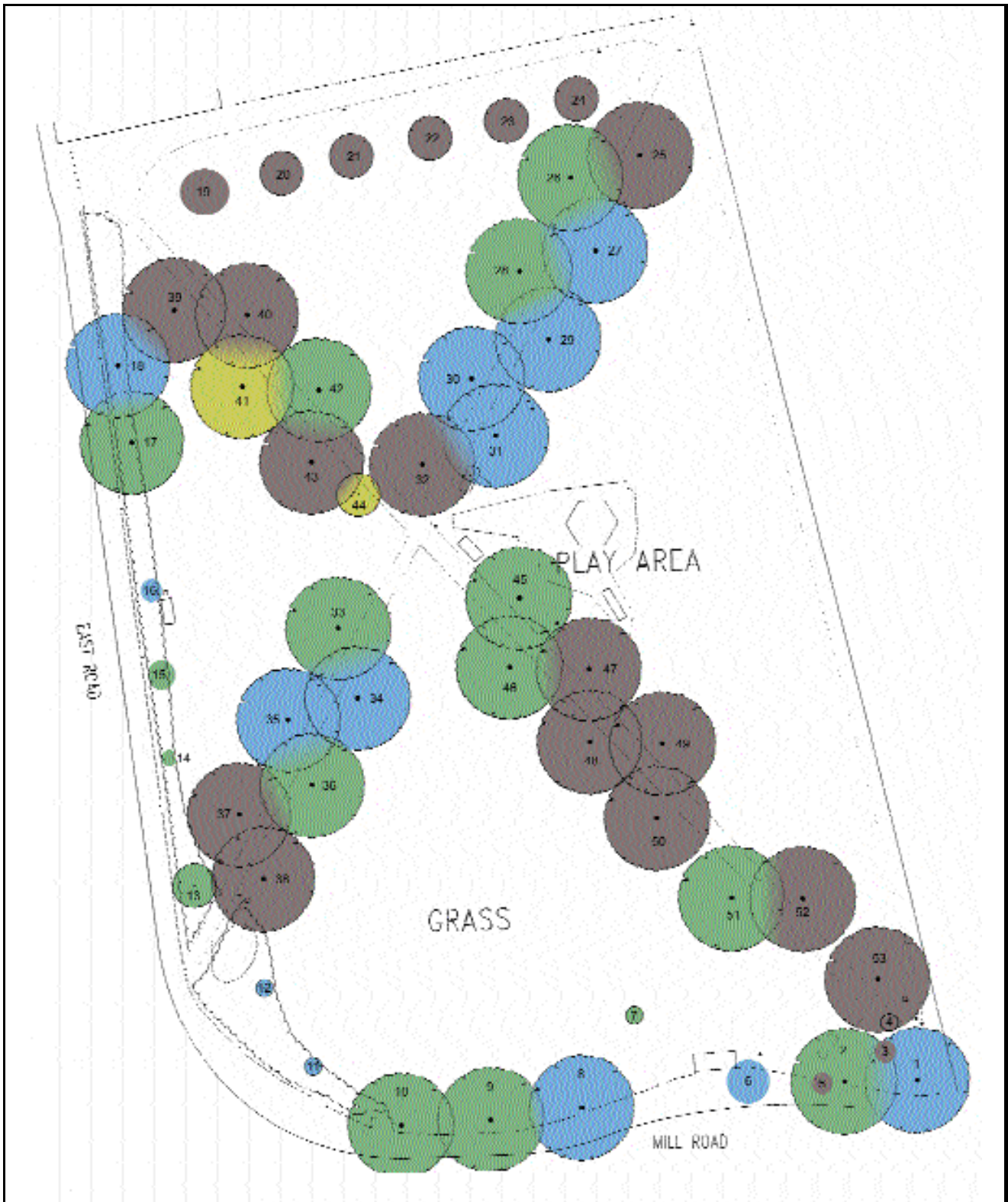


Petersfield

PSULE Tree Assessment October 2000

- Predicted life expectancy of greater than 40 years
- Predicted life expectancy of between 15 to 20 years
- Predicted life expectancy of 5 to 15 years
- Predicted life expectancy of less than 5 years
- Young or small trees





