

Toolkit:

How to develop a site plan for an event

Description

Site planning has been described as the art of arranging structures and shaping the space between (Lynch and Hack, 1984). It is very important to make a comprehensive site plan when organising an event, as it may be the difference between a good and an excellent event. The layout of an event can affect the atmosphere but it is also important to consider routes for emergency vehicles, power supplies and topography. The combination of just these factors can become complex before even considering the number of people expected at the event and what can be located where, therefore it is important to put time and effort into the site plan design.

How to do it

Firstly, a map of the site is needed. The local authority should be able to provide a map of the park. Here are some websites where it maybe possible may also be able to obtain a map: <http://maps.google.co.uk/>, <http://www.multimap.com/map/home.cgi?db=GB>, <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap/>. However these website maps may not provide as much detail as needed, compared to one from a local authority, especially for smaller parks. It is possible to design a site plan both electronically and on paper. This is a personal preference but it is recommended that you do both. The advantage of working on paper is that it is easy to work on when on site and at meetings, and then input it into an electronic version so for the final site plan. This then can be used by all the event organisers, participants and in the event programme such as Adobe InDesign.

It is also important to visit the site with the map to become familiar with the site and to put it all into perspective. At this point a preliminary assessment can be carried out (see worksheet at end of toolkit). While keeping the type of event in mind, some of the areas to consider are:

- Entry and exit points,
- Emergency routes,
- Central arena/staging area,
- Audience space,
- Stall area,
- Parking,
- Power points
- General safety of the site

A risk assessment should be completed and up-dated when it is known what activities are taking place and where (see risk assessment work sheet at end of toolkit, The Plan It! toolkit also gives a risk assessment template in it's appendix).

As the event organisation develops, a list can be compiled of the infrastructure, facilities and activities for the event. Once this list is compiled the design of the site plan can begin. Key infrastructure and facilities to consider are:

- Staging
- PA system
- Toilets
- Crowd barriers
- Marquees and gazebos
- First Aid tent
- Information tent
- Power points
- Parking
- Entrance and exit points

It is essential to emphasise the importance of having a central point at an event, this maybe a staging area or an arena. Here people can find out information about the event from announcements, plus it is often a good idea to have some more visually attractive activities to entice a crowd in, creating a lively atmosphere. The topography of the park may create a natural amphitheatre which would allow for great viewing points of the stage and help reduce noise to the surrounding area. If however, the park's topography does not allow for this it is important to consider where to position the stage to allow for an audience to watch the comfortably.

Activities such as falconry demonstrations, historical re-enactments, sports matches and coaching need plenty of space and need to be situated away from other activities that may interfere with theirs and to avoid health and safety risks. Other event participants such as stall holders can be situated very near each other to create a good busy atmosphere. Children's activities for instance bouncy castles and face painting may be clustered together helping to theme/zone an event. However it is key to remember that bouncy castles need a power source as this may limit the number of options for its location. Suppliers often provide generators to prevent this limitation but remember that safety is an issue surrounding all power supplies. Always use diesel generators.

A good technique for designing the site plan is to print off a large map of the site and cut out icons representing each activity and infrastructure. Try and keep it all to the same scale. This will enable you to play around with icons in different areas, this can be done in consultation with other members and is a good group bonding exercise! It is important to go over the site plan with other people to see it from different perspectives. Take this plan on site and try and visualise it, if any amendments are needed to be made, do so. Once it is completely designed, draw it up electronically but be prepared to make alterations.

Please see examples of site plans at the end of this toolkit.

Tips and issues to consider

The site plan may need to be simplified if you want to use it on the event programme. The scale does not matter as much here, this may allow the icons to be enlarged and larger text size.

On the day of the event it is very helpful to mark out the site plan on the site. For instance, spray paint (using eco-friendly paints) the designated area for each stall and allocate a numbered slot for each stall holder. Be sure to inform the park manager that you are doing this and that the paint you are using will wash away easily.

Think carefully about what activities can go along side each other. A sports match beside a dog display maybe distracting for the dogs and players. Fairground rides can sometimes be accompanied by very loud music and can drown out music or performances on stage. Historical re-enactments can involve cannon and/or archery demonstrations, be sure you receive a complete programme from the re-enactment group of their intentions on the day. They will also advise you on safety precautions.

Do not spread the event too thinly over the site. If it is a large site don't try and cover every corner. Focus the event in one area but if trying to promote the whole park, give guided tours (see toolkit how to run a guided tour). Some activities, as mentioned above, need to be situated away from the main event due to safety issues but make sure it is advertised well through announcements, signage and the programme. Think about access issues when situating the activities.

