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3rd September 2014

Jubilee Square, Leicester – Risk Assessment for Lawn Edges

Dear Louise

Please find below a summary of the risk assessment process that ran parallel with the design of the lawn edges.

Context

Our design from an early stage featured four areas of lawn sunk at their northern ends to a depth of 450mm in order to create south-facing seating edges. These lawns are surrounded by paved surfaces. The sides of the lawns taper from 450mm to being flush with the adjacent paved surfaces.

Risk

The risks identified during design development for the lawn edges were twofold – firstly the weight of the units used to construct them which was mitigated through their detailed design, and secondly the potential for falls by pedestrians from the adjacent paved surfaces.

Mitigation of Risk for the Square in the Everyday Mode

Part K of the Building Regulations sets out the need for protection from falls of heights of 600mm or over. The lawn edges fall comfortably within the range where no protection is required. The design therefore has not proposed barriers adjacent to the lawn edges.

In order to mitigate the risk of falls we therefore focused upon the use of contrasting colours and textures. This approach was developed in full consultation throughout the length of the project with Leicester City Council's Access Officer. The design features white lawn edge units with an adjacent contrasting black stone strip. This combination will provide clear visual demarcation. The adjacent paved surfaces are in resin bound gravel and porphyry stone setts. Both materials have a texture that contrasts with the smooth texture of the lawn edge units.

Other mitigating proposals were considered but were thought to be unnecessary given the measures taken and described above. These other potential measures included a low raised edge which was dismissed on the basis that it might cause a trip hazard. A strongly textured warning strip was also considered but this was also considered to have the potential to be a trip hazard.

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Mitigation of Risk for the Square in the Events Mode

The Square on an everyday basis will be a relatively quiet place for people to move through and sit in and without large crowds of people the lawn edges will be clearly visible. Appropriate lighting will ensure that the edges remain visible after dark.

The space however is intended to be used for special events on an ad hoc basis and when there are large numbers of people in the Square the paving will become less visible and the visual warning less effective. To mitigate this we have included in the design a line of bench seats running parallel with the northernmost lawn edges. This line of bench seats will provide separation between the main events space (ie the large paved section of the Square) and the lawn edge so that even if there is, for example, a busy market taking place in the northern part of the Square, the area around the lawn edge will remain relatively free of people, and the edge will still be visible.

It is anticipated that risk assessments will be undertaken prior to the staging of all events and in the event of very large numbers of people within the space it might be considered necessary to install temporary safety barriers along the lawn edges. This would be normal in planning for any large event.

Further Mitigation

We do not believe that the risk of falls needs further mitigation and that placing barriers of any sort alongside the lawn edges would lead to a more cluttered space, which in turn could impede both accessibility as well as the events functionality of the Square.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the contents of this summary.

Yours sincerely

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