

## **MILL HALL: FRONTAGE DETAIL**

### **SUMMARY**

To seek Members' views as to which design option should be submitted in association with the treatment of the frontage of the Mill Hall.

### **INTRODUCTION**

At Planning Services Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> April, Members approved the planning application associated with the demolition of the Rayleigh Sports and Social Club and the laying out of this area for car parking purposes, subject to a condition requiring a revised design for the frontage of the Mill Hall site to address many of the concerns raised. A copy of the Planning Services Committee report is appended for Members' information (Appendix 1)

### **DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

In the light of the Planning Services Committee's decision, officers have worked up the following options concerning the treatment of the Mill Hall frontage. These are listed below and detailed as Appendices A, B, C and D.

#### **Option A**

To leave the one way scheme as already exists and improve the planting / seating layout on the existing island. This results in the loss of 15 of the additional car parking spaces from the original scheme as submitted and does not provide a significant improvement to the frontage of the site on Bellingham Lane. The speed tables would still be constructed as they provide level disability access.

#### **Option B**

To reform the front of the site widen the road adjacent to Homeregal House and provide a formal sitting area with the Millenium Beacon as a focal point in a paved area. A new pedestrian access adjacent to the WI building would be formed using the footway that already exists on this side. This would also allow retention of the planting area adjacent to the WI building. This results in the loss of 6 parking spaces from the original scheme but provides a balance of amenity and parking and pedestrian access.

This provides disabled parking in this front area, allows retention of an ambulance bay for Homeregal House, and deals with the access issues raised by the WI and the owners of the arcade.

**Option C**

As Option B but with the area around the Millenium Beacon set out as lawn rather than paving. This also provides a good formal seating area but with a softer feel than all paving.

**Option D**

Would be do nothing to this front area at all, but lose the 15 additional parking spaces and provide no improvement to the frontage of the Mill Hall to Bellingham Lane.

In the light of the options now produced, Members are asked to determine which should be submitted to address the planning condition.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The detailed design options B and C for consideration will result in significant visual improvement of the frontage area. Option A provides some improvement and Option D retains the existing frontage.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The design options outlined can be funded from within the budgetary sum set aside for the implementation of the scheme.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

A revised design now needs to be submitted if the condition is to be addressed and subsequently discharged.

**PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

The scheme lies within the Rayleigh Town Council area

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Council determine which option for the Mill Hall frontage they wish to see submitted in response to the condition placed on the car park application (Application No. 00/00064/DP3)

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

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For further information please contact David Timson on (01702) 546366

## Committee Report

14.



Rochford District Council

To the Meeting of: **PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE**On : **6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2000**Report of : **CORPORATE DIRECTOR (LAW, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)**

Title : **REVISED VEHICULAR ACCESS TO BELLINGHAM LANE, REVISED AND EXTENDED CAR PARKING LAYOUT, CONSTRUCTION OF WALL AND RAILINGS (1.6M HIGH APPROX) TO BELLINGHAM LANE, NEW FOOTLINK TO WINDMILL, RELOCATION OF TOWN BEACON AND LANDSCAPING. (ALL FOLLOWING PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL CLUB BUILDING). LAND ADJACENT MILL HALL, BELLINGHAM LANE, RAYLEIGH**

Author : **Kevin Steptoe**Application No: **00/00064/DP3**Applicant : **ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**Zoning : **RAYLEIGH CONSERVATION AREA, RAYLEIGH TOWN HISTORIC CORE, COMMUNITY USE**Parish: **RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL AREA**Site Frontage: **29m (to Bellingham Lane)** Site Area: **0.48 Ha****Planning Application Details**

- 14.1 This application relates to the treatment to be applied to the land to the east of the Mill Hall, if the consent to demolish the Sports and Recreational Club building is granted (see the previous report).
- 14.2 Currently much of the area, except that to the frontage of the site, in front of the Mill Hall and adjacent to Bellingham Lane, is already in use as a car park. It is intended that this use be extended over the area currently occupied by the Sports and Recreational Club building, which is to be demolished. Generally the car parking layout

would be remodelled to allow landscaping to be incorporated within it and to allow the provision of additional spaces. New paving would be provided to the area around the windmill and a new footway would be created to link the windmill, the Mill Hall building and Bellingham Lane. At present there are 42 + 2 disabled parking spaces in the area. The proposed plans show the creation of 69 + 2 disabled spaces.

