

Committee: Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For decision	Dated: 10-05-2021
Subject: Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan (SEF 22/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 11 and 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	-
What is the source of Funding?	-
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	-
Report of: Colin Buttery, Director of Open Spaces	For Decision
Report author: Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conservation - Epping Forest	

Summary

This report presents a brief summary of the Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan (PMP), prepared for the City of London Corporation by two expert consultants and part-funded by the statutory agencies, Historic England and Natural England. The purpose of the PMP was to provide a complete heritage and ecological assessment of the this Registered Park and Garden (RPG) Grade II* site and to make recommendations for the protection and long-term management of the exceptional heritage, whilst working in sympathy with the conservation and access management of Epping Forest. This report proposes that the full PMP itself is now more widely shared with key stakeholders.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- approve Option 1 below, to make the PMP publicly available and to allow dialogue with key stakeholders from 11th May 2021 onwards.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation acquired 295 hectares (ha) of the Copped Hall Estate in 1992 in order to protect the boundaries of the Forest from development and to provide support for the Forest's wildlife. This acquisition was one of a series of Buffer Lands acquisitions during the 1980s and early 1990s made to

protect the Forest in a strategy recognised and endorsed in October 1993 by Policy and Resources Committee.

2. Of this acquisition, 130ha lies within the 165ha national Registered Park and Garden designation (RPG). The remainder of the RPG area is in other ownership, including the hall and gardens owned by the Copped Hall Trust that also acquired their area in 1992 (see map at **Appendix 2**).
3. Copped Hall park and gardens are recorded as Grade II* on the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for England*. The national significance is recognised by Historic England's designation as Grade II* on its Register of Parks and Gardens (one of 38 registered sites in Essex, and 1610 registered sites nationwide –approximately 30% of all sites are Grade II*). Comparison with other estates regionally and nationally concludes that it was of a high status and contains a relatively rare package of relict features.
4. Within the City Corporation's ownership of Copped Hall, the Registered Park and Garden area, as well as the earlier historic boundaries of the park are divided, at the current time, into different land designations and occupiers (see map at **Appendix 2**). To the south of the M25 the Warren Plantation and Holly Hedge Field have been incorporated as Forest Land under the Epping Forest Act 1878, the latter field only incorporated in the year 2000 to mark the start of the new Millennium.
5. North of the motorway Copped Hall is divided into two Buffer Land compartments Copped Hall North and South (respectively Compartment nos. 54 and 55). The whole of Copped Hall South and some fields in Copped Hall North have been managed in-house since acquisition. The areas, including the Deer Park, were returned to and have been managed as grassland with the support of consecutive Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship grants in 1993, 2003 and 2008. The last of these agreements terminated in 2018.
6. The rest of Copped Hall North is under an agricultural tenancy. This is currently a 1-year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT), as recently approved by your Committee in March this year.
7. In 2015, a Conservation Statement for Copped Hall and the Buffer Lands was prepared by Historic Environment Associates ('*Copped Hall Conservation Statement*', March 2015). The Conservation Statement provided an outline assessment of the site's landscape and heritage importance and flagged up gaps in knowledge, providing pointers to further archive sources. It also helped to open an early dialogue with both Copped Hall Trust and the officers at Epping Forest District Council responsible for the Local Plan's Conservation Area status of Copped Hall.

Current Position

8. The PMP was commissioned in 2017, with 80% grant support from Historic England and Natural England. Two expert consultants in heritage assets, historic and farmed landscapes were engaged to carry out the detailed assessment of

Copped Hall's heritage and wildlife value with a view to providing advice and recommendations for management planning and external grant applications, particularly Countryside Stewardship.

