

## **Fernhill Park and Gardens Public Consultation Report**

A public consultation “Fernhill Park and Gardens- Have your say” was carried out in Jan 2017 to inform the preparation of a landscape master plan for Fernhill Park and Gardens. The consultation was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> January and 313 submissions were received.

The consultation was an online consultation where submissions were invited from interested parties to have their say on the design and development of Fernhill prior to the development of the Masterplan. Comments/suggestions were submitted through the Councils online consultation hub, <https://dlrcoco.citizenspace.com/>.

As part of the process, some general information was provided in text format on the website with further supplementary information about Fernhill also provided in a PDF document.

As part of this process, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) facilitated guided tours of Fernhill for members of the public on the 19th and 20th January 2017. Furthermore, DLRCC also undertook presentations followed by questions and answers in Sandyford Community Centre on the 18th and 25th January 2017.

The submissions were made up of many different comments/observations on a range of issues. In order for clarity these observations have been reported on under a range of headings and summarised. Where multiple people made same observation, the number of people is indicated in brackets.

The response of the design team is provided in relation to the headed item under the observations received in relation to that item.

The majority of the submissions were by private individuals whom are not listed in this report. Organisations/Public Reps who made submissions were as follows:

Three Rock Panorama  
The Irish Environmental Network  
Kiltiernan Garden Club and The Dublin Garden Group  
10th Kiltiernan Scouts  
St. Marys National School PA  
Dublin Mountains Initiative  
Neale Richmond (Seanad Eireann)  
Rosemount Secondary School  
Tree Council of Ireland  
Cluain Shee Community Group  
Kinta Oakes Landscape Design  
Aspiory Consultancy  
SEDICO Pharmaceuticals  
Baxter Real Estate  
Start-up Fit Consulting

Frazer McDonagh Designs  
Shankill Old Folks Association Day-Care Centre  
Alpine Garden Society  
Stars of Erin  
RHSI (Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland)  
Ballinteer, St. Johns GAA Club  
Cllr. Kevin Daly  
Kiltiernan Adult Education  
Cllr. Deirdre Donnelly  
Cllr. Lettie McCarthy  
DLR branch of Green Party/Comhaontas Glas  
Mountaineering Ireland  
Rhodedendron, Camelia and Magnolia Group of RHS  
Magnet Design  
Kilmacud Crokes  
D.C.G.  
Retired Primary Teachers Gp.  
School of Agriculture and Food Science UCD  
Cllr. Chris Curran  
Vital Communications  
GIY Dundrum  
Zoological Society of Ireland  
Belarmine Residents Association  
Teagasc  
St. Brigids Community Garden/GIY Stillorgan  
Irish Forest School Association  
College of Further Education, Dundrum  
St. Marys NS  
Learn to Garden/Learn to Grow  
Three Rock Orienteering Club  
Kiltiernan/Glenamuck Residents Association  
Kiltiernan Beekeepers Association  
Kiltiernan Gardening Club  
L.C. Tennis Academy  
Leopardstown Heights Residents/Balally 137th Scouts  
Craobh Liam Bulfin de Chonradh na Gaeilge  
Cllr Lynsey McGovern

## **Play**

There were a total of 77 specific requests for a play area to be included in Fernhill Park and Gardens and the comments submitted in relation to play are as follows:

- large playground similar to Marlay/Cabinteely for young and older children
- consider several small playgrounds scattered around the gardens
- include benches, picnic area and bins within the play area
- adventure trails for children (e.g. Kilruddery House)
- adventure playground (e.g. Kippure Lodge)
- tree huts
- children's facilities (as not much in area)
- play amenities for older children and teenagers (5)
- fairy trails (2)
- Fairy Garden (3)
- use wooden play equipment – more in keeping with the setting (2)
- child friendly signage
- play area and seating for those with limited ability
- treasure Hunt
- free play
- climbing opportunities
- incorporation of water and natural elements and equipment
- music/performance related
- Zipline
- Adventure Area
- secure and enclosed playground to prevent children running off
- sandpit
- swing for wheelchair bound children
- small and unobtrusive area for children
- keep Fernhill quiet & peaceful as an escape from busy lives
- area for kids parties, area for games (egg & spoon races, skittles, sack race etc)
- provide slides on the natural slopes
- don't cut down trees for playground
- “install resources for teenagers”
- tie in with the natural beauty of the estate
- encourage tree climbing
- natural play area beneath the trees rather than typical playground/woodland playground (4)
- consider a barefoot sensory area
- consider registered play officers at times to encourage children in old style play activities, building forts etc.
- not at the expense of losing green space
- natural play areas on the sloping fields
- accommodate playground in flat field off Enniskerry Road

**Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

It is proposed to locate a play area in a wooded area adjacent to the car-parking area known as the “*Orchard Plantation*”. Its setting in an existing clearance in the woods with the stream alongside and with its proximity to main park facilities makes it the ideal location. The play space will include some adventurous and challenging play units while always encouraging free and natural play using existing resources on site. The area is an existing enclosed wooded area comprising of mature trees which will be retained.

