

1. Council Statement on the Future of Broomfield House

The Council, working in partnership with the Broomfield House Partnership Board, aims to resolve the future of Broomfield House which is currently unsafe and a blight on the Park.

In March 2019 the Executive Director of Place, Sarah Cary in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, Cllr Ahmet Oykenner, approved further feasibility work be undertaken into the viability of delivering a shell reconstruction of Broomfield House. This would be cost neutral to the Council with funding arising from the disposal of the redundant fire damaged stable block / yard which was formerly used for staff accommodation for repair and development and without reliance upon obtaining grant aid.

Feasibility work will include pre application planning advice from Historic England and the Local Planning Authority and further market testing of the stable block / yard for a residential development.

The approval noted that the Council-led shell reconstruction envisages repair and reconstruction of the exterior shell of the building and reinstatement of essential interior structure that may be necessary to provide structural integrity. The interior will not be fitted out other than as a café on the ground floor and other suitable income generating uses will be investigated.

It is further noted that the outcome of the feasibility work will be reported to Cabinet for approval of the way forward. If the shell option is not viable, an application to the Secretary of State to review the listing and dismantling of the remaining structure would be the only remaining viable and deliverable alternative.

It was approved that the Partnership Board continue as a consultation body to oversee the development of the option.

A capital budget was approved to enable the shell option to be progressed and to enable the ongoing protection and maintenance of the house and related heritage assets over the next year.

Contact officer: Mark Bradbury, LBE Director of Property and Economy

2. Comments from The Broomfield House Trust and Friends of Broomfield Park

Over recent months the Council-led Broomfield House Partnership Board has examined a range of options for the reconstruction of Broomfield House. The Broomfield House Trust, the Friends of Broomfield Park and Historic England are represented on the Partnership Board.

These options range from a full heritage-standard repair and reconstruction of the House, partial reconstruction through to demolition. The funding implications of each option were examined. Although we would have wished to develop the stable yard for community use, the only combination of options and funding which approached the main aim of reconstructing and reopening the House relies on housing development in the stable yard.

We believe that if the House is reconstructed as proposed in the LBE statement it will be possible to attract further funding to complete the full reconstruction of the House and eventually, the restoration of the Lanscroon Murals. Attempting to attract full funding from commercial or charitable sources in one go has proved impossible, and partial reconstruction of the House would be inappropriate in both historic building and landscape terms. We found our views were consistent with the Conservation Architect who attended the last meeting of the Partnership Board and we look forward to seeing his ideas developed.

The Council's statement makes it clear that there are issues which need to be explored, but clearly if we are unsuccessful in resolving them the House is likely to be demolished. In the interim the Council sees the merit of ongoing funding for stabilising the house and protecting it (hoarding and surveillance) both on safety grounds and to meet Historic England requirements.

Colin Younger
Chair,
The Broomfield House Trust
10/5/2019