

Chair's Report for 2018-19

Marketing Exercise

Enfield Council carried out a marketing exercise from September to December 2018 inviting expressions of interest in restoring and developing Broomfield House and stableyard. They received no positive responses as regards the House but some interest in the stableyard for housing.

Broomfield House Partnership Board

There have been two Broomfield House Partnership Board meetings since the last AGM and one workshop.

The Board focussed on options for rebuilding/restoring Broomfield House. Six main options were considered with a number of sub-option variants. These options ranged from "Do Nothing" to "Complete Demolition". Their potential costs were set against potential funding to judge the likely practicality of each option.

Doing nothing would incur maintenance costs but give no community benefit, and full restoration has proved to be unfundable, and so were ruled out. We opposed preserving only some of the structure as a ruin and complete demolition. For a variety of reasons we also opposed two options for rebuilding on half the footprint.

Our preference was for restoring the complete exterior, accepting that the interior restoration could follow. The first phase would however include a café.

Given the continuing failure to find funding, and the priority of restoring the House, we very reluctantly agreed that housing development in the stableyard should be explored. The test is whether a surplus from development in the stableyard would cover the costs of the full footprint, limited fit out of the House.

Workshop

Following an intervention by Councillors, a workshop was held on 28 March to agree on a way ahead based on this work. The Council Executive Management Team subsequently agreed work should go ahead on the basis of the full footprint, limited fit out, option. However a condition is that this would have to be funded at no cost to the Council with enabling funding coming from the housing development in the stableyard.

The aim is to produce a costed feasibility study to be reported to the Council in the spring. A design team led by Pick Everard (and including a specialist heritage architects and cost consultants) has been appointed to carry out the work.

Dugdale Centre Exhibition

In conjunction with the Museum of Enfield we organised a very successful exhibition "Hidden Treasures: Revealing Broomfield House and Park" at the Dugdale Centre which ran from July 2018 to April 2019. The centre piece was the Minerva panel restored by Arte Conservation which was funded

by the Trust and a supporting grant from the Enfield Society. 12,392 visits were recorded. We also held talks in the Dugdale Centre, Palmers Green Library, and led guided walks in the park.

For those who have not seen it, a short film on the Minerva restoration is on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URzSz3OK1X0>

The aim is for the restored panel to be placed on permanent display on the first floor of the Dugdale Centre.

Park Opening Memorial

As an adjunct to work on the House, I have negotiated a £6,000 grant from the Heritage of London Trust to restore the memorial which commemorates the purchase of the Park in 1903.

Arrangements are underway for the work to begin.

Maintenance Issues

Sadly, Broomfield House suffered its fourth fire in April, possibly caused by rough sleepers using the basement. Ironically Enfield had decided to fund a replacement hoarding, partly because of the risk of intruders suffering harm for which the Council might well be held to be at fault. This was installed in May.

The Council has removed unstable structures in the stableyard cottages following the 2017 fire, and re-roofed the stable block to protect the interior. Should the House be demolished in spite of our opposition, there may be a possibility of at least part of the stableyard being renovated for community use, but this is far from being worked up as a concept. Should Broomfield House be demolished, the temptation to use the stableyard for housing is likely to be irresistible.