- 14.3 The frontage of the site to Bellingham Lane currently consists of an area of mounding planted with grass, established trees, paving and public seating. Vehicle circulation consists of an in and out route for vehicles (in adjacent to Homeregal House to the south of the site, out adjacent to the WI Hall to the north) with a loop allowing return to the site without going around the town one way system.
- 14.4 The proposed arrangement is as follows: There would be a single access road to the site which would be two way, this would be at the south side of the site adjacent to Homeregal House. This would divide into two access roads to serve the car parking areas adjacent to the windmill and to the south side of the Mill Hall (unchanged existing car park).
- 14.5 Much of the remainder of the frontage area would be given over to new car parking. This would be located in the currently mounded, landscaped area, and the existing exit and loop roads. Some of the existing landscaping (including some of the established trees) would be retained and there would be provision for new planting to the frontage of the site. The perimeter would be bounded by a new low wall with railings on top. The town beacon, which is currently located in this area would be relocated to a new site adjacent to the windmill.

#### Relevant Planning History

- 14.6 None

#### Consultations and Representations

- 14.7 The County Planner (Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice) has no objections. He comments that although the site is now given over entirely to car parking this has long been a major use and there will not be a great change in character. Overall impact considered to be of benefit to the Conservation Area.
- 14.8 The County Planner (Archaeology Advice) indicates that the area is one of archaeological potential. There should be minimal intervention (ie disruption of the ground below the surface). This can be covered by means of a condition on any permission.
- 14.9 The County Surveyor has no objection in principle but requests the formulation of a legal agreement to cover the treatment to be applied to Bellingham Lane in the vicinity of the exit road proposed to be closed off, and the provision of the new entrance road to a certain radii.
- 14.10 Anglian Water has no objections in principle but suggest conditions in relation to drainage
- 14.11 Environment Agency – No Objections

**14.12 Rayleigh Town Council has no objections.**

**14.13 The Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives indicates that these proposals represent an opportunity to enhance the setting of the windmill and to reduce the impact of Mill Hall and the parking areas with landscaping.**

**14.14 The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care has no objections.**

Rayleigh Civic Society welcomes the proposals, including the improved footway, but makes the following points:

- the treatment to the site frontage will not enhance the approach to Mill Hall and should not be implemented (with the exception of the loop roadway).
- trust that seats, particularly those funded, will be relocated.
- trust that suitable furniture (bollards and lighting) will be used.

The National Trust supports the overall direction of the scheme but makes the following comments:

- proposed parking to the east side of the windmill should be replaced by landscaping, but care should be taken to avoid the building becoming obscured;
- the site is in an archaeological sensitive area;
- some junction treatment should be provided where the two access roads join;
- care needs to be exercised in relation to the materials used.

**14.15 The Essex Police Crime Prevention Officer has verbally indicated that he has no objections to the scheme.**

**14.16 Sixty three letters have been received as a result of consultation.** These include residents of the adjacent Homeregal House, other residents, the Estate Managers of Homeregal, traders in Berrys Arcade and representatives on behalf of the WI or other organisations. The matters raised in the correspondence are, in the main, as follows:

- the proposals will result in the loss of a valuable, pleasant, scarce and important open, landscaped space;
- the ambulance parking bay, (adjacent to Homeregal), will be lost;
- two way traffic on the new access road will be dangerous and inconvenient to Homeregal residents;
- two way traffic and extra car parking will cause extra congestion (due to delivery vehicles in a narrow part of Bellingham Lane) and disturbance;
- the proposals will actually amount to few net additional spaces in the frontage area;
- the proposals encourage more cars contrary to government advice;
- the new car park will be subject to vandalism and anti social behaviour;
- the proposals result in the loss of loading or other spaces to the WI hall and make it inconvenient to access the building due to lack of footway; and,
- the lack of a footway access to the north side of the car park would deflect visitors toward the main town centre and away from shops at the top end of the High Street/ Berrys Arcade.

