

Introduction:

This heritage statement covers the proposed development of a play area near to Edisford Bridge Picnic area, and the impact it may pose to the significance of Edisford Bridge and Thistle Manor, also known as Roefield. It considers the height and impact against the setting for both of the above-mentioned buildings from the play area, and the mitigating conditions considered.

Site and Surroundings:

The current usage of the proposed site is as a trodden-grass pathway, stemming from the car park and picnic area nearby the steep riverbank of the river Ribble, to the larger Edisford Road car park and the B6243 road. There are trees to the north and west of the site, and the site area gradually slopes toward the river. Both listed buildings are to the north of the site; Thistle Manor is north-easterly across the B6243, approximately ninety metres away, Edisford Bridge is to the north-west, and is approximately eighty metres from site. Thistle Manor is surrounded by walls, and the section facing the site has bushes and taller trees between, restricting view to the site from Thistle Manor. Driving eastbound on Edisford Bridge, you are able to see the site on the right-hand side, where the tree cover breaks across the river.

From the projected elevation plans, the highest multiplay unit for the site would be 7.05m in height, with the remainder of the equipment not exceeding 4m in height. While this would ordinarily be noticeable, the taller tree cover on the north of the proposed site helps to disguise the multiplay unit. In these plans as well, we will overlay part of the current trodden-grass pathway with wet pour surfacing on an MOT Type 1 Stone base. This surfacing is permeable, meaning standing water would not accumulate during rain.

Significance of the listed buildings:

Thistle Manor and its former stable, also named as Roefield, were built in the 18th century. It was listed for special architectural or historic interest. The listing groups the Former Stables to Roefield and Thistle Manor/Roefield. Both Roefield and its stables have modern extensions to accommodate their current usages, being a care facility and leisure centre, respectively. A map dating back from 1700 shows fields in its area named Chapel Ground and Far Chapel Ground and might have been a Leper Hospital in the time prior to its construction.

Edisford (Eadsford) Bridge is a sandstone bridge dating back to Medieval times, with no exact date given, and carries the B6243 over the river Ribble. It was listed for special architectural or historic interest and is classified as a scheduled monument. Previous works to the bridge include increasing the width from 8 ft (~2.44m) to approximately 20 ft (~6.1m) on the southern side, accommodating vehicles better for its current purpose.

The bridge also was listed in two stages: the four eastern arches in May 1950, and the remaining five in November 1954. There are records of a bridge here dating back to 1339 and featured in a J. M. W. Turner painting in 1799, where the largest arch is thought to have replaced two smaller arches.

Description of the Site:

The site consists of varying play equipment, such as climbing rocks, multiplay units, sensory and inclusive equipment, additional furniture, and play panels. Surrounding the site is a tree we are working around in the east, and the B6243 to the north, where the two listed buildings are. To the west is a car park and, further east, the River Ribble. There is a downward gradient towards the riverbank.

Two types of surfacing will be used to replace the trodden-grass path and to provide ample safety if falling from the equipment: wet pour and Wicksteed Safety Grass. Wicksteed Safety Grass is a rubber honeycomb matting that is installed into grass, providing grass retention and impact absorption, and is permeable, especially as the grass grows through, and provides the same impact protection even when the grass grows over. Wet pour surfacing is a permeable, rubber surface used for pathways and impact-absorbing surfaces in play areas. Additionally, it is slip resistant and non-abrasive and can be coloured to create graphics and more. This surfacing is laid on top of baseworks consisting of MOT type 1 stone at 100mm depth instead of grass, with the type of stone used further improving drainage and reducing surface water retention.

This rubber is from recycled sources if black or eco-fleck, with the base wet pour used always being recycled, where coloured wet pour has a 2cm depth of virgin rubber. While we will be using block paving for part of the sensory pathway, it is of mixed material and included permeable material. The remaining EcoTumble parts of the sensory pathway perform similarly to wet pour and is manufactured from recycled tyres and foregoes an engineered base.

Heritage Impact assessment:

The impact of the play area development on the Roefield/Thistle Manor buildings will be minimal to none. From a significance perspective, while this will affect the setting from across the road, there is sufficient cover with foliage to minimise this, being able to cover the taller items in the play area from view, even with the seven-metre-tall central tower multiplay unit.

Edisford Bridge, however, will be affected slightly more. Like previously stated, the site of the play area, and the play area itself, will be visible from the road, affecting the setting of the bridge. While working on site, to minimise any damage from large transport vehicles onto site, avoiding use of the bridge for these vehicles would be paramount, especially in inclement weather. Additionally, reducing or eliminating flood

risk was of concern, hence the choice in porous or permeable surfacing solutions. Ultimately, when the play area is erected, there will be minimal impact on the significance of Edisford Bridge.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the construction of the play area in the proposed location, will disrupt the setting of either listed building significantly. With Edisford Bridge, the surfacing being laid with the play area could concern the potential flood risk over natural grass, however, attached with this application shows the permeability of wet pour surfacing and the baseworks associated. Equally, while the height of the play area being installed could disturb the setting from the Roefield buildings, the tree cover already in place mitigates this sufficiently.