9. In addition to cataloguing and assessing, in detail, the importance of the site and the key priorities for management, the PMP also sought to provide a framework for integrating the conservation actions across the multiple ownership of the RPG.
10. In addition to document research and extensive fieldwork during 2017 and 2018, the consultants also arranged discussions with Epping Forest management team and other officers and with the Copped Hall Trust. Following feedback and revisions from officers the PMP (in eight parts) was completed in December 2018. After a full review, Historic and Natural England advisors met with officers in summer 2019 to confirm that the PMP met their objectives.
11. Epping Forest officers have since been considering options and developing proposals on changes to the land management, based on the PMP recommendations and also new information in relation to climate action, and these proposals would be the subject of separate reporting.
12. A brief summary of the PMP's findings and recommendations is attached at **Appendix 1**, with the aim of developing this into a more complete PMP summary document to aid future consultations and discussions with stakeholders. The full PMP document is in eight sections, including a gazetteer and maps. Historic and Natural England have indicated that they are in a position to sign-off the PMP and, therefore, that the City Corporation is in a position to publish it.
13. The PMP demonstrated and enhanced the national importance of the heritage landscape at Copped Hall through its research findings. In particular, the earthworks within Rookery Wood were considered of exceptional significance due to their Tudor origins. It also recommended land within the RPG boundary in the City ownership should be reunited as some of this is divided between tenanted and in-house management at present. A series of recommendations were made on the built structures including the eastern and western ha-has and the two WW2 pill-boxes.
14. In addition, the PMP reiterated the importance of the ecological continuity of the landscape with that of the Forest. It recommended tree-planting across the historic park to reinstate the extent of the earlier lowland wood-pasture and parkland landscape, recommending the early 20th Century lay-out as a guide to this, but recognising the need for flexibility and the ecological links with the Forest. The PMP also recognised the importance of grazing to the future of the landscape management.
15. The PMP also considered the issues of access, including car parking and the issues this would pose with areas in multiple ownership around the central attraction of the Hall. Low-key interpretation was proposed, including possible grant support through Stewardship. Increasing visitor pressure and its implications were explored in the approaches to future management and the

PMP recommended that a consultancy specialising in access provision to historic environments should be engaged to develop options and proposals

Proposals

16. This report provides a summary of the PMP to capture the key issues. It further proposes that the PMP, and a summary document based on the attached summary, be made publicly available to local stakeholders immediately after the Committee meeting. Amongst those local stakeholders would be the Epping Forest Consultative Committee at its June meeting, the Copped Hall North FBT tenant, the Copped Hall Trust and officers at Epping Forest District Council responsible for the Local Plan's Conservation Area designation.
17. It is proposed that officers would contact The Copped Hall Trust early in the process of dissemination of the PMP, in consideration of its ownership of the Hall and gardens and its involvement in the provision of information to the consultants for the PMP.
18. A delivery plan, with options for seeking external grant support, based on the PMP recommendations and the proposed role of the Copped Hall land for the City Corporation's *Carbon Removals* project, would be presented as a separate report (or reports) to both this Committee and the Consultative Committee.

Options

19. Option 1: To "sign off" the Copped Hall PMP and to make it publicly available as soon as practicably possible, along with a summary document, and for officers to begin a dialogue to receive feedback on the PMP with Copped Hall Trust, EFDC officers, the tenant and the Consultative Committee. **This option is recommended.**
20. Option 2: To provide, at this stage, only a summary document to local stakeholders and to seek text modifications with Historic and Natural England to the main document while awaiting further development of external grant applications before consultation on the PMP with other stakeholders. **This option is not recommended.**

Key Data

21. The City Corporation owns 295ha of Copped Hall as buffer lands acquired in 1992. Of this 130ha is within the 165ha Registered Park and Garden Grade II* (RPG).
22. The RPG heritage interest dates back to the Tudor period and some of this heritage is of exceptional significance.
23. The RPG is within multiple ownerships and the City Corporation's owned land is divided between Forest Land, in-house and tenanted Buffer Lands. The in-house land has been managed with the support of UK Government Stewardship schemes between 1993 and 2018.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

24. The PMP and its further development would contribute significantly to City of London Corporate Plan 2018-2023 Outcome 2 *People enjoy good health and well-being*; Outcome 11: *We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment* and Outcome 12: *Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained* .
25. The aim of the PMP and its recommendations are to support the Open Spaces Department's Vision of enriching people's lives by enhancing and providing access to ecologically diverse open spaces and outstanding heritage assets across London and beyond.

