

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE MONUMENT

SMALL HEATH PARK, YARDLEY

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Significance of 21st February

The area of Birmingham surrounding Small Heath Park is home to the largest Bangladeshi community in the city and one of the biggest in the UK. The Mother Language commemoration is an annual event that takes place in Small Heath Park on 21st February. The significance of this date lies in the fact that it was the day in 1952 when students from the University and colleges in Dhaka demonstrated in large numbers for the recognition of Bengali as their national language. The then government of East Pakistan countered the demonstration with violence and a number of students were killed. This event is commemorated for the courage the students showed in sacrificing their lives for their mother language.

Subsequently International Mother Language day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999. On 16th May 2009 the United Nations General Assembly called on its member states "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by people of the world". To this end and in recognition of the sacrifice in Dhaka, 21st February is now celebrated as the International Mother Language Day in many countries.

Significance of Small Heath Park

Small Heath Park is an important site for the Bangladeshi community. On 28th March 1971 thousands of Bangladeshis gathered there in support of Bangladesh's independence. This day is still observed each year at Small Heath Park by the Bangladeshi community in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Each year a temporary structure is built to mark the day and around 400 people gather before midnight on the eve of 21 February to pay their respects to those who lost their lives and to promote the freedom to speak one's mother tongue, peace and cultural diversity.

The need for a permanent fixture

There is an overwhelming interest and desire within the community for a permanent monument evidenced by the support shown by the numbers gathered each year, for the last 4 or 5 years around the temporary structure including the Bangladeshi Assistant High Commissioner. The structure will provide a cultural focus within the park and reflect its history as the first location where the Bangladesh flag was raised abroad following its recognition as an independent nation. It will also form a backdrop for events and community cultural activities throughout the year. To drive the project forward a committee, The International Mother Language Monument Project, has been established through the Assistant High Commissioner's office, which has raised funds for its erection and future maintenance.

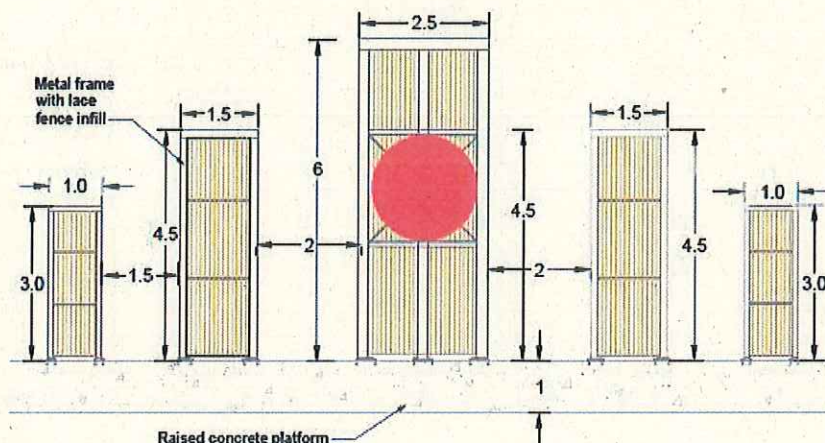
Location

The Council's Parks Service have identified an area within Small heath Park that could be made available for the monument accessed from the main circulatory path to the north of the park adjacent to Coventry Road. This is an open area of grass set against a back drop of trees and the structure will be orientated to face into the park whilst still being visible from the public highway. It will be approached by a short path and a circular paved area. See location plan below:



Monument design and materials

The design of the structure is based on the original monument erected in Dhaka, and represents a mother and her family. It comprises 5 pieces of steel framework with the centre piece (the mother) standing 6m tall by 2.5m wide, the top third cantilevered, with a circular disc fixed to the centre of the frame at the front. The two pieces either side of the centre piece are 4.5m tall by 1.5m wide and the outer pieces are 3m tall by 1m wide. They all have infill panels of 16mm vertical round bars, are galvanised and polyester powder-coated in white with the circular disc in red. The five pieces are fitted via steel base plates to a 1m high by 2m wide polished concrete plinth arranged in an arc with a 500mm polished concrete seat in front engraved with some lines of poetry celebrating mother tongue.