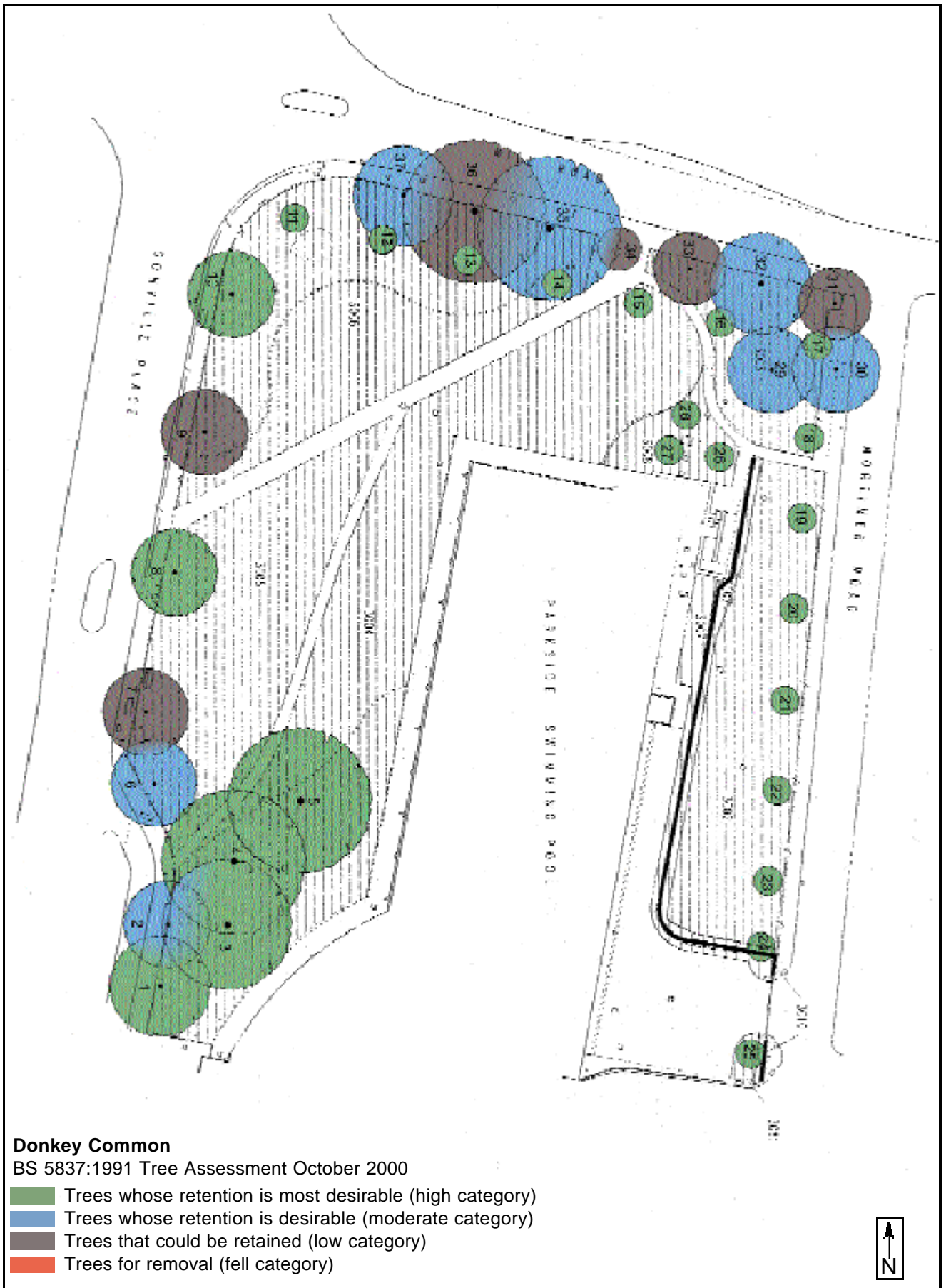
Petersfield

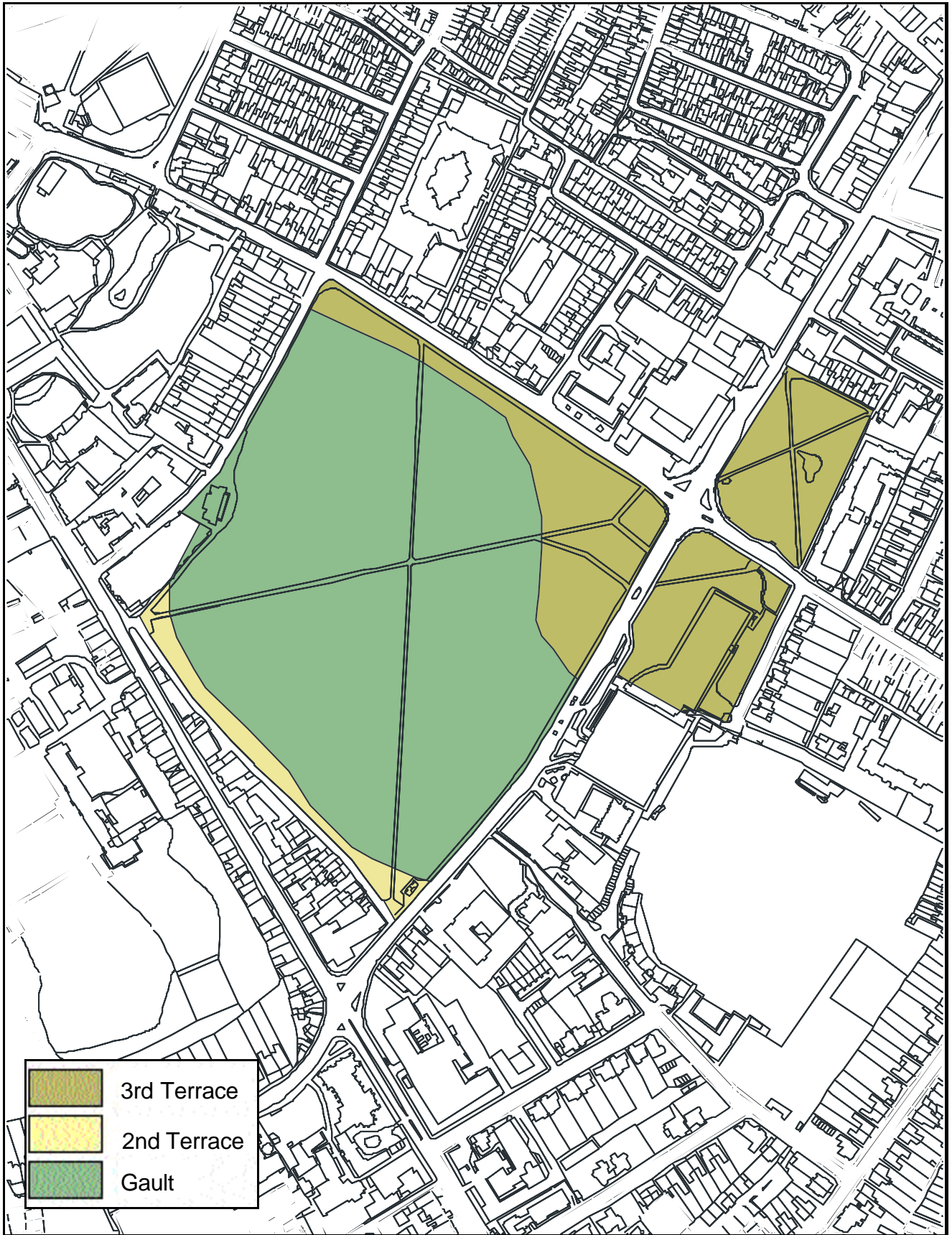
BS 5837:1991 Tree Assessment October 2000

- Trees whose retention is most desirable (high category)
- Trees whose retention is desirable (moderate category)
- Trees that could be retained (low category)
- Trees for removal (fell category)