Financial implications

26. None at this stage. A further report is to follow which will set out options for implementing recommendations from the PMP and seeking external grant funding. Some of the elements of the PMP would also be implemented through the *Carbon Removals* Project funding under Strand 9 of the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy (CAS).

Resource implications

27. The consultation work on the PMP over the next year would require Epping Forest officer time to discuss the PMP recommendations with local stakeholders, including Copped Hall Trust and Epping Forest District Council. There would also be significant resources required to develop the recommendations into an external grant proposal. Some of this work has already been completed and will be presented as a separate report to Committee in July. In addition, the new Carbon Removals Project posts will provide the required additional resources for the development of the grant proposals and further external consultations.

Legal implications

28. None at this stage. This report covers only the distribution of and consultation about the PMP document.

Risk implications

29. None at this stage as no direct works are proposed in this report.

Equalities implications

30. None.

Climate implications

31. None as part of this report. The future action plan for implementation of the recommendations of the PMP will be of fundamental importance to the

achievement of the Carbon Removals contribution to the City Corporation's CAS targets.

Security implications

32. None.

Conclusion

33. The PMP has shown that the heritage landscape of Copped Hall landscape, within the ownership of the City of London Corporation, is of national significance with some exceptional features spanning several centuries of parkland development. The PMP recommends heritage and ecological restoration go hand-in-hand, with wood-pasture and parkland a key to the future management of the habitats and landscape. Of the heritage features the Tudor Square Pond is the most significant and requires careful restoration. Dialogue with key neighbours, including the Copped Hall Trust is encouraged and more work to sensitively integrate access and interpretation is required.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Summary of Copped Hall PMP highlights
- **Appendix 2:** Map of Copped Hall heritage boundaries and land use

Background Papers

- *Copped Hall Conservation Statement* (Final Report). Historic Environment Associates March 2015

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APPENDIX 1 for Copped Hall PMP report SEF 22/21

An INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY NOTES for COPPED HALL PARKLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (PMP) (Dec 2018 – 8 sections)

Purpose of the PMP

This is summarised on page 10 of the PMP. The report was commissioned by the City of London Corporation and supported by Historic England and Natural England through an 80% PA2 Stewardship grant. The purpose was to evaluate all physical and documentary evidence to set the importance of the site in context and to provide a framework for management recommendations to protect the heritage features and to inform a parkland restoration, with the aim of seeking funding for such a restoration, with Historic England and Natural England support, from Stewardship or successor grants.

Ownership and the Registered Park and Garden boundaries

The land owned by the City Corporation covers the majority of the nationally-important Registered Park & Garden Grade II* (130ha of the 165ha total). Importantly, the City Corporation owns the majority of the original parkland boundaries, as their extent fluctuated over the centuries from Tudor times to the 20th Century.

However, it is significant issue that land within the RPG is within multiple ownerships and establishing good working relationships with The Copped Hall Trust, which was consulted during the PMP, and with local residents within Copped Hall is important for the protection of the integrity of the site.

Heritage

The PMP itself provides an **Executive Summary** at pages 5 to 7. This includes the following important summary of the heritage significance of the site:

“Copped Hall park and gardens are recorded as Grade II on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for England. The national significance is recognised by Historic England’s designation as Grade II* on its Register of Parks and Gardens (one of 38 registered sites in Essex, and 1610 registered sites nationwide – approximately 30% of all sites are Grade II*). Comparison with other estates regionally and nationally concludes that it was of a high status and contains a relatively rare package of relict features.*

Copped Hall is a multi-period site originating on the medieval and Tudor period, with connections both to Waltham Abbey and to royal and aristocratic owners. Archival material survives for some of the Tudor and Stuart period within the Sackville manuscripts (covering the ownership of both the Earl of Middlesex and Sackvilles) and considerable archaeological evidence for this period remains including the very substantial earthworks relating to the large-scale water features, also an earthwork mound to the south-west, and the park pale. These have been identified by the PMP of being a particular significance and rarity and are highlighted as areas for further research and protection. This period also influenced the subsequent layouts and design. The earliest veteran trees within the study area may date to this period”.