Adjacent to it and just south of the eastern car-park area in the “*9 acre field*” there will be an ornamental play space with sculptural mounding, rocks, trees and other features very much designed for free and imaginative play. It will also incorporate a small enclosed toddler play area. It is proposed to provide a long slide and associated steps on the hill leading from the formal active recreation area in the “*Road Field*” to the lower area adjacent to the shared surface plaza space.

A “flying fox” is proposed along the top of the “*Wood Field*”. The latter two areas are geared towards older children and teenagers.

There is an informal active recreation area for those wishing to play informal games in the centre of the “*9 acre field*”.

Further natural play will be encouraged throughout by strategically placing suitable items which will encourage free play and exploration of nature and the environment.

**Café/Tearooms**

There were 56 requests for café/tearooms to be located within Fernhill and the associated comments are outlined below:

- coffee shop adjacent to enclosed playground
- outdoor eating space (5)
- good food
- local produce
- use garden produce
- dog friendly coffee shop(2)
- reasonably priced coffee shop (essential)
- café on the scale of Botanic Gardens/Airfield
- café with a local vibe & enthusiastic person to run it (not a franchise)(2)
- locate near walled gardens
- “Old World” Tearoom
- “Avoca” style restaurant
- nice restaurant
- consider alternatives to the main concessions
- have communal indoor and outdoor eating area where people can also bring their own food
- link with fresh produce in garden

### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

A café/tearooms is proposed for the existing coach-house and the adjacent courtyard to be used for outdoor eating. The bungalow building accessed off this courtyard will be demolished and a new building constructed which will accommodate an outdoor eating terrace at rooftop level affording views out to the sea. This building will also accommodate public toilets, staff facilities and a meeting room.

It is envisaged that this café/tearoom will source an amount of its produce from the adjoining kitchen garden. The management of this amenity will be decided later taking into account the observations made.

### **Fernhill Gardens**

Consisting of the garden area around Fernhill house, the rock garden and the garden on either side of the broadwalk.

The gardens themselves are very important and this seems to be largely recognised in the observations submitted. There were 37 specific requests that the original plants and trees comprising the original garden be retained and preserved. In addition there are many observations and comments in relation to the gardens which are listed below:

- preserve botanical heritage (3)
- Park should remain a unique garden with minimum alteration
- More tree planting (3)
- expand the Magnolia and Rhododendron collections
- structure of gardens should be maintained and not altered to become a generic park
- labelling of trees and plants 6
- secure garden from unwanted visitors both human and deer
- open to the public but limit damage to the beautiful gardens and trees
- reflect the natural style gardening philosophy of William Robinson with minimal intervention throughout entire estate (6)
- develop gardens further 3
- remove *Rhododendron ponticum* if present
- a mini Powerscourt
- Gardens – a tourist destination
- “Trees and Plants protected above all else”
- “Become the Botanic Gardens of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown...” (3)
- Gardens need to be kept separate to rest of park like Marlay Walled Garden
- visitor map indicating trees of note in Fernhill
- wooded nature of site should not be lost
- the gardens do not have the robustness of a public park and should have controlled entry and supervision
- shade and semi-shade planting should be undertaken and consider sub-tropical plants
- design with consideration of the international significance and tourism potential of the garden

- overall plan should give sensitive consideration to care of botanical content
- consider an annual Rhododendron festival
- thorough survey of the plant collection before pruning or removal works take place/protect the shelter belt/don't open up gaps for the wind/Replant Rhododendrons & herbaceous planting in the areas where they currently are/maintain bulb planting as part of a wildflower area
- keep to original layout
- protect heritage
- actively promote the gardens
- retain hedgerows
- plant exchange resource
- support Irish horticultural produce
- very important plant collection
- summer Gardening School/private gardening school
- develop as a botanical gardens
- keep gardens as a place of quietness, contemplation and peace
- manage visitor numbers
- build links with other notable gardens, plants people and plant collectors
- restoration of the water features would be desirable
- Horticultural School or centre in recognition of the horticultural importance of Fernhill
- consider an off shoot of Bloom or a Horticultural celebration event in its own right in the future
- guided walks of garden (2)
- a quiet space for contemplation and meditation/maintain as a quiet garden
- don't turn it into a tourist attraction
- map areas of spring bulbs
- retain the "laurel lawn"
- need to get the balance right (too many visitors will disrupt the peace and quiet of the garden and also affect the plantings especially the meadows and too many children will also cause damage making pathways through the shrubs
- may need to attract a more mature audience, encouraging genteel walks rather than the normal football and exercise areas

#### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

It is proposed to retain and preserve the existing gardens and to commence appropriate replacement planting to add to the value of the plant collection. The gardens will be fenced with several access gates in order to limit the number of visitors to a level that the gardens can sustain at any one time. The vulnerable nature of this garden is very much recognised -it will not tolerate heavy pedestrian traffic and visitors will be required to keep on the existing pathways which will be upgraded. A boardwalk with steps and resting places will be incorporated to facilitate current limited access to the steeper parts of the garden.

It is proposed to place interpretative information at a number of appropriate locations along the Broadwalk which is the most accessible part of the garden and from which a significant portion of the garden was designed to be viewed. Seating and other services will be strategically located throughout the garden. Trees /plants of note will be labelled.