APPENDIX 5 Soils

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Significance	Vulnerability	Conservation Guidance
3.2 Archaeological Importance		
As a 400yr old public open space buried artefacts may be exposed during excavations for maintenance of underground services etc.	A lack of awareness of the long history may mean that the opportunity to add to the archaeological knowledge would be lost.	There should be an understanding of the general archaeological potential and when major excavations are planned the County Archaeologist should be informed.
3.3 Design significance		
The layout of Parker's Piece has resulted from a formalisation of tracks and uses established over time rather than from a single design. The results of this gradual evolution are fundamental to the character and flexibility of the space. The original Victorian layout of Petersfield largely survives with the addition of the play area and modifications to the planting beds. Donkey Common has been much modified since the 1960s by the building of the two swimming pools.	It would be very easy to lose this essential character of Parker's Piece by the addition of artefacts, structures or tree planting in the central area.	The connections between the form and function of the space and the importance of the memories of generations should challenge any proposed change to this essential character.
3.4 Contribution to townscape character		
<p>Parker's Piece provides the setting for the listed buildings along Park Terrace, Parkside and Gonville Place. The distant and peripheral tree planting integrates the diverse building sizes and styles producing a three dimensional enclosure of some depth, which goes some way to balance the scale of the open space.</p> <p>The public perception and memory of Parker's Piece is of a vast open area of closely mown grass surrounded by forest scale trees. The simplicity of this unobstructed space offers versatility to organised and informal sport as well as large scale public events and celebrations.</p>	<p>The quality of future tree planting design will affect this interrelationship in a positive or negative way.</p> <p>Tree planting of an inappropriate scale or location, or the additions of permanent structures or artefacts in the central area could destroy this essential character.</p> <p>The large size and openness of Parker's Piece and the relatively level nature of the land around it</p>	<p>Give priority to drawing up an arboricultural strategy to ensure appropriate new planting takes place and to give guidance on the management of existing and future tree stock.</p> <p>Strongly resist the placing of permanent structures or artefacts in the central open area of Parker's Piece.</p>

APPENDIX 6 Summary of the significance, vulnerability and conservation guidance for Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common

Significance	Vulnerability	Conservation Guidance
<p>Petersfield and Donkey Common are also formal spaces in their own ways. Their relationship to Parker's Piece, Christ's Pieces and New Square through the use of closely spaced lime trees should be recognised.</p> <p>The garden quality of Petersfield provides a more enclosed environment to sit in than on Parker's Piece or Donkey Common.</p> <p>The play area on Petersfield is a valuable asset in this part of town. Being close to main routes it is possible to make a stop there as part of a longer trip to and from the city centre or Grafton Centre.</p>	<p>means that tall buildings will be much more visible than in a more congested townscape. The quality of the skyline around Parker's Piece is therefore vulnerable for a considerable distance. Focal points such as a church spire could be obscured or lose its special position in the enclosing view if tall buildings are constructed in response to the increasing pressure to build to a high density.</p> <p>A change in choice of tree species diluting the link with nearby spaces could weaken the relationship between them and lose the characteristics they have in common.</p> <p>A change from shrub planting on Petersfield will lead to the loss of the sheltered quality it provides and the presence of East Road and the junction will become much more dominant.</p> <p>Alcohol and drugs abuse are sometimes a problem on Petersfield and some people may feel vulnerable and avoid using the play area or the park.</p>	<p>Recognise that closely planted lime trees produce a distinctive character and respect the tradition of planting them.</p> <p>Continue to refurbish the planting beds on Petersfield to provide shelter from the surrounding roads and visual interest to those on Petersfield as well as passers-by. Balance the benefits of being able to see into the space with areas of taller shrubs providing shelter from the road traffic.</p> <p>A ranger service and perhaps given its proximity to the Police headquarters, a modest Police presence would make park users feel more secure.</p>
<p>3.5 History of the open space</p>		
<p>Meetings, celebrations, formal and informal recreation and a wide range of events have been held on Parker's Piece throughout its history.</p>	<p>Inadequate resources for the appropriate maintenance could mean that the use has to be limited.</p>	<p>Be aware of the history of Parker's Piece as a town green and allow these uses to continue there. Make adequate resources available to carry out appropriate capital works, repairs and to maintain the grass in a robust condition.</p>
<p>3.6 Community, commemorative or social value</p>		
<p>Parker's Piece has close connections with the history of football and cricket.</p>	<p>Knowledge of this connection could be lost if it is not shared or marked in some way, diminishing the social history associated with Parker's Piece.</p>	<p>Allow these connections to be commemorated and celebrated in an appropriate way without compromising the essential character of Parker's Piece.</p>