The heritage interest of the site, however, spans several periods since then before the Hall fell into neglect after 1917. For example, a serpentine canal was built in 1839 through the earlier Tudor Square Pond in Rookery Wood, while the ha-ha is first mentioned in 1895. The importance of the Tudor Square Pond is summarised on page 147 of “exceptional significance”. The pill-boxes from WW2 are also considered significant and details of preserving these are given on page 186.

Reunifying land within the RPG area is given high priority by the PMP – with a plea to at a minimum bring Kennel Field (currently straddling the RPG boundary as arable) out of tenancy and arable land and into the wood-pasture and parkland area.

The PMP considers that the park reached its zenith around the 1890s at the time of the second edition OS map of the area.

Significance of the heritage

The significance of the site is summarised on pages 146 and 147 of the PMP, with it summarised thus:

“12.4 An assessment of the significance of the site in relation to its contribution to landscape history design, both in the UK and, if appropriate, abroad. (Brief B2 iii)

Copped Hall Park is Grade II* on the register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest it is therefore assessed as of Exceptional Significance”.

Timeline

A timeline of historic events connected to the Hall and its park, including its changing boundaries, is provided in the PMP between pages 18 – 34. The park is at its greatest extent to the east in Tudor times – at 1590. Much of this land lies outside the RPG but is protected by City Corporation ownership.

There are key phases in the history of the park:

- Phase 1 Pre-Medieval (page 81)
- Phase 2 1100-1500 (pages 82 – 85)
- Phase 3: 1550-1650 (pages 86 - 100)
- Phase 4: 1645-1745 (pages 101 – 108)
- Phase 5: 1745-1869 (pages 108 – 126)
- Phase 6: 1869-1917 (pages 127 – 131)
- Phase 7 1917-1986 (pages 132 – 134)

Ecological issues and wood-pasture & parkland restoration

The Park is of considerable nature conservation and wildlife importance. There are a five ancient Oak boundary trees on the site – which may date back to the earlier park boundaries. Given the closeness to Epping Forest, the presence of ancient and veteran trees and the known importance of nearby Warlies Park for saproxylic (decaying wood) invertebrates, Copped Hall is likely to be important for these species although a survey could not be completed as originally planned in the PMP.

The whole Copped Hall area owned by the City Corporation (compartments 54 and 55) supports red and amber listed bird species like Skylark, Cuckoo, Kestrel and Yellowhammer and also protected species (Schedule 1) like Red Kite -proved breeding on site and Hobby and Goshawk, probable breeding on or adjacent to the site. The area also supports the declining Brown hare and the Cobbins Brook has in the past supported Water Vole. All these species are vulnerable to disturbance. Grazing is of key importance to the landscape conservation as well as the ecological restoration of the wood-pasture and parkland.

The PMP proposes (pages 226 -228) a planting plan, proposing the use of the wood-pasture creation option under the Stewardship grant to help achieve the restoration. The PMP suggest more formality within the bounds of the RPG (see page 199) but a rougher wood-pasture character elsewhere and a high density of trees.

Access and interpretation

The focus and brief for the PMP was to understand its heritage significance and propose recommendations for its conservation. Access was considered in less detail particularly in the light of the multiple ownership of the central area of the site. The issue of car parking and the need to work alongside the Copped Hall Trust was highlighted (page 202). Recommendations were made to explore the Option AC1 Stewardship grant funding for both car parking and interpretation installations. The PMP summarise the need for further access considerations thus:

“It is suggested that a consultancy specialising in access provision and the historic environment may be able to facilitate discussion both internally for CoLC and with external stakeholders and then advise on suitable options arising from this. Future charging for parking may be an option for funding the associated infra structure required”.

Principles of Restoration

Principles are outlined for five key areas:

- Broad Spectrum principles (pages 191 - 192)
- Historic Parkland management (p, 192)
- Modern land management/biodiversity focus (p.192 – 193)
- Archaeological Features (page 193)
- Archives (page 193)

A Vision for the site

This is discussed on pages 189 and 190 of the PMP. It emphasises that in the view of the authors it would be inappropriate to try to establish or impose one single period of heritage restoration on the landscape. It also makes clear that the biodiversity importance of Copped Hall should be strong focus and guiding factor in the restoration and development of the Park.

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