It is important in management terms that the correct balance is attained in facilitating access through the garden to appreciate the plant collections and to retain the tranquilly it affords. The gardens will form a distinct entity in themselves for walking (passive recreation) and active recreational facilities will be provided in the more appropriate areas of Fernhill. Dogs will not be permitted within the gardens as is the case in many other garden attractions.

It is proposed to restore the rock garden area behind the house and facilitate access in a safe manner whilst retaining the existing water features as they were designed to function.

The plant collection is being catalogued together with the flora and fauna and will serve to inform the management plan. Links with appropriate gardens/plants people will be explored to improve the collection. Works have commenced and are on-going to control invasive species.

The Robinsonian style of gardening which this site is renowned for will be continued.

### **Kitchen Gardens**

These are also referred to as the Walled Gardens although their edges are defined by tall hedging and trees which creates a similar character to walled gardens. There were approximately 17 requests for a community garden or similar to be located within the Kitchen Garden area. There is recognition of the wonderful educational resource that is encompassed within Fernhill. The comments submitted are listed below:

- Rent out the kitchen garden and sell produce from it
- Walled gardens maintained and planted with veg
- Offer a lease on the Kitchen garden to a small nursery
- Plant sales/Garden Centre (2)
- Grow veg for local schools, nursing homes, hospitals
- Provide allotments (5)- mini raised bed allotments on the agricultural land/ mini allotments (2)
- Allotments only for locals
- Educational resource for third level students and provide educational sessions for the public and children ( 11)/Garden School
- Create an educational environment in the areas of horticulture, forestry management and veg/fruit cultivation for adults and children
- Forest school area
- Outdoor classroom for College of Further Education Dundrum – could assist with propagation and cultivation
- Outdoor classroom
- Community Gardens for local families (5)
- Kitchen Garden demo area for organic production of fruit and veg
- GIY organisation –interest in Community Garden and permaculture and growing on slopes
- Redevelopment of Kitchen garden should connect with healthy eating locally
- Development of Walled garden should be deferred or possibly converted to a car-park?
- Preserve the market Garden area and incorporate a horticultural society
- Community Garden (9)- suggest that Kitchen Gardens and sheds be adapted for this use and also include for GIY

### -School Garden (3)

#### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

It is proposed to retain the kitchen garden for community garden purposes retaining much of the integral framework planting and also to restore and reuse the glasshouse/cold frame and potting shed and incorporate these features into the Community Garden. The Community Garden will be operated by locals with restricted access to the public, but the working of this will be visible from public areas.

The educational resource of Fernhill is valued and the Council will engage with Colleges, schools and the community in order to enable as many people benefit from this important resource as possible. This aspect also relates to the ornamental gardens at Fernhill. It is envisaged that some garden produce is available to the proposed adjoining café/tearooms in order to create a viable and sustainable connection between the kitchen garden and the actual café kitchen and that this forms part of the café/kitchen garden ethos

#### **Biodiversity**

There is a wide appreciation of nature in Fernhill and the following comments and suggestions have been submitted:

- Conserve wildlife and plant life and leave some areas with limited public access
- Preserve & enhance existing biodiversity (2)
- Long grass to allow for bees to pollinate/bee hives
- Opportunity to spread local birch genotype from FitzSimon's Wood to Fernhill
- Maintain the heritage of a rich biodiversity
- Preserve unique wildlife (3)
- Grounds have great potential to support pollinators, beetles, grasshoppers, shield bug and more which benefit from existing varied habitats
- Maximise area of semi-natural grassland across the site –mow once per year
- Protect wet and damp areas, resist drainage, wet grassland good for hoverflies and declining beetle species
- Woodland edges and hedgerows are also very important
- Leave dead wood in-situ
- Will take pressure off Marlay Park
- Minimise the disturbance of habitats to cater for public enjoyment
- Ballybetagh Bog is in close proximity and should provide educational material around this
- Retain old and rotten native trees and cordon off areas around them to preserve flora and fauna
- Preserve and sympathetically develop the park in keeping with the rich ecological and architectural history of Fernhill
- Concerns that if a tree canopy walkway was being considered should be sited in trees of relatively little botanical or habitat value if they were present in Fernhill and also such an amenity would have a negative impact on birds and bats and other wildlife
- Ecological-Environmental Educational Centre
- Wild space
- Survey of wildlife and protection of wildlife within gardens



- A full ecological survey should be carried out
- “Protect this unique island of rich biodiversity”

#### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

Given the varied habitats that are present in Fernhill, the on-going management of the Park and Gardens will seek to preserve the existing habitats and enhance them where possible. The grazing regime which has facilitated the formation of a species rich grassland adjacent to the Enniskerry Road known as “*The Meadow*” will be continued and the natural wetland in the western corner of the meadow will be maintained.

It is proposed that access through the ecologically sensitive areas will be restricted to paths and a boardwalk which will facilitate viewing and access through but restrict the negative impact of visitors on existing habitats and biodiversity. Deadwood, including standing deadwood will be retained on site as much as possible except for areas where its removal is required to facilitate replacement planting. Ecological surveys have been on-going to provide input into the management of the Park and to establish a baseline of information on the biodiversity of the Park. These have been incorporated into an Ecological & Horticultural Report which provides recommendations that address those comments and suggestions submitted.

Dogs must be kept on a leash outside of the off leash area/Dog Park to protect mammals and ground nesting birds.

