

Committee(s): Epping Forest Consultative – For Discussion Epping Forest and Commons – For Decision	Date(s): 130219 110319
Subject: Eagle Pond Draft Conservation Statement (SEF 7/19b)	Public
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces Paul Wilkinson, City Surveyor	For Decision
Report author: Paul Thomson, Superintendent of Epping Forest	

Summary

This report is necessary to seek the approval of the consultation draft of the Conservation Statement for the heritage landscape of Eagle Pond, Leyton Flats, prior to issuing the draft for consultation. Prior to becoming part of the Epping Forest arbitration award, Eagle Pond was connected with the Wanstead Infant Orphan Asylum grounds and the earlier more extensive Wanstead Park estate while today also forming part of the Snaresbrook Conservation Area.

The draft Conservation Statement suggests that Eagle Pond is largely of local significance to Snaresbrook and Epping Forest, but the pond possesses historical links to the Grade II* Wanstead Park and Grade II Snaresbrook Crown Court which are nationally significant. The draft Conservation Statement proposes 19 policies which will guide the conservation of the site's heritage value.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Offer any comment on the draft Eagle Pond Conservation Statement
- and subject to any such comments, approve the draft Conservation Statement for public consultation.

Main Report

Background

1. Section 7(3) of the Epping Forest Act 1878 obliges the Conservators to '*at all time as far as possible preserve the natural aspect of the Forest*'. While the definition natural aspect is not clearly defined in the Act, the description of the natural aspect within section 7 includes both heritage and nature conservation elements. The recognition of the nature conservation elements accurately

presages the later obligations to the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) included in subsequent legislation.

2. Epping Forest and its associated Buffer Land also contains a series of heritage buildings and heritage landscape elements which both reflect the Forest's character while distinguishing them from the remainder of the Forest. The heritage elements notably include Scheduled Monuments at Ambresbury Bank and Loughton Camp; Grade II* Registered Parks and Gardens at Copped Hall and Wanstead Parks; the Grade II* Warren House & Gardens; the Grade II Snaresbrook Crown Court, Gardens and Eagle Pond, together with locally listed landscapes such as Highams Parks and unlisted areas such as Knighton Wood, Paul's Nursery and Warlies Park, which as it happens, contains the Temple, a feature in the landscape which is another Scheduled Monument. Many of these heritage landscapes also coincide with Local Planning Authority Conservation Areas notified under section 69 and 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990.
3. To help guide the conservation of these buildings and landscapes the City Surveyor's Heritage Estate Section is funding the creation of Conservation Statements (CS) which will enable the significance and special character of historic places to be understood and consequently conserved in a sustainable manner as their public use and relevance continues to evolve.
4. Implicit in the term conservation is an acceptance of appropriate change as society's requirements for buildings or places alter over time. This objective is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018, which defines conservation as the 'process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains, and where appropriate, enhances its significance'.
5. Eagle Pond, originally named Snaresbrook Pond and then Snare Pond, forms one of these Heritage Landscapes. Eagle was assigned to the City Corporation by the Epping Forest Arbitrator in 1881 from the wider estate of the 1840 Wanstead Infant Orphan Asylum designed by George Gilbert Scott and William Bonython Moffatt. However, the landscaping appears to predate the construction of the Asylum and is likely to have been part of the extensive designs for the Wanstead Park Estate dating back to 1735. The pond now sits at the extreme north east edge of Leyton Flats and is immediately surrounded by modern and Edwardian residential development, which are designated as part of the Snaresbrook Conservation Area.

Current Position

6. Today, Eagle Pond is a popular natural amenity for local residents. Although part of Epping Forest, the relatively urban context of the pond and its proximity to roads, housing and the formal grounds of the Crown Court lend the site a particular character.
7. The consultants, Alan Baxter Ltd, were procured to complete a CS for the Eagle Pond during 2018.

Options

8. The CS details 19 policies:
 - Understanding (including intellectual access)
 - Ownership and management
 - Level of protection
 - Access and circulation
 - Archaeology
 - Dumping of food waste and litter
 - Trees on the dam
 - Invasive Non-Native Species
 - Absence of vegetation along north bank
 - Pollution from storm run-off from Snaresbrook Road
 - Loss of open habitat on the west side of the Pond
 - Feeding birds
 - Large numbers of Canada geese
 - Erosion of south bank
 - Lack of habitat diversity in the Pond
 - Climate change
 - Regular removal of accumulated silt

Proposals

9. It is proposed that, subject to your Committee approving the consultation draft, that the draft CS be issued for the first stage of external stakeholder consultation and in turn, for wider public consultation through the Epping Forest 'Inovem' Inclusionware™ portal.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

The recommendations of this report support the Corporate Plan with particular reference to the following aims:

a. Contribute to a flourishing society

- i. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- ii. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

b. Shape Outstanding Environments

- i. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
- ii. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment
- iii. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

And supports the Open Spaces Business Plan as follows:

a. Open Spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.

- i. Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced
- ii. London has clean air and mitigates flood risk and climate change

- iii. Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe
- iv. Our habitats are flourishing, biodiverse and resilient to change.

b. Spaces enrich people's lives.

- i. People enjoy good health and well being
- ii. Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
- iii. People feel welcome and included
- iv. People discover, learn and develop.

c. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

- i. Our practices are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable
- ii. London's natural capital and heritage assets are enhanced through our leadership, influence, investment, collaboration and innovation.

Implications

- 10. **Consultative Committee comments:** The Consultative Committee welcomed the context of the CS and hoped that some of the more aspirational objections would be achieved.
- 11. **Financial:** The CMP costs were within the City Surveyors approved Additional Works Programme budget. Most of the existing work programme reflected in the CS policies will be met from existing Local Risk budgets. The more aspirational policy elements do not represent financial commitments at this stage and would require requests for funding and grant arrangements to be approved before any implementation would be considered.
- 12. **Legal:** Section 4 of The Epping Forest Act of 1878 states that 'Epping Forest shall be regulated and managed under and in accordance with the Act'.
- 13. **Equalities:** An equalities impact assessment, if applicable, will be incorporated in the final draft of the CS.

Conclusion

- 14. Both Forest Management Plans and Conservation Statements are widely acknowledged as a best practice in the planning and management of Public Open Spaces where there are no major development proposals.
- 15. The draft CS for The Eagle Pond is presented to members for comment and approval prior to seeking the first stage of external consultation with the Local Planning Authorities and the relevant Government Agencies – Historic England and Natural England, together with statutory planning consultees The London Parks and Gardens Trust and the Georgian Group. A further draft of the CS will incorporate that external consultation, with a view to seeking wider public consultation in 2020.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Eagle Pond Conservation Statement

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