Trees

The location has been chosen to impact minimally on the surrounding trees but it is required to remove one small struggling cherry tree. The structure and excavations for the foundations will be outside the root protection zones of the remaining trees which will create an attractive back drop to the monument. The removal of the tree has been discussed with the City's Principal Arboriculturist, Alan Wallbank who advised that this would be acceptable given its condition. Its shown below just behind the camera column.



Community Consultation

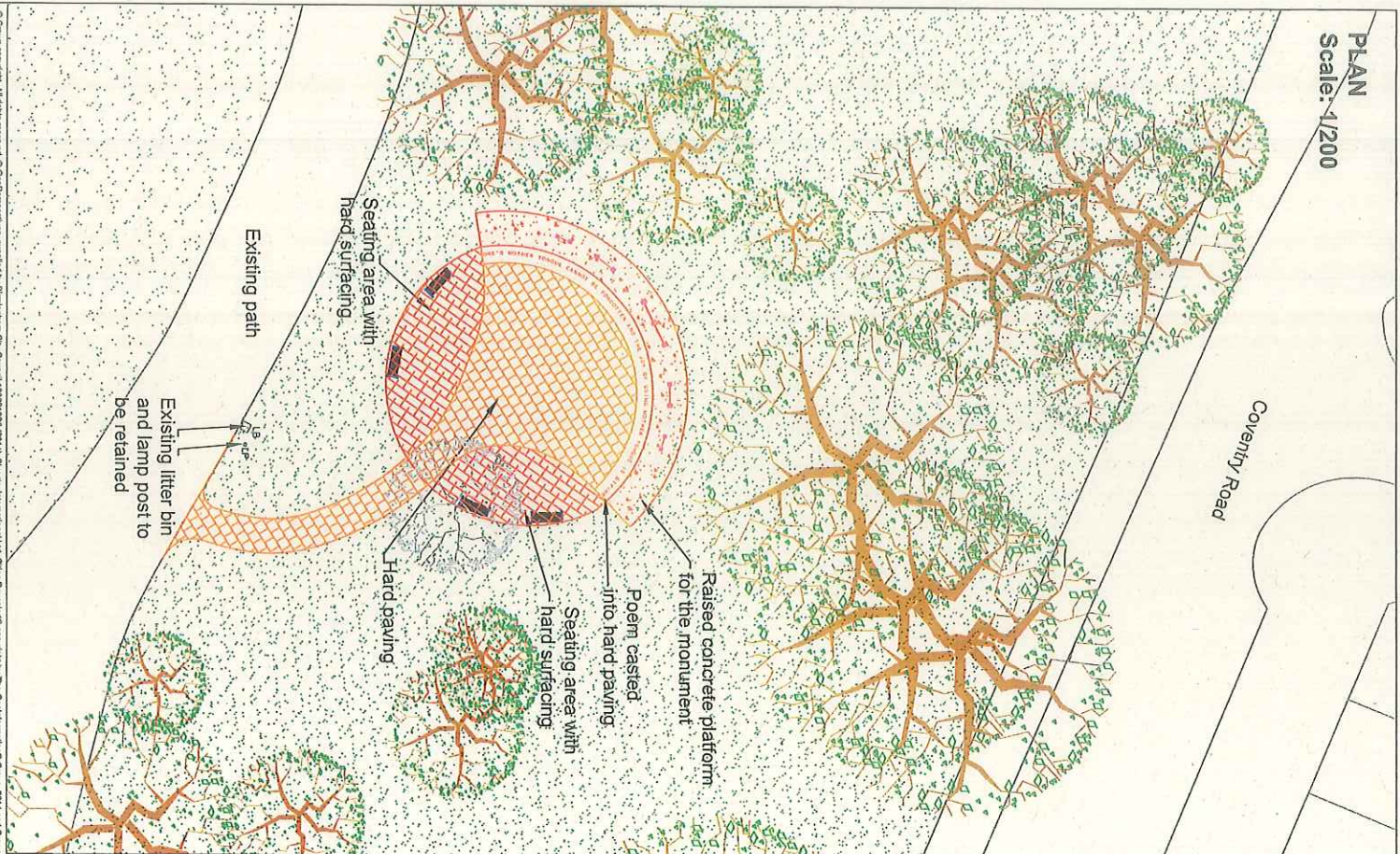
The International Mother Language Monument Project (IMLMP) has undertaken consultation within the local community and has a letter of support from Jess Philip's M.P. for Birmingham Yardley. The previous Bangladeshi Assistant High Commissioner presented the proposals last year to the Public Art Gateway Group and the IMLMP has met with the Friends of Small Heath Park, agreeing to present in due course the proposals to the Small Heath Ward Committee and the Trusts and Charities Committee, who manage the park on behalf of the Trust, and have been notified through this application.