Significance	Vulnerability	Conservation Guidance
3.7 Ecological value		
<p>Since Parker's Piece is a formal space its ecological value is essentially incidental. However it does have a value to feeding birds in soft ground conditions and some of the trees have the potential to reach an old age with benefit to the wildlife associated with old trees. Petersfield and Donkey Common provide a wider range of vegetation structure.</p>	<p>Achieving a high ecological value is not a primary objective for these spaces.</p>	<p>Provide a good growing environment and a sound maintenance programme so that the trees can reach an old age.</p>
3.8 Education or public potential, public or recreational value		
<p>Parker's Piece provides the playing fields for Parkside Community College and St Alban's Primary School. Some cricket and football clubs also use the pitches and training squares.</p> <p>The freedom to cycle across Parker's Piece allows the busy junction at the Catholic Church to be avoided making a safer route and reducing road congestion.</p> <p>The Public Toilets are a valuable facility for users of the Piece and passers-by.</p>	<p>There is a shortage of publicly owned sports pitches in the city as a whole. Other events on Parker's Piece may damage the pitches or restrict when they are available for play.</p> <p>It is important that the history of these open spaces is understood so that Parker's Piece is seen as a robust functional space for the needs of the citizens rather than purely an ornamental amenity space that can be looked at but not used.</p> <p>A change in policy concerning cycling through public open spaces would remove these benefits.</p> <p>Lack of resources may mean such facilities are under threat.</p>	<p>It is necessary to balance carefully the needs of regular users with the disruptive effects of one off events. The diversity of uses should be encouraged, continuing with tradition, and managers should avoid allowing a single interest group to dominate.</p> <p>Continue to allow cyclists to use green spaces such as Parker's Piece while designing the layout and signing of the cycle paths to reduce conflict with other park users as much as possible.</p> <p>Continue to seek resourcing in an imaginative way to enable these public conveniences to live up to their name.</p>

APPENDIX 7

Parker's Piece, Petersfield and Donkey Common Gazetteer

1. RAILINGS

Description

There are 3 different types of cast iron railings, one mild steel and one timber post and rail. Recycled plastic posts using a cast iron original have been trialed on Parker's Piece recently.

Significance

The 'Cambridge' railings are of a design that is common to the other historic city open spaces, providing a subconscious link between them. Being of high quality contributes to the character of the space particularly where the area enclosed is simple grass.

Guidance

The consistent use of the 'Cambridge' railing, where it is necessary, is to be encouraged. The unenclosed sides of Parker's Piece should remain in that condition if at all possible so that people have free access to the space.





2. PATHS and CYCLEWAYS



Description

The paths are simple asphalt paths on Parker's Piece and Petersfield. The path on Donkey Common is laid in stone flags. The main path across Parker's Piece from Mill Road to Regent Street is divided by a white line to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to keep to the left as a way of easing conflict. There is no specific cycleway designated. Some of the paths on Petersfield are in poor condition after repeated patching.

Significance

Some of the paths have been established over a long period, well before they were formalised by hard surfacing.

Guidance

The condition of the paths and the materials used are important in influencing the character and quality of the spaces. It is important that the paths are well maintained and the materials are simple and low key. Functional elements such as the central path division could be done in a higher quality way than white lining on black top. The flexible nature of asphalt makes it a suitable material for Petersfield given the close proximity of the lime trees, however a more sympathetic top dressing could be applied to all these paths. Consideration should be given to laying a new path within Parker's Piece parallel to Regent's Terrace to reduce the conflict between pedestrians and cycles using the road and to give pedestrians the experience of walking over the Piece.

3. THE CENTRAL LAMP



Description

The central lamp at the intersection of the main paths on Parker's Piece has become known since the 1960s as 'Reality Checkpoint'. It was refurbished in 1999.

Significance

The cast iron lamp is a Grade II listed structure (667-/6/10064) dated c1893. The lamp is an important and decorative focal point in the centre of this simple space.

Guidance

The lamp should continue to be maintained as part of the history of Parker's Piece.

4. GAS LAMP

**Description**

The old gas lamp at the centre of Petersfield has been damaged in a fire.