#### **Sports and Recreational Facilities**

There were wide and varied views on sporting facilities contained in the submissions as outlined below and placed under relevant headings:

##### Playing Fields

- Playing fields (11)
- Soccer & GAA facilities for local school use( 7)
- Include full size GAA pitch
- GAA & Rugby pitches for local clubs with floodlighting & changing facilities
- GAA pitch for use by Stars of Erin
- Pitches for the 800 girls in Kilmacud Crokes who have few pitches to play on
- Informal play/kick-about areas
- Informal kick-about over formal pitches
- No pitches allocated to clubs – have informal ball sports area
- Limit number of pitches and no floodlighting
- No pitches (8)
- Don’t compromise Fernhill to pitches and their ancillary facilities – extensive car-parking, sports buildings and floodlighting (2)
- Multiple pitches would destroy existing character (2)
- Not appropriate place for sports grounds/pitches (3)
- Pitches would have a negative visual impact on views both to and from the mountains
- Would lead to floodlighting and excessive car-parking

- Too windy for pitches
- Too much level change to get them in
- Topography unsuited to pitches
- Tons of pitches around the place
- concern about extensive ground works required to create pitches in grass land area
- Concern about pitches bringing noise pollution, litter and only serve a minority (2)
- Ample pitches in the area –priority to wildlife due to the unique location at foothills of the Dublin Mountains
- Already a lot of pitches and sporting facilities in the locality and it would be nice to see Fernhill serving other community members with different interests
- Not in favour of large scale recreation facilities and in order to provide balance facilities such as tennis courts should be facilitated
- Pitches unnecessary and not in keeping with the location
- Pitches if necessary could be accommodated in field at Enniskerry Road

#### All-weather

- All weather pitches (Similar to Marlay)- for multi sports(5)
- Astro area for football and basket ball

#### General

- Provision of playing facilities welcomed
- Obstacle and assault courses for children-
- Use for minority sports, not GAA, soccer or rugby
- Free community sports initiatives
- Work in partnership with local schools in relation to getting people more active
- Mini orienteering course aimed at children
- Map Fernhill for leisure orienteering and create a permanent orienteering course
- Basketball hoop
- Bowling green possibly
- Crazy Golf
- Netball basket
- Sports amenities within walking distance to schools
- Lawn tennis and lawn bowling – both in the character of the place
- Toilets to serve sports area

#### Running

- Running track for 5km Parkruns
- Running track (3)
- Running Track for children (3)

#### Tennis

- Tennis courts (7)
- Floodlit tennis courts, changing area & sports hall
- Tennis club –establish for Sandyford/Stepaside

Biking/Cycling

- “Pump tracks for BMX and dirt jumpers”
- Mountain Bike Trail for Children/Bike tracks
- Cycle track
- Bicycle & Scooter paths (2) /bike track through the woods for older children
- Cycle-path to Ticknock as road network too dangerous especially for children
- Facilities for cyclists, lockers, showers and Mt Bike rental
- Good bike track
- Promote biking, hillwalking and mountain biking
- BMX biking should not be included as too intrusive and noisy

**Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

There have been numerous requests for a variety of sporting amenities. Playing pitches in particular have been requested and it is proposed to accommodate a formal active recreational area in the “Road Field”, which will involve cut and fill and the burying of the lower voltage cables that run over the site. This is large enough to accommodate 1 no. soccer/rugby pitch and a junior GAA pitch. These will not have floodlighting or permanent goal posts and will only be available for use during daylight hours. The active recreation area will be sand based and hard wearing and constructed to maximise playing time. It is envisaged that this area will be used intensively by underage sports groups with the use of temporary goals and equipment.

This area will have a 2 lane full length (400m) running track forming its edge to facilitate runners. The active recreational area is confined to the “Road Field” and will be graded sensitively to protect the views from the Barnaculla Rd and the mountains. The surface will be grass and advantage will be taken of the slopes for spectator provision. There will be a sports building to the north of the formal recreation area accommodating 2 changing rooms, storage for goalposts and toilets to serve both sports grounds and the park generally.

The “9 Acre Field” will accommodate an informal play area able to accommodate junior football, school sports, lawn sports and exercise classes without significant alteration of the ground. It is not proposed to accommodate cycling or bicycle sports within Fernhill due to the existing terrain, sensitivity of the site and impact on other park users. However ample bicycle parking will be provided at all entrances.

**Parkland Amenities**

Fernhill Park and Gardens is clearly recognised as an ideal setting for walkers due to its location in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and it is also envisaged that via the Right of Way which goes through the site, walkers can access the Mountains on foot. There were 34 specific requests for walking amenities, mainly paths.