## Material Planning Considerations

- 14.17 The main issues raised by these proposals and which should be considered in coming to a decision are as follows:
- the principle of the introduction of more car parking capacity into the town centre;
  - the visual appearance and perception of the area;
  - safety and congestion which may be affected by the new circulation layout and the general convenience of it to users.
- 14.18 In general terms government policy is to encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car in order to cut down on congestion and pollution. At the same time however, the need to provide adequate choice in the modes of transport available is recognised in order to ensure the competitiveness of retail areas.
- 14.19 These proposals, although they introduce additional car parking capacity, are not considered to be so significant in that respect that they represent a form of development running counter to the general aims of government policy which should be resisted.
- 14.20 In relation to the visual appearance and perception of the area, few comments have been made in relation to the treatment near to the windmill building (in the area where the Sports and Recreational Club building is to be demolished), and those that have been made have been supportive. The proposals do allow for more planted landscaping to be introduced into an area which is currently largely devoid of such features. Although the view of the windmill will be over the parked vehicles, this is still considered to be beneficial to the current situation where the windmill building is tucked away from almost all public view until immediately upon it. The proposed landscaping is likely to contribute further to that enhanced view.
- 14.21 In relation to the frontage area (adjacent to Bellingham Lane), the views which have been expressed are quite different. Without exception they have been opposed to the reuse of the current landscaped space for car parking.
- 14.22 There are other landscaped public spaces in the vicinity (The Mount and the land associated with the church at the top end of the High Street) although these spaces are not of the same type as the area in front of the Mill Hall. The space has the benefit of the public seating. There are six established trees within the frontage area and it is considered that four of these will have to be lost if the proposals go ahead in their current form.
- 14.23 Despite the value currently attached to this space, it is considered that improvements can be made to its quality, and these proposals could represent an opportunity to implement this. The value of the area as it stands is somewhat detracted from by the presence of roadways on all sides. As a result it has no well defined boundary treatment. In addition, although there are established trees, there is little additional ground cover landscaping to the area.
- 14.24 Given the perceived value that is attached to this space, taking into account the possibility to create improvements to it, and the desire to create additional car parking, it is considered that there may be scope for a compromise approach here. This would involve the creation of a fewer number of new spaces than the proposed 15 (9 new).

taking into account the loss of the existing 6 spaces in this area). These would be placed so that they utilised some of the land currently covered by the exit roadway (thus cutting down on the take from the landscaped area). If the single access and exit is still created, such a compromise could result in a reduced overall net loss of the landscaping area (as the existing loop road could be incorporated into landscaping). It may also allow the retention of a greater number of the established trees and more room in which the public seating could be relocated (some of which is provided by subscription/ donation)

