

Broomfield House Update

The latest position on Broomfield House is as set out in the update to 18th October Cabinet. Point 7 below is what officers are currently working on. The results of the marketing are programmed for reporting to Members later next year. Meanwhile the next meeting of the Broomfield Partnership Board is scheduled for 16th January 2018.

1. Broomfield House is a Grade II* listed building. The house is the focus for the Grade II registered historic park and its stable block (not previously open to the public) is also listed Grade II*. Both House and stables are included within Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. An integrated strategy is needed for the House and Stables.
2. Following a series of fires in the 1980's and 1990's numerous schemes for the restoration and reuse of Broomfield House have been put forward, but have not been possible to bring to fruition. The expectations and hope to recreate a building of similar appearance and use to that which existed before the first fire have never been able to be achieved in a way acceptable to the local community and residents. The schemes that came forward were either too commercial or unfunded / unviable. The most recent of which was a lottery application in 2012/13 for funding to establish a heritage and learning centre, which was not supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
3. In planning designation terms, development in the stable yard would only be justified if for example, it generated funds towards the repair of the listed buildings, but the site would not otherwise be a development site.
4. A Partnership Board was established in October 2014 Chaired by Cllr Bambos Charalambous. Board membership includes the Broomfield House Trust, Friends of Broomfield Park and Historic England. The remit of the Board was to explore whether the House and Stables could be restored with lottery funding to provide public access and a viable future use. This was on the clear understanding that if the board were unsuccessful an application to the Secretary of State for the demolition of the remaining structure would be the default position.
5. The purpose of this agenda item is to update members on the progress of the Project Board. The Project Board have met ten times in the two years since it was established and overseen the production of a very significant amount of work. These outputs include studies on heritage significance, structural feasibility, use options, costs and soft market testing.
6. Structural surveys of the building remains have shown that only 20-30% of the remains could be restored as it stands. The remaining 70% of the structure is unviable for the use for which it was intended (see technical footnote). Any reconstruction of the House would therefore to a large extent be a replica rather than a restoration. All options will be examined from full reconstruction through to demolition, however for the reconstruction options the funding gap (the cost of repair and its market value on completion, including income from any new uses) could be as high as £9m. The covenant which restricts trade or business raises risks around the provision of any future income generating use. The HLF feedback is that they still have issues around the funding gap and how the proposed end-uses would meet their requirement for very secure long-term income generation and sustainable business viability.
7. In the coming months officers will undertake the further work which is required by Historic England, in accordance with government guidance (the National Planning Policy Guidance), on further testing of options.
8. The Council understand the frustration at the perceived lack of a resolution, however, it is not possible to consult local people on the future of Broomfield House until a limited range of options or a preferred scheme has been identified. This can only be evolved by fully testing

viability through the market. The extent to which development in the stable block / yard enables options for the House needs to be tested. Officers will undertake a marketing procedure to seek expressions of interest from a commercial partner (a process which takes 9-12 months). This will help test viability and inform future public consultation on options including the costs, pros and cons and trade-offs associated with each option.

9. As part of this work, officers will continue to work with the community on the alternative options and continue to liaise with the HLF. In particular, to obtain further feedback from the Heritage Lottery Fund on whether they would support a less costly partial restoration and reconstruction of the House (as HLF engagement to date has only been based on full reconstruction).
10. Once this work has been completed officers will be able to bring a full report to the Cabinet for a decision on the way ahead. Given the deteriorating condition of the remains and the risk of collapse of the supporting structure, vandalism and injury, the Council is determined to continue to work with the community to deliver a timely resolution.

Technical Footnote to point 6.

Whilst the majority of the brickwork could be retained and repaired, the majority of the building was of timber framed construction, that is not capable of repair and retention.

A drone survey has recently been carried out and the resulting video footage will be placed on the Council's website. This will aid understanding of the building construction and the limited fabric which remains.

The Conservation Management Plan, (Donald Insall Associates June 2016) states that 'no more than 20-30% of the historic fabric of the building remains.

The survey drawings in the Structural Appraisal Report (Conisbee July 2014) identify that the construction of the external envelope is brickwork on the ground floor (on the front elevation the brickwork is only below the window openings). Above this the walls are timber framed and rendered. The exception is the eastern corner (facing the lawn) which is brickwork through both storeys. The internal walls are mainly missing, but the evidence suggests they were timber construction, other than a couple of ground floor walls that are still present.

This report states that 'a large proportion of the timber elements are severely damaged and it is felt that the potential for stabilisation, repair or retention of these elements is unlikely to be viable. The masonry has suffered less damage and deterioration...Therefore these elements of the structure, including the chimney stacks, can be retained'.

The Structural Feasibility Study (Conisbee March 2017) states that the majority of the remaining masonry elements may be effectively refurbished and retained and has assessed that the percentage that could be refurbished 'would be in the order of 80-90%'.