Walking

- Walkways (34) -marked with distance, ability etc
- Accessible walking trails with distance markers
- Accessible perimeter path and include information on habitats along this route
- Paths through woodland and on hillside to be natural and not accessible

- Forest trails/Woodland walkways
- Link to Ticknock forest
- Sign-posted pathway to the top to Three Rock
- Paths should be kept rural looking rather than over engineered
- Walks suitable for the elderly with shelters (2) against rain
- Walkways to be able to accommodate motorised wheelchairs and buggies for the elderly or immobile
- Routes of different lengths with km marked (2)
- Perimeter path with adjacent separate path for runners (2)–8ft wide, lit and paved

### Running

- running paths (9)-Well lit or low level lighting
- Jogging facilities

### General amenities

- Toilets (10) - changing places facility
- baby changing (2)
- Picnic Area (7)-sheltered
- Markets at weekends for selling local produce (6)/monthly markets
- Benches (8) -many/deck chairs on the lawn/log seats /should blend into the landscape and make most of the views
- Bins (4) adequate number and dog foul bins
- Notice Boards and signage (2)
- Outdoor Gym/Exercise equipment (6) – consider using natural materials found on site
- Areas that attract goats and deer
- Duck pond (2) pond or other water features
- Cable car link to the mountains (2)
- Funicular between Dundrum & Fernhill/ Operate pedal buses from Lambs Cross funicular stop to Stepside with a stop at Fernhill
- Beehives (2) consider an apiary near the kitchen gardens
- Lawn Games like boules and oversized chess game
- Install Frank Aitken’s windmill in the gardens and explain history of it
- Auditorium build into slope for small events –outdoor cinema
- Covered amphitheatre
- Fire-pit (2) and natural amphitheatre
- Low key outdoor music events (jazz,chamber music etc)
- Small bandstand
- A Willow Maze for mindful walks
- Place for older peoples activities (2)
- Reconstruction of a granite working shed showing how granite was cut and dressed
- Area for outdoor yoga/pilates/tai chi
- Treetop walkway
- Bird hide (2)
- Skatepark (2)
- Zip-wire(2)

### Commercial

Historical & Retail facility

Shops

### Nature

-Nature Trails (7)

-Nature Centre (small one in St Endas)(2)

-Wildlife areas e.g. Hedgehog sanctuary

### Scouting

-Accommodation for 10th Dublin (Kilternan) Scout Troop –large storage facilities, large hall, kitchen, outdoor camping area, meeting room, bunk room/sleeping facilities, showers, toilets and other ancillary amenities (28)

-General scouting amenities (3)

-Communal BBQ space

-Camping

### Animals

-Farm animals on the grounds (5)

-Herd of native ponies

-Build on the tradition of Agriculture in Fernhill

-Include farm animals similar to Newbridge House

-Petting zoo (2)

-Keep a small herd of native Dexter Cattle in front field – private group would supply and manage same

### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

It is proposed to retain the original paths and construct paths where they once were. Also a range of new paths will be constructed to maximise the walking and running routes outside the garden area. A way-marked perimeter path will be provided as far as it is possible due to the nature and terrain of the site. The paths will range in levels of accessibility due to the natural topography and rest areas with seating will be provided along the routes. The paths will be graded based on ease of access over the terrain and will have distance markers on the main walking /running paths.

There will be seats, picnic benches, bins, shelters and signage located as required within the park. Accessible toilets will be provided in the “*Road Field*” as part of the sports building and adjacent to the café and will include a changing places area and baby changing facilities. Exercise equipment will be provided at strategic locations in the fields to the south of the Park.

A “flying fox” will be provided at the top of the “*Wood Field*”. It is intended to accommodate scouting activities as far as possible, although camping facilities will not be provided. A number of nature trails will be mapped out. It is proposed to continue the grazing tradition of the “*Meadow*” at Enniskerry Road with farm animals thus providing an additional interest for local children. There will be opportunities for fun days and outdoor theatre and music. Water features will be developed

where the old watercourses running through the site permit, and a pond area is proposed in the “Wood Field”. Beehives will be accommodated in close proximity to the Kitchen Garden if feasible.

### **Dogs**

There were 13 specific requests for a dogs-off-leash area or a Dog Park and the comments submitted are listed below:

- Dogs-off-leash area (11)-Large activity play area for dogs - A training field for dogs
- Small dog park (2)
- Separate dog park for big and small dogs (2)
- Total off-leash area like Killiney Hill
- Section of park for dogs off leash (not a dog park)
- “welcome bonus if all dogs were kept on leads or a space without dogs”
- Rather than dog control have the park a dog free zone like Botanic Gardens
- Walk dogs off leash at certain times or certain times of the year.
- Dogs on leash only
- Bins and waste bag dispensers
- Consider an fenced off area within the dog-park for training/socialising shy/nervous dogs
- Have trees and tunnels to add play
- Incorporate wooded area and water

### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

A Dog Park/dogs off-leash area is proposed for an area the top of the “9 Arce Field”. This will be landscaped with trees, large logs, seating and other features. This may be divided to separate small and large breeds. Dogs will have to be on a leash at all times in Fernhill outside of this area and will not be permitted in the garden zone.

### **Fernhill House**

As part of the consultation we invited people to comment on potential uses for Fernhill House and although it has been decided to develop the house as a later phase in the development of Fernhill House and Gardens, these suggestions and comments will be recorded to aid that decision. Priority at present is to get the Park and Gardens open to the public as soon as possible and we can then focus on the house.