Power generation is an issue at most events. Access to power could be a factor that dictates where the stage is positioned. However generators can over come some problems but ensure there is space so that they can be cordoned off.

Be aware of noise generated from the event. If possible position the stage away from residential areas or behind trees or other objects that will dampen the sound. It is often a good idea to pop a notice through the doors of the surrounding residents, this gives them warning that it is happening and helps to avoid any conflict on the day.

The licensing of an event may determine some of the site plan. Make sure you know of any restrictions and precautions required by the council or police before you start planning.

Don't forget to designate an information point, first aid point and a point to find lost children. They can all be at the same place if helpful.

Consider accessibility issues when designing the site plan (see access toolkit).

Suppliers and participants of the event may need to access the site by vehicle. It maybe wise to designate a route considering power lines, topography and ground condition.

If the programme is being handed out prior to the event date, include clear directions to the site, along with public transport routes and car parking facilities. Naming some nearby streets and well known areas or building should help direct the public to the event.

If the main car park for the event is off site – a map to it's location to handout to motorists at the main gate can be very useful.

Producing a map in the programme and using signs on site should give enough guidance to the public.

Producing several versions of the site map for different groups may be advantageous. Stall holders and participants need to be guided to where they are showcasing. Security and the police may need a more detailed map as may the main organisers. The public need a clear map of the site and the timed activities of the day.

Health and safety is an obvious factor when site planning, be sure to note the risk assessment when designing the site plan. This is once again a site specific issue. You will always need emergency routes on

Useful organisations to work with

Local Authority

Other groups that may have hosted events in the past on the same site. They have site specific experience and can advice on dos and don'ts

The police

RAC can produce signs at a cost to direct people to the site

Although the following webpage is aimed more towards the organisation of larger music events, it has some good tips and ideas, including some helpful check lists:

<http://demo.tourismnortheast.co.uk/pages/information-sheets/planning-your-event/site-planning>

What to do if it rains

Be prepared to have a plan B if there is rain forecast for the day of the event or there is heavy rain the days leading up to the event, resulting in a waterlogged park. In case of a waterlogged park, assess the entire park and if possible relocate the event in another area of the park i.e. higher ground, a well drained area, away from any rivers or water features.

If it rains on the day have some spare gazebos on hand. These can be used to shelter a crowd that are viewing performances in front of a stage or an arena. Stalls may need to be relocated in a marquee.

It is highly recommended that what ever the weather forecast is, the stage is covered along with any electrical equipment.

What to do next

Keep the site plan and note any problems and successes of the design of the plan. This will help when planning future events or assisting other groups in the event design layout of the site.

Written by Oonagh Kelleher, GreenSpace 2008

Tel: 0118 946 9060 Email: info@green-space.org.uk Website: www.green-space.org.uk

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Preliminary Site Assessment Checklist

Factors	Description	Comments
Entry and Exit points	How many? Pedestrian or vehicle access? Allow for emergency access? Easily accessible? Well signed?	
Emergency Routes	Is there access to all areas on site by emergency vehicle?	
Safety of Site	Are there features of the site that would need to be marked and could pose a risk and effect the site plan e.g. river, ponds, area of fly tipping.	
Power points	Where are the power points? Are they easily accessible? Do vehicles need to be made aware of overhead power lines?	
Central area/stage	Are there many options for the positioning of the central arena/stage? Which is the most appropriate and why? Is there enough space for the audience?	
Stall Area	Is the topography reasonably level? Is the area prone to flooding? Is there enough room for people to circulate around the stalls?	
Parking	Is the car park in reasonable distance from the event? Is there an area for disabled parking? If parking in the park (in an area that is not usually designated for parking) is the ground and topography suitable?	

Risk Assessment Template

Area/ Location:

Task requiring assessment:

Person at risk (Under 18's require special consideration):

Slips/Trips	Fire	Machinery	Work at Height	Ejection of materials
Pressure Systems	Electricity	Vehicles	Noise	Lone Working
Temperature extremes	Hazardous Substances – Make specific COSHH Assessment		Manual Handling Operations – Make Specific Manual Handling Assessment	

Hazards Identified	Hazard Severity (H)					Likelihood of Exposure (L)					Risk Rating (H) x (L)
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
c)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
b)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
c)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
d)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
e)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
f)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
g)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	

H Factors: 5 = serious/death; 3 = moderate injury; 1 = minor/negligible

L Factors: 5 = definitely likely; 3 = likely; 1 = highly unlikely

Where any risk rating (H) x (L) is 8 or greater, control measures are required

Existing Control Measures in Place

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
g)

