

Chairman's Report for 2022-23

We believe that Broomfield House could have been repaired/restored/rebuilt at any stage after the first fire in 1984, but three more fires and intervening decay gradually made this more difficult and more expensive. This coincided with potential funds becoming scarcer.

The Trust proved that restoration of salvaged material was possible by arranging for the Minerva panel to be reconstructed, restored and conserved, and put on display in the Museum of Enfield. However, this represents only a tiny fraction of cost of the major works which would be required for the whole building. Very regretfully finding the money for restoration of the house (or even any form of replacement building) has proved impossible.

Since the last AGM, the Trust and Friends of Broomfield Park have had a series of meetings with Enfield Council. To summarise, these have been continuations of the Council proposals to demolish Broomfield House and "memorialise" it.

Because the House, at the centre of a listed park, is Grade II * itself, listed building consent is required from the Department of Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport before demolition can begin.

After consultation with Historic England and other concerned bodies, the council is pursuing a proposal which will result in demolition of an unsafe structure, the house, and memorialise it in some way. The intention is to restore the relationship of Broomfield House to the historic park and to the archaeological and horticultural heritage of the Baroque gardens.

There is therefore a possibility that elements of the house's fabric could be retained, giving some sense of the size and position of the original house, incorporated into a whole designed to give the viewer a feel for the House's significance in the park.

Following initial enquiries with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in September 2022 an Expression of Interest was submitted under the project title "Unlocking Broomfield Park for the Community".

The next step is to submit a Round 1 application to the NLHF by 17 August. If successful the process would move in to a Development Phase which would

run from Spring 2024 to Autumn 2025, followed by the more detailed Round 2 application in late 2025 for the Delivery Phase, with a hoped start date for the work in early 2026.

Taking in to account other restoration work in the park (on the Conservatory, Gazebo, Remembrance Garden and Boating Lake), the area of interest under consideration focuses on the footprint of the House, the rear lawn and the north and central lakes. Given uncertainties about the costs of the project, extending this initial bid to include the southern lake is very unlikely.

However, success in this bid would hopefully open subsequent approaches to the NHLF. The eventual objective would be to restore all the baroque water garden.

Interested local bodies, (the Broomfield House Trust, Friends of Broomfield Park, the Enfield Society and the Southgate and District Civic Voice) have been involved in the discussions, but consultations are now being widened. Depending on the response to the stage one bid, consultations will be focused on the way the “memorialisation will be carried out.

The council is currently testing some initial ideas and a programme of activities with residents and park users. They welcome ideas and feedback which can be submitted by completing a short survey by Sunday August 6, 2023.

Complete the ['Unlocking Broomfield Park for the Community'](#) survey.

The Stableyard and Salvaged items

The Trust has concerns about the fate of items salvaged from the House and in store, and more significantly the stableyard. Although the Trust’s main concern has always been the house, its registered objectives include the stableyard and other heritage buildings in the park.

An important statement from English Heritage relating to the current project sent to the council in July 2022 includes the following:

We would expect your scheme to secure a long-term solution for the salvaged barley-twist balusters, timber panelling and the Lanscroun murals. We therefore recommend that you seek to appoint appropriate expertise to further understand the significance of these elements and fully consider a wide range of options for their future.

We also urge you to bring forward proposals to secure the repair and reinstatement

of the derelict stable block, as well as to pursue your proposals to restore elements of the designed landscape.

At the time of writing, it's not clear what progress has been made on these key issues, nor whether this will affect the Lottery Fund's view of the upcoming bid. The belief is however that these issues will not need to be addressed until the Development phase. We will post any updates as things become clearer.

The Gazebo

Work has begun on the restoration of this Grade II structure. However, this was delayed by a belated recognition that though planning consent had been granted, the requirement to meet specific conditions attached to the planning permission had been overlooked. However, even a cursory view of the structure as it is suggests that restoration is only just in time to prevent terminal decay.

Update: The conditions for materials (3) schedule of works (4) in respect of the repair and restoration of Grade II Listed gazebo have been discharged, so there should be no obstacles to the work going ahead.