- Use for housing homeless & set up refugee camp in Park
- Reflect the quarrying and stone mason tradition of the location in exhibition space
- Community Room (3)
- Community space for evening classes
- Home for community based activities/ volunteering/ Scout Den
- Event / Function space (3)
- Filming
- Visual arts facility (2)
- Artist in residence studios (2)
- Studio space for Artists (2)
- Art exhibitions (focused on nature) (2)

- Art and craft space
- Retreat for writers, musicians or artists etc
- Temporary Exhibition Space
- Preserve the character of the house and buildings
- Nursing Home
- Community Crèche
- Small boutique hotel
- Visitor Centre (history, interactive space for children on flora and fauna, info on Dublin Mountains)
- Mini concerts on Sunday afternoons –classical, trad or jazz (3)
- Room for aspiring musicians/band practice
- Café/Restaurant/Tearooms with outdoor seating
- High end restaurant and venue
- Tours of house in relation to history of the families who lived there
- Pop up shop space
- Conference rooms/meeting rooms (3)
- Art Gallery/ Children’s Art Gallery
- Heritage Centre
- Place of education/classrooms
- Building should generate sufficient revenue to fund cost of running the gardens
- Cultural Centre
- Library (3)
- Craft work training centre/craft shops/craft centre(4)
- Theatre performances
- Club cinema with monthly shows
- Air B&B model – generate income – in association with rent rooms for talks, exhibitions and classes
- Should be a place of high availability
- Open the house to use by the public(4)
- Art classroom for school use
- GIY (Grow it yourself) Meeting Room
- Area for info on Wicklow Way and Dublin Mountains Way
- Area for children’s parties with outdoor games area
- Rent out rooms for book clubs, private functions and other local activities
- Seasonal Art & Mindfulness Camps for children
- Room dedicated to the history of the estate and families who lived there
- Show historic films, photographs, literature etc on the Darley and Walker families which should be on view to the public
- Culinary school
- Classes
- Yoga studio (2)
- Dance classes
- Meeting rooms for scouts, youth groups and local clubs
- A commercial kitchen to rent out to start up food producers
- A living room for seniors
- Museum of childhood (a local citizen has a collection of toys for such a display)
- Enclosed toddler play area adjacent to café

- Room for student grinds
- IT training room
- Wedding venue (2)
- Small museum of Irish Gardening
- Baby Changing Room and Baby feeding room
- Important to conserve the building( 2)
- “Gateway to Dublin Mountains” exhibition
- Renovation should aim to achieve “Nearly Zero Energy Buildings Standard “in line with Energy Performance of Buildings Directive
- Classes for the public on gardening, container gardening/sourdough & bread making/mead & beer
- Classes on eco-friendly household management, renewable energy, recycling etc
- Centre for documenting and storing seed of traditional Irish fruit and veg varieties and perhaps grow some in the kitchen garden
- Consider planting an orchard of old apple, pear, plum, gooseberry and currant breeds

### **Parking and Access**

The comments and observations are listed below:

- Ample public parking (5)
- Adequate parking for cars, buses and bicycles (3)
- Not too much car-parking
- Ensure sufficient car-parking on site so surrounding estates are not used as overflow car-parking (2)
- Free Parking
- Safe, secure all-weather parking
- Disability parking and access (and enforcement)
- More than one access (Enniskerry Rd already very busy)
- Be as in-obtrusive as possible
- Safe and accessible access (3)
- Substantial parking –could be the next Avoca?
- Safe ingress/egress and good visibility in both directions
- Concern over lack of cycle paths and access on already busy road
- No tarmac/concrete (3)
- No tarmac or gravel car-park spaces – use grass re-enforcement mesh
- Minimise amount of road and paved car-parking space
- Encourage pedestrian and cycling as a means of getting to the park
- Bike amenities /bike rack (7)
- Buggy/wheelchair accessible pathways (4)
- Address access for wheelchairs and buggies as much as possible and practical given the nature of the site
- Pedestrian crossing on main road (5)
- Accessible car-parking closer to the amenities for people with disabilities (“car park in Marlay too far from walled garden & café”)
- Don’t lose horticultural content to excessive car-parking
- Opportunity for a large number of people to get there by foot/bicycle (2)
- Accommodate car-parking in flat field off Enniskerry Road (2)
- Upgrade cycle-paths in the immediate area of Fernhill



- Pedestrian entrance near Stepside village/Bellermine (2)
- Stagger car-park and landscape with trees
- Sensitive design of car-park required
- Discourage vehicular visitors as site not big enough
- Look outside Fernhill for parking area
- Lambs Cross congested and dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians –requesting cycleway & Bus lane through Lambs Cross from Sandyford Rd to Enniskerry Rd
- Locate car-park across the road from Rosemont School with pedestrian access (3)
- Consider CPO the derelict house at Rosemont School and creating a carpark (2)
- Provide public parking in Stepside for access to Three Rock
- Concern about appearance of a large car-park in the grassland areas (5)-negative impact on the views of and from the mountains –urbanisation of the mountainside
- Consider grass mesh/terracing and tree planting
- Open existing entrance until a new one is in place
- Limit car-parking to the carrying capacity of Fernhill
- Car-park should be located on the edge of the park as not good to have traffic driving through the park
- No cycling in the park (2)
- Consider a cycle-path inside the boundary wall along Enniskerry Road as the cycle-lane on the road is narrow and poorly lit- to benefit children getting to school
- Measures should be taken to avoid filling the car-park with walkers' cars who are heading up the mountain for the day
- Promote visiting Fernhill (& Three Rock) by bus/LUAS – signpost the routes, put maps on website, mark on the paths leading to Fernhill (4)

#### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

The existing vehicular entrance into Fernhill is very dangerous due to its location in close proximity to a bend in the road which restricts visibility. It is therefore proposed to create a new vehicular entrance adjacent to Rosemont School and to provide an avenue between the Kitchen Garden and Rosemont School which leads to the “*Road Field*” and the “*9 Acre Field*”. The new vehicular entrance will lead to a junction upgrade where a right turn lane (southbound) will be installed as well as a signalised junction with Toucan crossings.