- 14.25 It is suggested that, given the comments made, and the desire here to both improve parking provision and enhance the space, a condition could be attached to any permission to indicate that it does not refer to the frontage area (to be indicated as appropriate on a plan) and that further revised plans be drawn up for that area to reach a more acceptable compromise here on the basis of the above.
- 14.26 Safety issues have been raised in relation to the proposals. There is a concern that the new two way access arrangement and the new junction that will be created within the scheme will be a detrimental move, in road safety terms. This is not considered to be the case however. It is accepted that current users are familiar with the existing arrangement. But it has to be said that the existing one way access with loop is unusual and somewhat confusing to new users. Two way roads are, of course, conventional and priority/ routing universally understood. With appropriate road marking measures to the internal junction it is considered that the new road arrangement is an improvement rather than a poor move.
- 14.27 With regard to safety, the County Surveyor has requested that treatment be applied to the side of the Bellingham Lane roadway outside the site where the existing exit road is removed. This treatment is the provision of a new footway across the existing exit road and the provision of double yellow lines there. These would seem reasonable additional safety/ anti congestion measures required as a result of the proposals.
- 14.28 The County Surveyor requests that the above measures are ensured by means of a legal agreement. In this case however, as the applicant is the Council a legal agreement may be a less than normally appropriate and unenforceable method of ensuring the provision of the necessary works. As they are minor works the use of a condition in this case would seem more appropriate.
- 14.29 Although the County Surveyor has requested the provision of the new access roadway to a certain radius (7.5m), this is not achievable to both sides without further eroding the landscaped area. Given that the additional traffic to be attracted to this area by these proposals is likely to be modest, it is considered that achieving a 7.5m radius to the exit side of the new roadway is an acceptable compromise and provides sufficient visibility for traffic to safely exit the site.
- 14.30 The issue of congestion has been raised in relation to the new access/ exit from the site. The point being made is that a higher volume of traffic will have to pass the unloading areas of the shop units on the High Street, which back onto Bellingham Lane. This is because the exit from the site is adjacent to Homeregal rather than the WI hall. Whilst this is the case, even when unloading is taking place at the shop units, a single vehicle width is maintained clear on what is a one way road. As a result it is not considered that the risk of greater congestion here is sufficient grounds on which to resist the proposals.



- 14.31 In relation to general convenience, there appear to be two main concerns. The first of these is the loss of a marked ambulance parking bay at the entrance of Homeregal House. The second is the loss of a foot exit from the car park at its northern end, adjacent to the VI hall.
- 14.32 The loss of the marked ambulance space would appear to be a loss to residents of Homeregal House in terms of the convenience of use of the area. Whilst the provision of such a space is not obligatory for the type of residential units in Homeregal it is used and, from the comments received, valued. The condition suggested and referred to above, to allow the reconsideration of this frontage area, does allow the opportunity to reassess this frontage area.
- 14.33 However, it is not considered that sufficient planning argument could be advanced to resist the scheme on the basis of the loss of this facility. Despite the removal of the marked bay, ambulances will still be able to park in front of the Homeregal entrance when required.
- 14.34 The other inconvenience of the scheme proposed is the loss of a foot link to Bellingham Lane at the north end of the frontage. This does appear to be an unnecessary loss given that a link could be incorporated without upsetting the overall improvements created by the scheme. This will require a length of footway to be provided within the frontage car parking area (for safety) but it is considered that this can be accommodated on a reconsideration of the frontage treatment under the condition suggested.

#### Conclusion

- 14.35 The overall aim and impact of the scheme is considered to be beneficial. The setting of the windmill will be enhanced whilst at the same time providing additional car parking. It will also result in the loss of the frontage space as laid out with some seating and landscaping. Given the comments received, some further attention to the treatment of this frontage area could result in a more acceptable scheme whilst still achieving many of the aims of it.

#### Recommendation that this Committee resolves:

- 14.36 That the scheme be **APPROVED** subject to the following heads of conditions:
- 1 SC4 Time limits, standard
  - 2 Condition indicating the area for which revised layout plans are required to be submitted
  - 3 Condition indicating no development prior to the demolition of the Sports and recreational Club building.
  - 4 SC14 (amended) Surfacing Materials
  - 5 SC50A Means of enclosure
  - 6 SC59 Landscaping.
  - 7 SC96 Archaeological Works' (amended).
  - 8 Details of access road kerb radii
  - 9 Provision of works in the Bellingham Lane roadway outside the site (new footway and double yellow lines) to an agreed timetable.