Programme

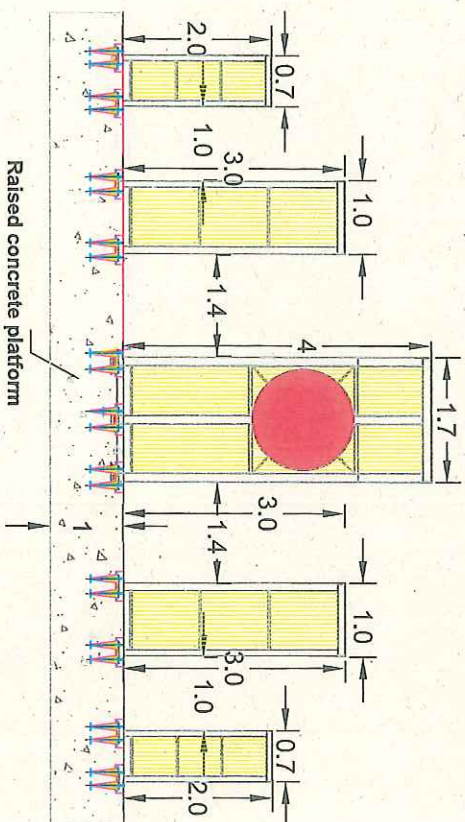
It is intended to complete the construction of the monument, subject to all necessary approvals by February 2020 in time for the 2020 International Mother Language day celebrations.

23rd July 2019

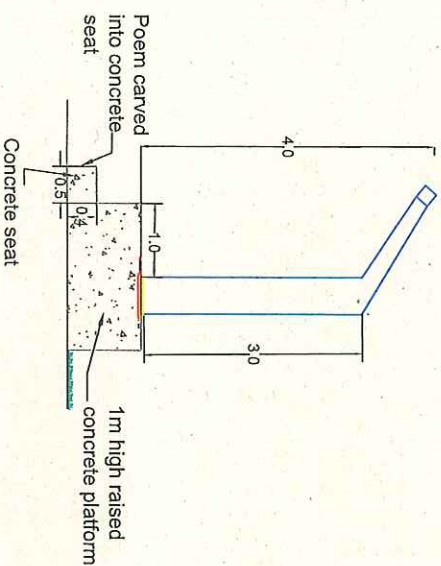
The Landscape Practice Group
Birmingham City Council
1, Lancaster Circus
Queensway,
Birmingham B2 2BL



FRONT ELEVATION OF THE MONUMENT
Scale: 1/50



SIDE ELEVATION OF THE MONUMENT
Scale: 1/50



D C/J Nov/19 Elevation plan amended after revised structural design
C C/J Oct/19 Height of the monument has been reduced to 4m + 1m plinth following meeting with Planning