Parking is provided in “*Road Field*” and the “*9 Acre Field*” and along the avenue adjacent to the school – approximately 160 parking spaces will be provided of which 7 will be disabled spaces. Parking for 3 coaches will also be provided. The car-parking is designed in consideration to the sensitivity of the site and the views into the site and will largely be hidden among trees and mounded areas. It is distributed in three locations and forms quite narrow strips which are more easily screened than a large car-park. Appropriate surfacing will be further researched and may include a combination of grass filled porous blocks or macadam for ease of accessibility.

In addition the existing entrance will become a pedestrian/cyclist only entrance and a new pedestrian/cyclist only entrance will be provided adjacent to the roundabout at Belarmine. Ample bicycle parking facilities will be located inside these entrances and in the main car-park as cycling will not be permitted in the Park and Gardens. The Council will promote pedestrian /cyclist access as the

favoured mode of transport to Fernhill. The route from the LUAS and from adjacent bus stops will be clearly signposted and information on all routes will be publicised on the website. Pedestrian crossings will be provided to facilitate safe crossing of the Enniskerry Road from Belarmine and Aikens Village. The car-parking and avenue will have lighting which will be on a timer and be switched off when the park closes.

### **Right of Way (ROW)**

There have been a number of comments pertaining to the existing ROW as summarised below:

- Upgrade the Right of Way (11)
- Remove stiles and gates as impede access of mountain bikers wanting to access the mountain bike trails at Three Rock
- Use as an entrance to Fernhill from Barnacuillia Rd
- Maintain the link to Barnacullia/Glencullen/Three Rock (10)
- Raised bridge over the ROW to link the park instead of the two gates on ROW
- Retain traditional qualities and secluded nature of ROW (3)
- Facilitate bicycles
- Develop a walking/mountain bike trail from Fernhill to the top of Three Rock
- Place stepping stones in the tunnel as it gets muddy in wet weather
- Fence the ROW off from the gardens to prevent trespass into gardens

### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

The right of way will remain largely as it is with some improvements to improve it as an amenity. However it is intended to retain the traditional elements which are present and maintain the existing rural feel. It will be fenced on either side along its length to prevent access into the gardens when they are closed and to prevent deer getting into the property.

The tunnel under the broadwalk, old stile and stone walls will remain. The access from the ROW into Fernhill will be upgraded and the route to the mountains will be sign posted from Fernhill via the ROW. It will be regarded as the walking route to the mountains. It will not be upgraded to provide for cycling due to the narrow width, steep terrain and existing features which are to be retained as part of the heritage of the ROW. The ROW is in itself independent from Fernhill but can be accessed from the Park.

### **Management Considerations**

There were a wide range of comments and observations which relate to the management of Fernhill Park and Gardens and not specifically to any one aspect and these are recorded below:

- Open as soon as possible (2)
- Open to pedestrians initially (2) Open it and develop in stages
  - “become a world class park for south Dublin”.... (2)
- Keep as natural as possible with links to Wicklow Way Walks
  - “Change as little as possible about this lovely place...”
- Don’t change the character and atmosphere of Fernhill
- Retain in keeping with natural landscape
- Preserve Fernhill as it is 4
  - “Don’t cut down any more trees”
- Not too much development
- Educational resource
  - 3 primary schools and 1 secondary school within walking distance – exposure to nature
  - tourist attraction
- Protect animals whilst developing the park
- Develop woodland activities
- Commemorate the contribution of the Walker family within the park with plaque/stone
- Commemorate history
  - Preserve essence of history and character
- Lease part of it to a commercial garden centre (to bring in revenue)
- Employ a gardener/designer who can manage gardens in a sensitive way
- Establish links with Kew Gardens as plants have their origins there
- Liaise with Mount Usher and Kilmacurragh as same philosophy of gardening practiced
- Don’t let gardens become a children’s play area
- Park to act as a Gateway to the Dublin Mountains (2)
- Local gardening groups should get involved in the care and maintenance of the gardens
- A volunteer Gardener scheme/programme
- Involve the local community in working the site (2)
- Local organisations set up to look after different areas – gardens/house/hayshed/allotments
- As not much gardens and open space in area – requirement to provide an alternative
- Launchpad to explore the Wicklow Way
- Protect and develop the historic nature of Fernhill
- Similar standard to Marlay & Cabinteely (5)
- Do not let it become too commercial
- Like to see an “Airfield style” public amenity though smaller
- Reasonable fire prevention precautions on unused buildings
- Consider impact on traffic on walkways –refers to issue in Marlay
- Use as many natural and renewable materials as possible in the redevelopment
- Document the development works
- Opportunity for 3 distinct areas (1) House and Gardens, (2) Playground and Community Park
- (3) An adventure park
- “do not allow cyclists and joggers to take it over as they have in other parks”