Additional Control Measures Necessary to Reduce the Risk to Lowest Acceptable Level

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
g)

Person responsible for maintaining and ensuring the introduction of existing/additional control measures

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
g)

Emergency Procedures for serious and imminent danger, e.g. fire, first aid, bomb threat

i)
ii)

Other Comments and observation

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Assessor

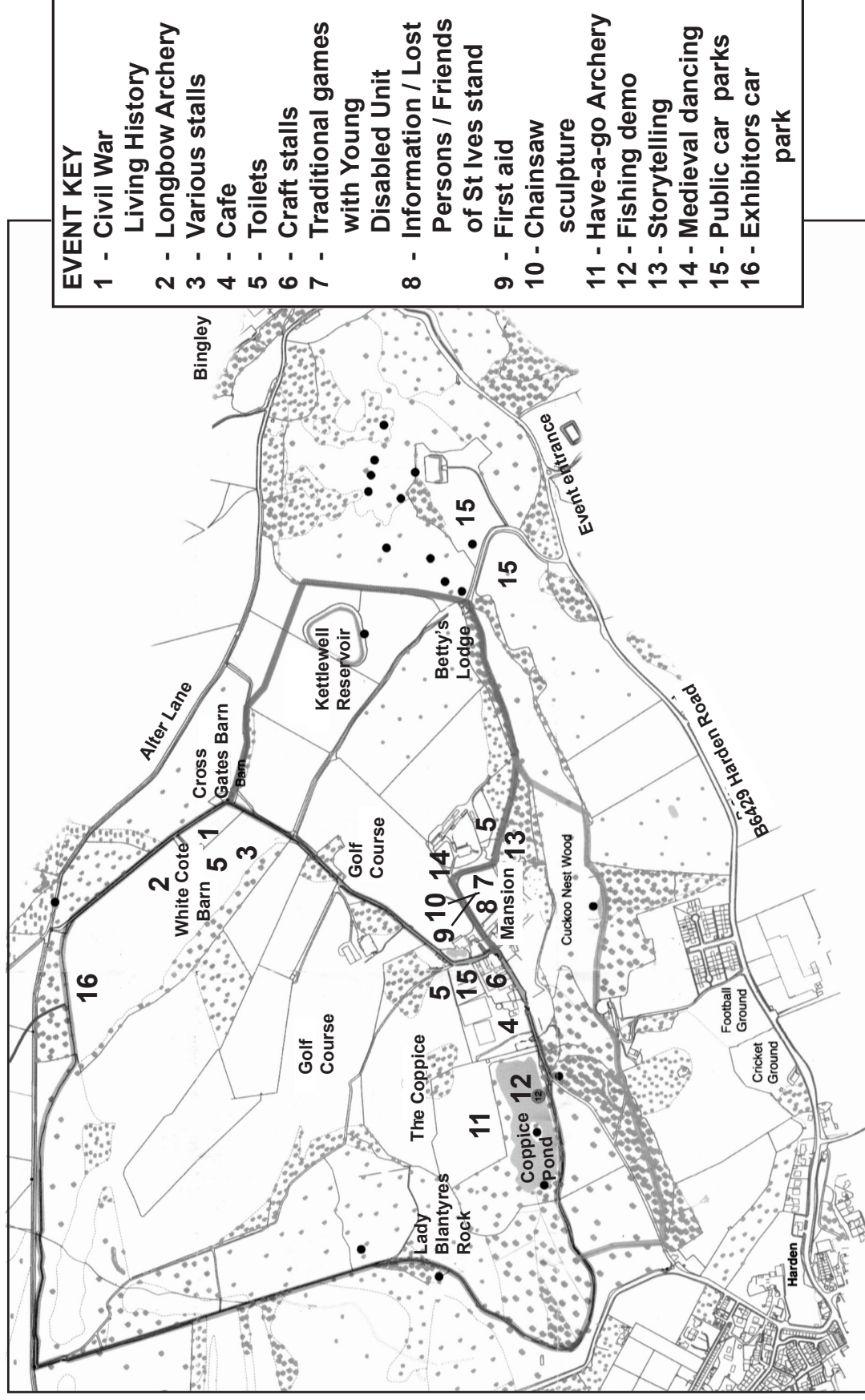
Date

Review date (no more than 3 years)

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Assessment must be reviews if circumstances change or there is reason to believe that this assessment is not valid.

Map of St Ives Estate, Bingley - Park It! event 2007



Map of St James' Park, Southampton

Park It! event 2007