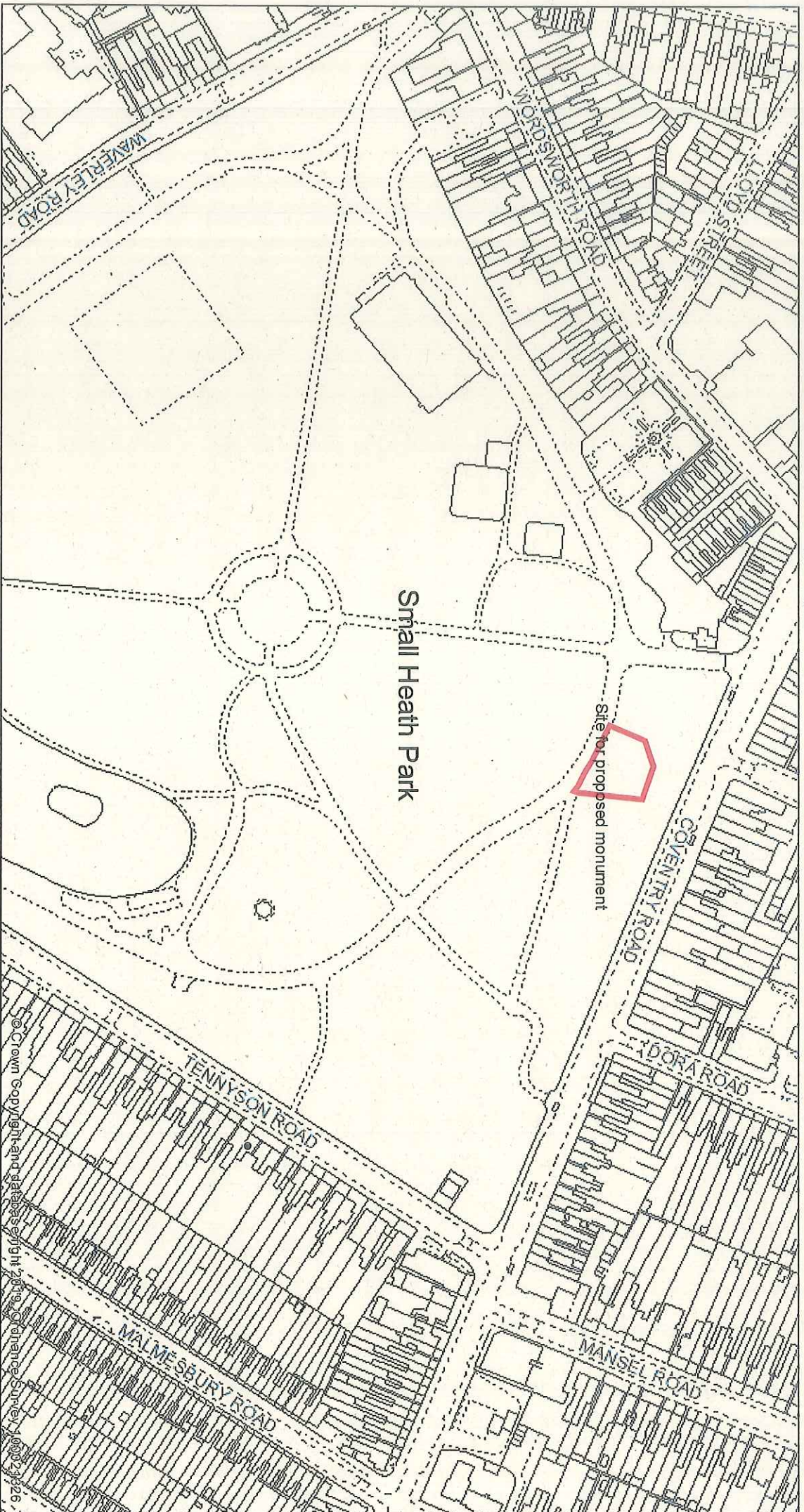


Client: HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Project: INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE MONUMENT AT SMALL HEATH PARK
Title: LAYOUT PLAN AND ELEVATIONS

Drawing Number: 80442/L02
Revision: D

Do not scale from this drawing.
A2 KS SHOWN C/J 21.5.2019 DRAFT
0 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m 60m 70m 80m 90m 100m
VP0404 Small Heath Park Landscape Monument Design Development Small Heath Park Landscape Monument Layout Plan no.2 11.10.19.dwg

Small Heath Park Language Monument, Location Plan 80442/L01



Date of Map Creation: 19/07/2019

Map Created By: RSC

Scale: 1:2,500

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