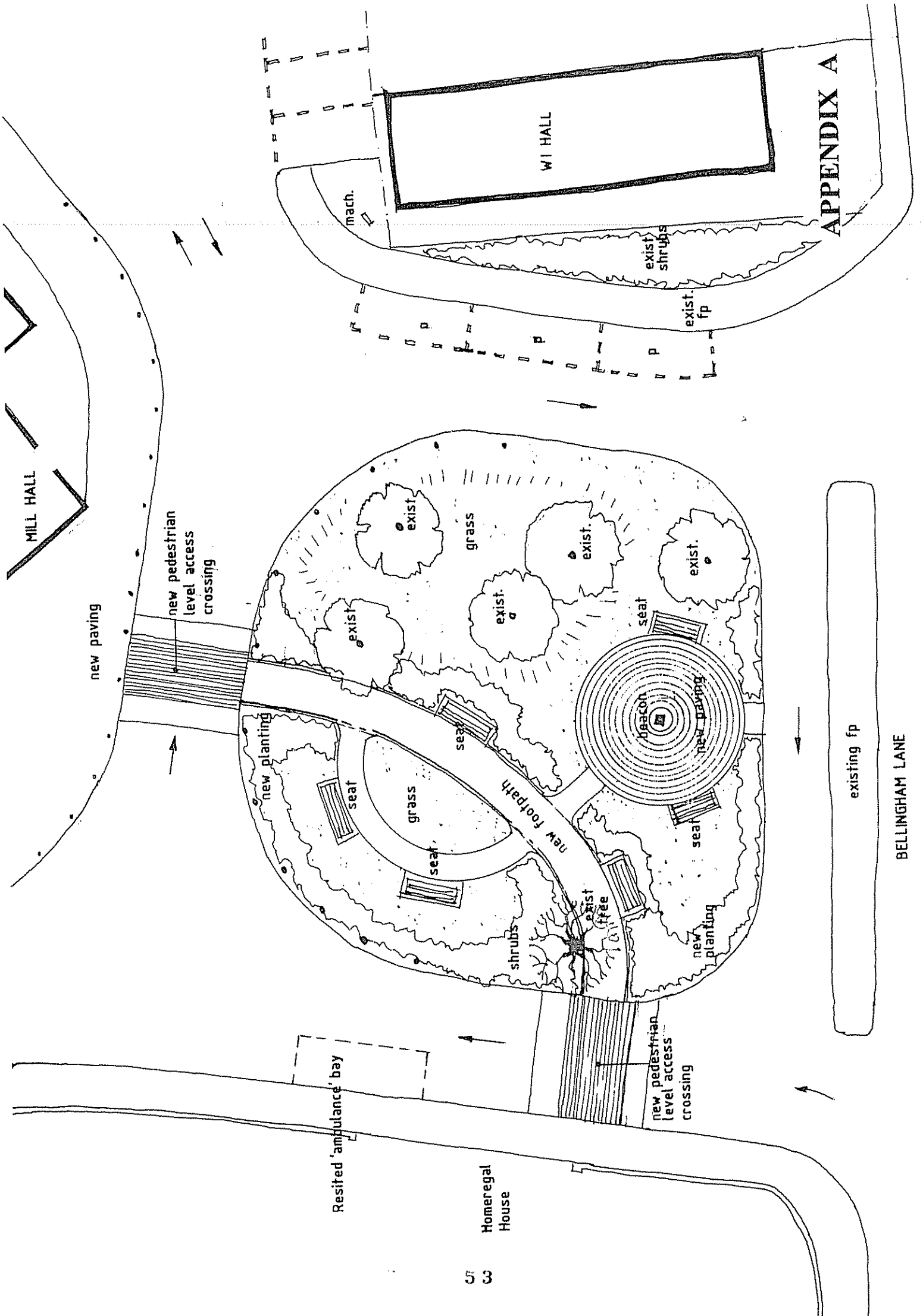
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APPENDIX A

WI HALL

mach.