Significance

The lamp is a Grade II listed structure (667-/8/10065). It conveys a sense of history on the small park but its dilapidated condition confers a depressing atmosphere on its surrounding.

Guidance

Repair the lamp.

5. SEATS and BINS



Description

There are 27 Wicksteed 'Huntington' seats on Parker's Piece, 7 on Petersfield and none on Donkey Common. In addition there are 38 bins of a slatted timber design on Parker's Piece, 4 on Petersfield and none on Donkey Common.

Significance

They have no significance other than that their appearance is appropriately low key and a satisfyingly simple design that is easy to repair. However the litter bin is possibly rather rural for this formal location.

Guidance

An appraisal should be made of the locations of the bins and the routes followed when they are emptied to avoid vehicles running over the rooting zone of the perimeter trees.

6. ORNAMENTAL PLANTING

PARKER'S PIECE

Description

There is some crocus and daffodil bulb planting in the eastern corner of Parker's Piece and around the alder trees close to the public toilets.

Significance

There is no significance.

Guidance

The relevance of the bulb planting at the eastern corner of Parker's Piece should be reconsidered.

PETERSFIELD

Description

The ornamental planting is a mix of spring bulbs, herbaceous material, small and large shrubs.

Significance

The planting provides a sheltered semi enclosed space protecting the adjacent housing and play area from the busy roads. There is an important balance that needs to be maintained between the tall sheltering shrubs and the low planting that allow views into Petersfield.

Guidance

Continue to renew as necessary the shrubbery and herbaceous planting as necessary to maintain this as a high quality space. Police the small park so that it does not become the place for drunks and drug addicts and the shrub beds are less likely to be used as toilets.

DONKEY COMMON

Description

The shrub planting is limited and relates mainly to the sculpture of a group of swimmers.

Significance

No significance

Guidance

The grass sward could be enlivened with subtle bulb planting but there should be no shrub planting which would obscure views from the pool over Parker's Piece.

7. TOILETS



Description

The toilet block is sited in the southernmost corner.

Significance

The toilets are a valuable facility for people on Parker's Piece as well as those passing through. The lay-by allows vehicles to stop close by.

Guidance

The toilets should be put into good condition and steps taken to ensure that they feel safe places to use.

8. STATUE OF BATHERS' GROUP



Description

The original bronzed fibreglass sculpture was created by Barbara Rae following a public subscription. It sat originally on the Gonville Place side of Donkey Common outside the first swimming pool. It was recast in bronze as part of the 1999 Lottery funding for the latest pool and moved over to the Mortimer Road side.

Significance

Over the years it has become a familiar part of the grounds of the pool although it is now in a less conspicuous position.

Guidance

Ensure that the statue and its surroundings are properly maintained.

9. TREES



Description

Mature forest scaled trees draw the eye on this large expanse of open space. The planting since 1981 of London and Oriental plane and various lime species is not going to provide sufficient continuity. The trees on Petersfield and Donkey Common define these spaces as well as making an important contribution to Parker's Piece.

Significance

The trees on Parker's Piece, on Donkey Common and Petersfield, those in the surrounding streets and distant college gardens are important components in the enclosure of the open space. They help to integrate the varying styles, scales and ages of buildings around the Piece. The formal style of planting on Petersfield and the choice of species echo the planting on Christ's Pieces and New Square.

Guidance

An arboricultural strategy that reflects all the sites is urgently required.

10. HOBBS' PAVILION



Description

The present Hobbs' Pavilion replaced an earlier shed in 1930 to honour the famous cricketer Jack Hobbs who demonstrated his skills to such success on Parker's Piece. It is Council owned and at present part is leased as a restaurant. The remainder provides two changing rooms for the home and away teams and space for the irrigation tank for the cricket wickets. The former toilet block has been incorporated into the main body of the building.

Significance

The changing rooms make the sports pitches usable by teams, which unlike the local schools do not have their own facilities. The building commemorates Jack Hobbs' cricketing association with Parker's Piece.

Guidance

The restaurant is a suitable use for the building. In view of the shortage of sports pitches in the city as a whole, the changing facilities should continue to be provided to make the best possible use of these pitches.