- Incorporate environmental sustainability in both traditional and modern terms e.g. Solar PV and battery storage to power park facilities
- Consideration of demographics in the area which has drastically changed over the years
- Foraging
- Only open during the daylight hours
- Once fully operational Dublin Bus should be asked to increase their frequency of service and alter routes to facilitate access (2)
- Don't flatten areas
- Get balance right- too many visitors – negative effect
- Attract a more mature audience – genteel walks rather than football and exercise
- Don't overdevelop the estate and lose the Robinsonian character
- Flooding downstream – use uplands to catch rainwater in heavy rains to prevent flooding in Bayview, Commons Rd etc.
- Welcome weary cyclists (café and outdoor seating)
- Be a model of sustainable development
- Manage without herbicides or pesticides
- Use solar and wind energy
- Strict governance and accountability on funds spent on project development and operation
- Unhappy about the import of sub-soil
- Symbiotic relationship with Rosemont School with possible sharing of car-park outside of park hours
- Collaborate with Airfield Trust
- Ensure trees/gardens are protected from damage by machinery during development –ensure a gardener is present to oversee protection of plants
- Retain appropriate vistas
- Put info on plants, animals, ecology and amenities, maps, trails etc., on the website
- Strike a balance in relation to paths- paths on steeper gradients and steps should be retained and focus creating accessibility on the gentler gradients
- Buggy friendly
- Paths through woodland should be retained as gravel and repaired and maintained
- Increase accessibility (2)
- Fully accessible to wheelchair users
- Importance of inclusion and consideration of requirements from people with disabilities (car parking access, toilets etc.)
- Caution in relation to provision of parkland amenities as garden, habitats and plant collection have such high heritage value
- Maps and illustration to be layperson friendly
- No development other than café, small car-park and food stalls one or two days per week
- Look at Kilruddery estate as it is a good model
- Restoration of old walks would be welcome
- Gate lodge should be occupied by head gardener or caretaker
- maintain quiet places
- Top class Public Park
- Keep the gardens
- Family destination (3)
- A place to spend the afternoon that caters for everyone

- “Local people have input into what the park will be”
- Affordable family membership/discount for local people
- “Tasteful with no wasted money”
- Grounds and buildings open to the public
- Increased local employment envisaged
- Volunteer Rangers/guides/gardeners
- Provide employment for people who experience difficulty in tradition
- Draw attention to Neolithic structures in the area by creating a model of a megalithic tomb
- “If necessary remove vegetation to make most of the views”

#### **Design Team Response to the requests and associated observations/comments:**

It is not possible to open the park to the public without providing parking spaces as it would lead to parking on the adjoining roads and adjacent estates. The existing access is considered too dangerous to be opened to vehicular traffic. Therefore the priority is to develop the entrance at Rosemont School and the car-parking in order to open the park to the public.

It is proposed to retain the original gardens, features and layout whilst improving it for visitor access. The gardens will be further developed in keeping with the existing the Robinsonian style which will be maintained in as far as possible throughout. The gardens were not designed to be heavily trafficked by pedestrians and therefore some modern interventions mainly in terms of improved accessibility will be required to accommodate visitors.

These gardens were previously included on international gardener’s itineraries and attracted overseas plant and garden enthusiasts which it is hoped will be the case again. The gardens themselves will be fenced off from the overall Park in order to protect them and maintain the tranquillity of the garden. Links with other gardens of prominence and compatibility will be explored as it is planned to expand the plant collections in Fernhill.

The Parks and Gardens will be developed with the local community and schools in mind and appropriate facilities will be included in the development of this site such as play areas, picnic areas, formal and informal playing spaces and good quality parkland and woodland.

The development of the park will focus on environmental sustainability and the refurbished buildings will be powered by site produced power harnessed from the sun, water and wind. The management of the Park and Gardens will be ecologically sensitive with minimal herbicide use. Dead wood as far as possible will be retained on site as habitat material. The ecology of the site is very important also and will be of upper most importance in the development and management of Fernhill. Visitors will be encouraged to use public transport (LUAS and Dublin Bus) and to come to the park on foot or bicycle. Relevant information to inform people of the public transport links to the Park will be on the dlr website.

Fernhill is located in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and extends uphill from the Enniskerry Road. There is a level difference of 52m from the Enniskerry Road to the highest point on the site. The site therefore cannot be fully accessible in terms of gradients. It is intended that in as far as practical, the centre of the park (from the disabled car-parking spaces in the “9 Acre Field”) and

much of the mid- level area in the park will be made accessible. This will include access to the Broadwalk through the gardens, Fernhill House, play areas, lower parkland, playing areas, café, sports building and toilets. As slopes cannot be reduced seating and resting areas will feature throughout the park and gardens.

The Council intends to have gardening staff in Fernhill and as part of the on-going management and maintenance, consideration will be given to partnering/liasing with other interest groups such as students, community groups and volunteers to assist with the immense maintenance requirements. The Kitchen Gardens themselves will be operated as Community Gardens by the local community.

The Council in the development of the Fernhill Park and Gardens master plan are very mindful of the local demographics and have aimed to provide facilities to suit all ages in so far as possible.