exist. shrubs

exist. fp

MILL HALL

new paving

new pedestrian level access crossing

new planting

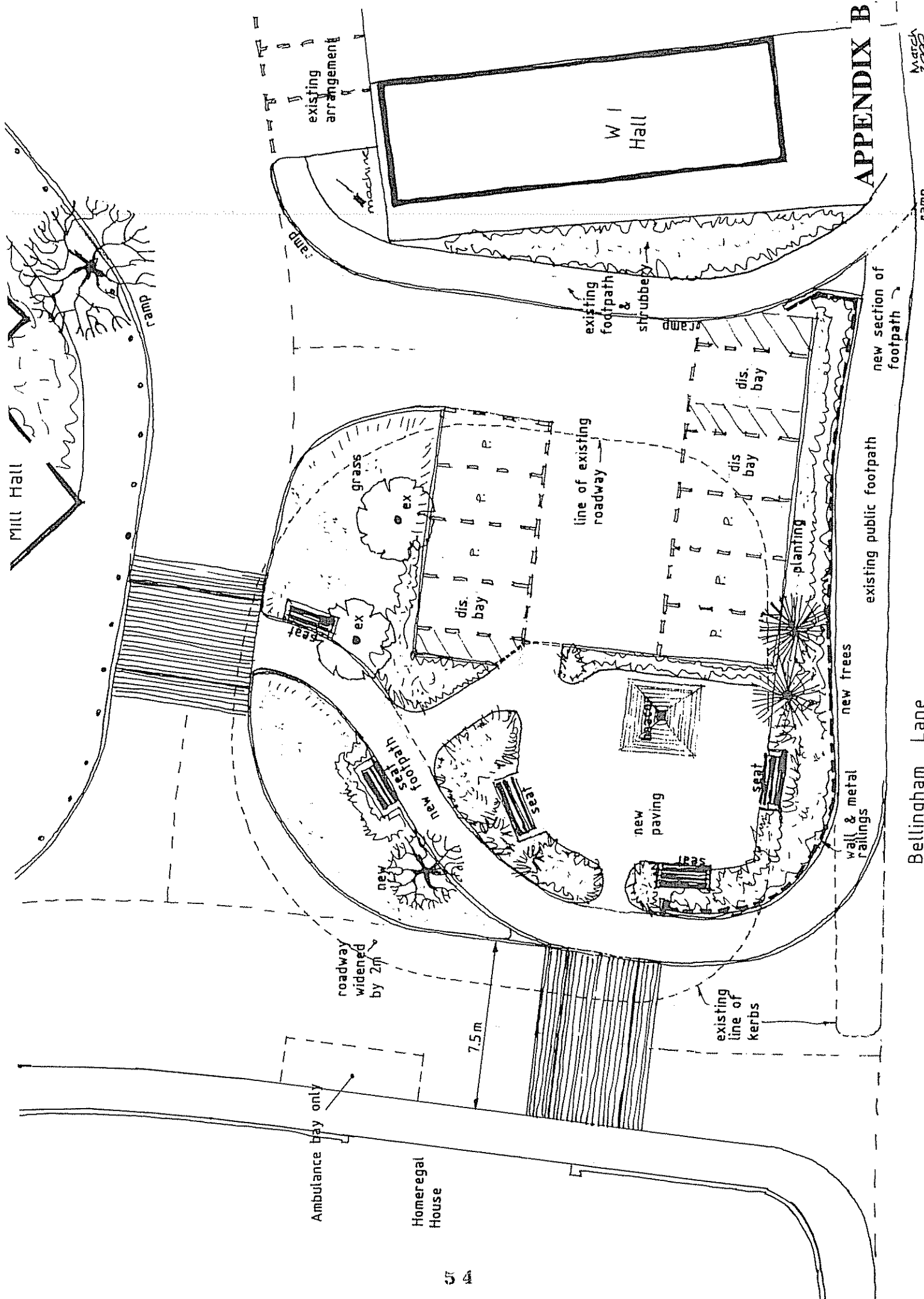
Resited 'ambulance' bay

Homeregal House

new pedestrian level access crossing

existing fp

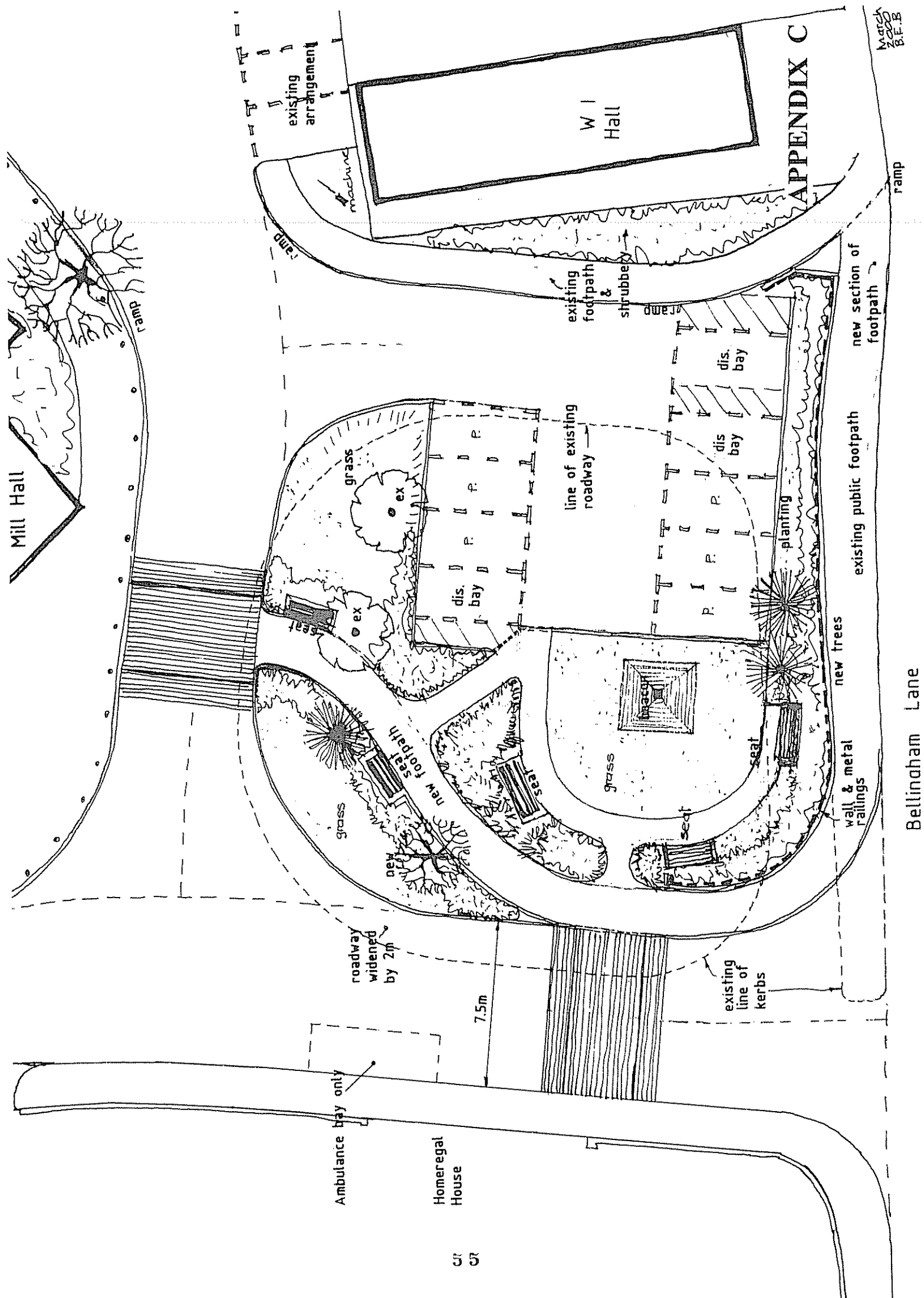
BELLINGHAM LANE



