

Committees:		Dates:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Projects Sub Committee	- For decision	Delegated
	- For decision	Delegated
Subject:	Public	
Ponds Project: Gateway 4c – delegated decision in respect of the Ladies Bathing Facility		
Report of:	For Decision	
Joint Report of the Director of the Built Environment and the Director of Open Spaces		
Summary		
<p>The Ladies Bath Pond facilities are positioned on the dam crest and are impacted by the Ponds Projects. It has been established that it is no longer necessary to relocate the facility and the concrete slab which it rests upon off the dam. However some changes in layout are necessitated by the Panel Engineer's requirement that parts of the facility be removed from the crest of the dam as they are blocking his view of the dam crest. It has been concluded that the facility can be rebuilt on the existing platform which will need to be slightly extended.</p> <p>Having established that "do nothing" was not an option, refurbishment of the existing facility was considered as the preferred approach in the first instance but this was not possible due the impossibility of re-providing the parts of the facility removed from the dam crest within the remaining footprint and lifeguarding visibility requirements. The redesign has taken the safety recommendations from an independent safety audit following the fatality last year into account.</p>		
Recommendation		
<p>It is recommended that the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy approve the option to replace the Ladies Bathing Facility with a new building on the existing concrete slab, and that this be submitted as part of the Ponds Project planning application.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. Delegated Authority was granted to the Town Clerk by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and Project Sub Committee in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of your Committees to approve the option for the Ladies' Bathing Pond facility.

2. At that time it was noted that on the early stages of the project, it was assumed that it would be necessary to replace the facilities at the Ladies' Bathing Pond as they are located on top of the dam crest. Provision was therefore made in the budget for a full replacement of the facilities, including the replacement or extension of the existing concrete slab. However as designs progressed and the spillway was moved on to the edge of the dam, it became clear that it may be possible to keep the existing slab in place, and potentially the existing facilities.
3. Having established that the slab could be kept in place, officers first considering keeping the existing facilities – a “do nothing” option. However some of the existing accommodation is over where the proposed spillway will be located. Further, the removal of part of the concrete apron behind the main building in order to open up the dam crest for ongoing monitoring means that it will be necessary to make some structural changes to the building. In addition the positioning of the spillway creates a new access to the water which is not visible by lifeguards from the existing building as the building itself blocks the view of the water.
4. Officers therefore considered either the changes to the existing facility or the provision of a new facility on the existing slab.
5. The previous two options which had been developed were to provide a new building and new concrete slab in the current location and a new building and new concrete slab to the western end of the dam have now been discounted due to buildability, sustainability and cost implications.

Current Position

6. Throughout the option development process, officers have been liaising with Atkins – the designers for the Ponds Project, Walters & Cohen – the Architects, who are subcontractors to Atkins working on the Ladies Bathing facility, structural engineers, the lifeguards to ensure that operational issues are addressed and the Kenwood Ladies Bathing Pond Association (KLPA). From the outset of the project, the KLPA have pressed for a “do minimum” approach – stating categorically that they do not want an “iconic facility” or an increase in the size of the facilities as they appreciate the natural setting of the pond.

Options

7. The option of refurbishment was initially very attractive as in the first instance this would appear to offer a low cost, sustainable and potentially popular option. However due to the Panel Engineer's requirement for the removal of part of the building from the crest of the dam and the additional removal lifeguard storage and facilities also located on the crest of the dam that would need to be provided within the building, it became clear that this was not a feasible option. Additionally, even without the need to re-provide lifeguard space, structural changes would have been necessary to the building to open up lifeguard views to the access to the water created by the spillway. Finally,

the building is not currently disability access compliant and any changes to the building would have necessitated compliance through building control regulations. Analysis of the space availability within the existing building showed that the provision of the facilities within the existing building would not have been possible while meeting disability access requirements.

8. It is therefore recommended that a new light-weight building be constructed on the existing slab. Some extension of the slab will be required – although as much as possible of the building will be cantilevered on the existing slab.
9. In consultation with the KLPA it has been agreed that the new building should be as low impact as possible and should occupy the minimum space.

Implications

10. The importance of the safety implications of the lifeguard's view of the ponds and the provision of appropriate operational space were highlighted by the City's independent Risk Management consultant following investigation into the fatality that occurred at the Ladies Bating Pond on 4 August 2013. A Coroner's Inquest concluded a verdict of accidental death, owing to the deceased having suffered a cardiac arrhythmia caused by cardiomyopathy of an undetermined type.
11. The Risk Management consultant made a number of recommendations in his report which have been fed into the design process for the new facilities. These related to the ease with which swimmers can enter and exit the ponds from the jetty, visibility under the jetty and a proposal for separation of the lifeguard's observation area and the area provided for swimmers and spectators.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. The Ponds Project supports Key Policy Priority 5: Increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life on London and the nation by supporting the provision of "safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces". The Ponds Project will ensure compliance with the current and anticipated requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975 and deliver the concluding mitigation of Strategic Risk 11. The project also supports the City Together Strategy – "supports our communities", "protects, promotes and enhances our environment" and "is vibrant and culturally rich".

Conclusion

13. The new facility will offer a much better use of the existing space whilst working around the engineering constraints of the wider ponds project.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Existing and proposed building

Background Papers:

Gateway 4c – Detailed Design: Hampstead Heath Ponds Project

Ladies Pond Fatality Report s

Esther Sumner | Ponds Project & Management Support Officer

T: 0207 332 3130

E: esther.sumner@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Thomas Creed | Engineer

T: 0207 332 3913

E: thomas.creed@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1: existing and proposed building

Existing building:



Existing layout plan:



Proposed layout:

