

Proposals for Vere Foster and Moyard play-park sites.



2014.

Consultees.

Proposal for relocation of the play-park by the Belfast City Council, in consultation with:

- Local residents.
- Young people from the Matt Talbot Youth Centre.
- Elected political representatives.
- Moyard and Springfield Park Residents' Association.

Following positive feedback from the above and similarly at community level, the opinions are strongly in favour of the Belfast City Council acquiring a section of the Vere Foster site to relocate the play-park from the top of Moyard Parade.

See enclosed map for suggested split of the site to accommodate the play-park and youth centre.

Vere Foster site.

The Vere Foster site became vacant in 2011 with the demolition of the former primary school and apart from the youth centre built on part of the land in 1983 the rest is lying idle.

Prior to the school closure, the youth centre had use of the school play grounds for after school activities, sporting events and summer schemes.

This was a great facility, extensively used by the young people and noticeably missed in the past couple of years.



Former school play ground at the back of the youth centre. This was the part most used by young people but after demolition of the school building, the ground was left uneven and could not be used for health and safety reasons.

Moyard play-park.

The play park is situated at the top end of Moyard Parade on land owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but maintenance is carried out by the Belfast City Council.

The park is on an isolated part of the estate beside the fields leading to the seven acre site and interface.

On the field just above the park, yearly bonfires have been light attracting up to a hundred young people at a time to party and engage in recreational rioting on the interface or other forms of antisocial behaviour.

In August 2013, before and after the bonfire a crowd of up to thirty teenagers camped on the grass in front of the park partying for a full weekend. All the neighbours complained about the noise, antisocial behaviour and public use of gardens and street as toilets.



Virtually from the day the park was built vandalism occurred with swings being cut down and other damage done in a near weekly basis.

Large pieces of equipment have been replaced at different times over the years and fires have been light causing severe damage to ground covering and various items of equipment. Litter and glass regularly covers the ground leaving it unsafe for children to use.

Over the years, some young people have used it as a meeting place for criminal or anti-social purposes and as well as damaging park equipment caused endless problems for local residents who tried to manage the property for the benefit of the local community.

A blind spot between the houses and park provided cover for underage drinkers who regularly congregate there and have burnt bins, fences and gates over the years. This has led to ongoing confrontations between young people and local residents.

In the 2008 hotspots report, it was referred to as a totally unsuitable place for a play park.



Waste ground at front of play-park where teenagers regularly gather during summer months.

The path to the left was originally intended for local access to the seven acre site and lower slopes of the mountain for recreation and picnics. Unfortunately, it was hijacked by young people who used it as access to the interface and for storing firewood prior to having a bone-fire on the other side of the fence.

Relocation of the play-park and extended facilities for the youth centre.

Recognising that a play-park is a much needed facility, it is clearly located in the wrong place. This view is supported not just by the residents living beside the park but elected representatives, residents Association and a large percentage of the local population.

Proposal for the Belfast city council to relocate the play-park.

The proposal is to relocate the play-park from its current position to the Vere Foster site.

The most suitable location on the site would be to the right hand side where the previous junior block stood. There is ample space similar to the measurements of the current play-park to relocate.

It is a common belief, that if the play-park is relocated to this site it should allow for greater security, high visibility to deter vandalism and more positive use from a wider section of the community.

Proposal for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The current play-park land at top of Moyard Parade, be returned to the NIHE for housing.

In future consultation with the NIHE and a potential housing association, it is believed housing at this location will be a big factor in the reduction of antisocial behaviour in the area and no longer a collection point for outsiders.

Proposals for the Belfast Education & Library Board Youth Service.

There is a big need for outdoor play facilities for the youth centre. This is widely supported by the local community, elected representatives, both resident association's, youth centre staff and young people who recently did a video presentation illustrating their vision for future use of the site.

There is ample evidence to believe that any investment in outdoor facilities will be used to the maximum by the youth centre and provide much needed and enhanced outdoor provision for the young people of the wider community.

Therefore based on this, the proposal is for the BELB youth service to invest in the development of a portion of the land for youth service use.

While it is envisaged the site will be evenly split between the BCC and BELB, this will require further discussion with both representatives to determine how much land is needed. This is something we feel needs done as soon as possible.

Our collective vision.

In consideration the views and opinions of all concerned, while outdoor play and sporting facilities are the immediate interest, sufficient land should be kept available for future development. In this we see the need for some form of extension to the current youth centre to meet existing and future needs.

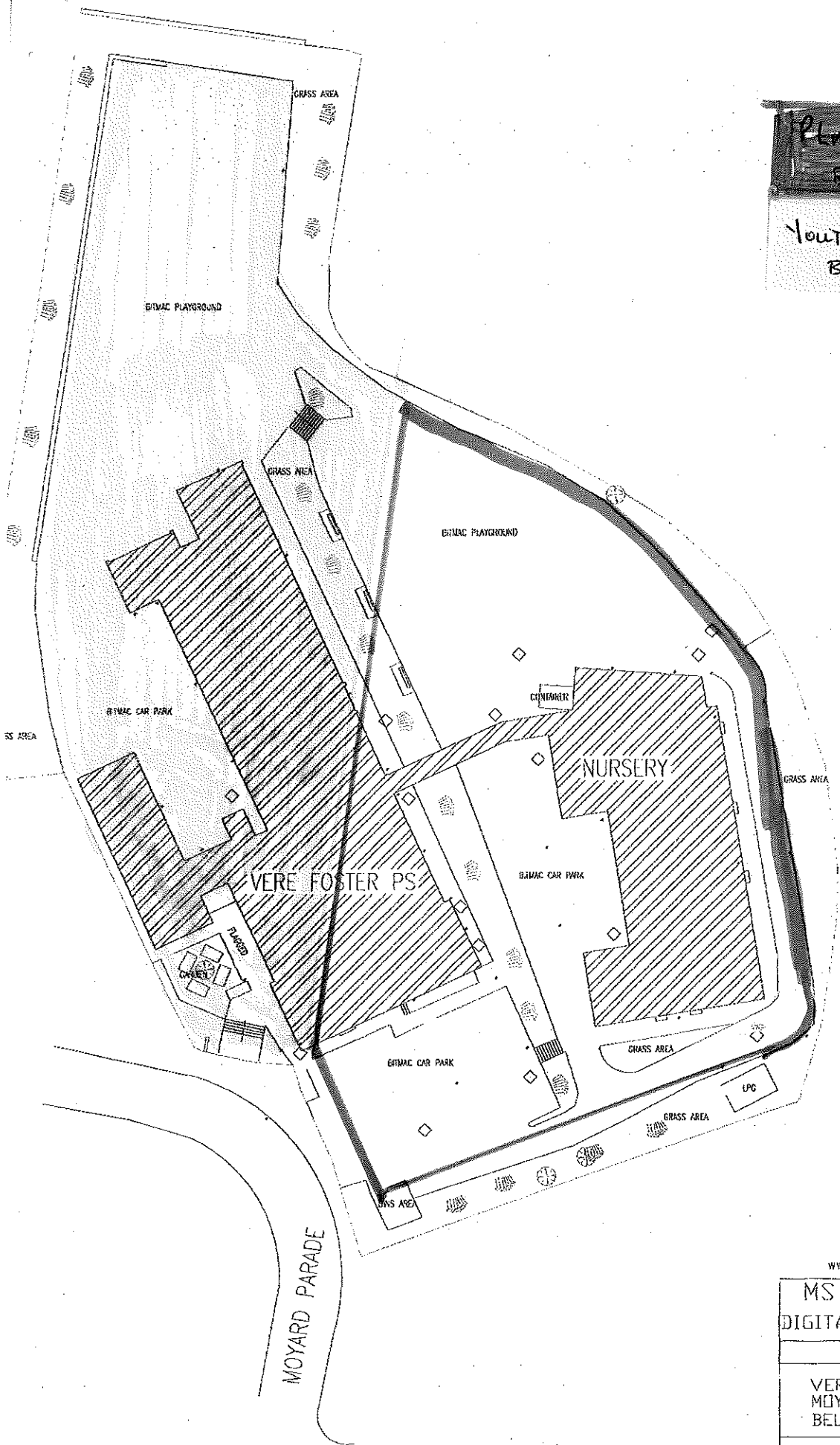
Reflecting on our vision for the remainder of the site, we have drawn up a short list of ideas which hopefully can be implemented:

- 3G floodlight pitch
- Outdoor gym
- Circular fire pit with surround seating
- Landscaped BBQ area with fixed bench seating.
- Allotments. This would refer to raised bed for growing vegetables.

To all concerned. This is a draft copy of a proposal to the NIHE, BCC and BELB.

If you have anything to add or change, please contact me brianmclaughlin2011@gmail.com or 07942015013

Play Park
B.C.C.
YOUTH CENTRE
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