APPENDIX B

Bellingham Lane

March 1985



Mill Hall

ramp

ramp

existing  
arrangement

roadway  
widened  
by 2m

Ambulance bay only

Homeregal  
House

7.5m

line of existing  
roadway

W I  
Hall

existing  
footpath  
&  
shrubbery

grass

grass

seat

seat

seat

existing  
line of  
kerbs

wall & metal  
railings

new trees

planting

existing public footpath

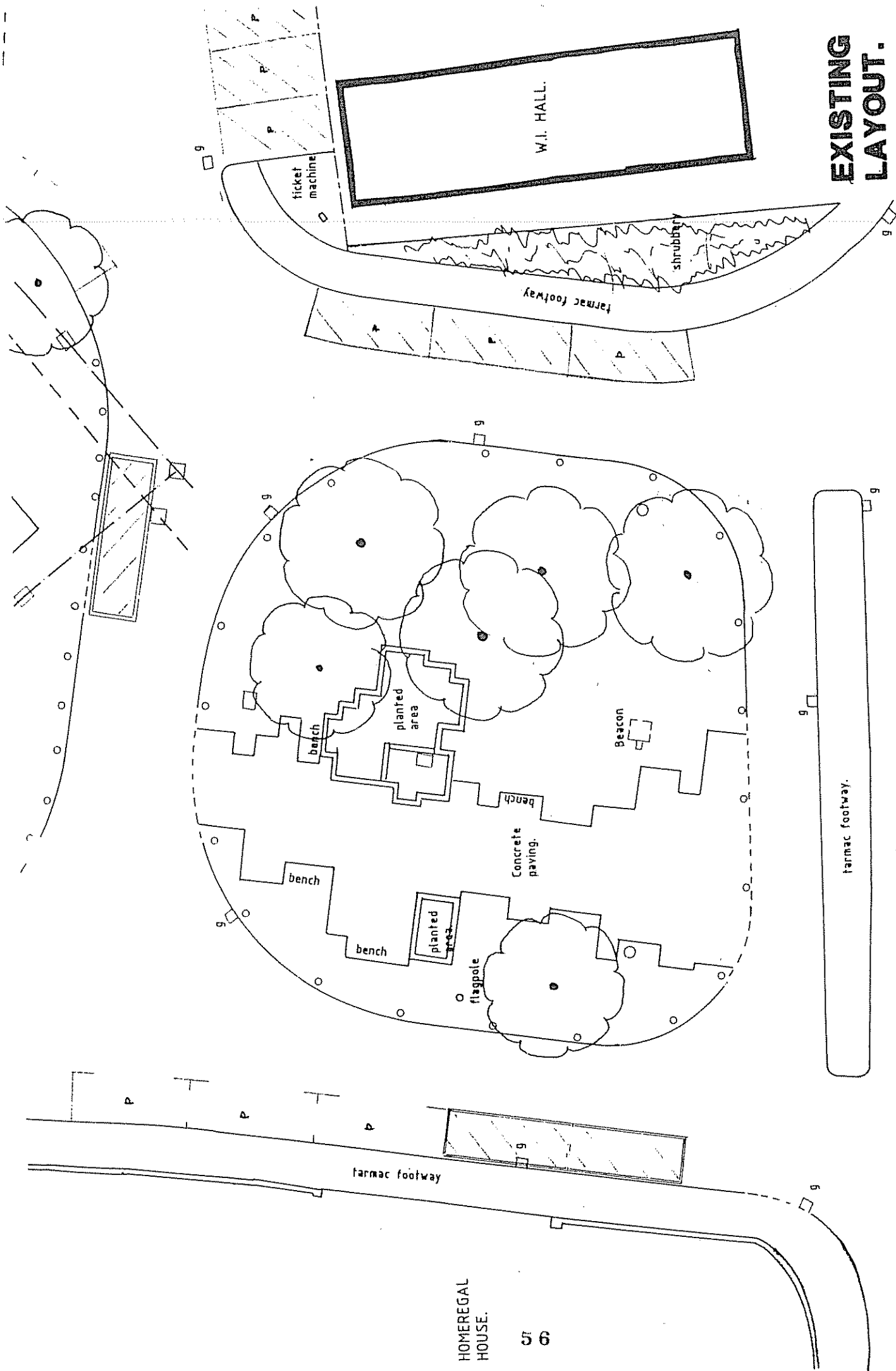
new section of  
footpath

ramp

APPENDIX C

Bellindham Lane

March  
2000  
B.E.B.



**EXISTING  
LAYOUT.**

**APPENDIX D**

Bellingham Lane.

HOMEREGAL  
HOUSE.