



Wanstead Park Working Party

Date: MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2016
Time: 11.30 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, WEST WING. GUILDALL.

Members: Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Alderman Gordon Haines
Verderer Richard Morris
Sylvia Moys
Barbara Newman
Graeme Smith (Deputy Chairman)
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Philip Woodhouse (Chairman)

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Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at the rising of the Committee.
NB: Part of this meeting could be the subject of audio or video recording

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES**
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 4)

4. **COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT 2016**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Decision
(Pages 5 - 10)

5. **TREE SURVEY REPORT**
Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Information
(Pages 11 - 14)

6. **ANY URGENT BUSINESS.**

WANSTEAD PARK WORKING PARTY

Thursday, 10 March 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Wanstead Park Working Party held at the Guildhall EC2 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Verderer Peter Adams	Sylvia Moys
Verderer Michael Chapman DL	Barbara Newman
Alderman Gordon Haines	Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Verderer Richard Morris	Philip Woodhouse

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Geoff Sinclair	- Head of Operations, Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. WANSTEAD PARK HYDROLOGY STUDY

The Committee received the Wanstead Park Hydrology Study and noted that the study produced hydrological and hydrogeological conceptual models of the cascade system of five lakes, concentrating on Heronry Pond.

Members noted that the purpose of the working party was to provide officers with support and guidance whilst investigating potential options to restore the lake system to minimise the occurrence of significantly lowered lake levels during the summer and autumn seasons. Members noted that throughout its history the Wanstead Park lake system had had issues surrounding the supply and retention of water.

The Superintendent reported that the Wanstead Park Working Party had been set up so the members could take a more detailed look at the various problems facing the Committee in relation to the management of Wanstead Park. He reported that the history of the park went back to 1545 when it was a deer park, in 1549 a new house was built with Queen Elizabeth visited it in 1578.

The 300 acre estate was purchased by Sir Josiah Child who carried out a massive programme of garden works. Further works were designed by George London in the mid 1700s and even more works carried out in the late 1700's

including the building of the temple and the boat house grotto. Extensive alterations were carried out in the early 1800s and the house and the Estate sold in 1824, because the owner went bankrupt.

The Corporation of London in 1882 purchased part of the park as part of Epping Forest. On 1st October 1987 the park was registered by Historic England and put on the “at risk” register.

There is no clear schedule of the work necessary to the park which will take it off the at risk register. A management plan was agreed by the Corporation of London in 1992. The registered park includes land which is not in the Corporation’s ownership.

In August 2013 English Heritage prepared a strategic assessment and conservation measures for Wanstead Park. In 2013 and 2014 surveys were carried out on the rhododendrons in the park. The Wanstead Park Hydrology Study was prepared in September 2014.

There is a steering group which consists of local politicians and the friends of Wanstead Park which brings together all the interested parties in the park. The Hydrology Study is not complete and since its preparation there have been discussions with the Environment Agency concerning the extraction of water from the aquifer to keep up the level of the lakes.

Officers believed that it was timely to review the situation as much had changed since the lake system was first constructed. With the added local political pressure and reputational threats from an “at risk” classification by the Environmental Agency a study was commissioned to undertaken two stages of investigation: the first was an detailed analysis of the hydrological system and the second phase sought to determine engineering solutions that could be sued to restore the lake system.

The Committee considered the study but raised serious concerns about the lack of information and deficiency of detailed research it contained. Members said it would be remiss to not investigate further the issues raised in the report and agreed that progress should be made.

Members were informed that there were three possible options to follow up the findings of this study proposed:

- A: Do nothing;
- B: City of London funded inflow improvements while undertaking longer term hydrological assessments; or
- C: Externally funded inflow improvements while undertaking longer term hydrological assessments and the relining of the Heronry Pond.

Officers informed Members that confirming how they want to progress the hydrological issues at Wanstead Park was a key requirement in the development of the Conceptual Options Plan for Wanstead Park being developed for later in 2016. Members agreed that the report would need to be considered by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee, and agreed that

this Working Party should meet again to discuss progress made by Officers in May or June 2016.

Resolved – that the Committee supported option C and advised Officers to progress with assessments.

4. **WANSTEAD PARK RHODODENDRON SURVEYS 2013/14**

The Committee received the Wanstead Park Rhododendron Surveys and noted that Rhododendron ponticum was used in landscaping schemes through the 18th and 19th century. Members noted the findings of the Wanstead Park Rhododendron surveys of 2013 and 2014 by Lear Associates.

Officers informed Members that the aims of these studies were to:

- Locate old Rhododendron plantings
- Focus on plants with distinctive attributes

The reason for the rhododendron survey being considered by the committee is that because of their invasive nature and the harbouring of disease. There is a general policy in Epping Forest that all rhododendrons should be removed. The rhododendrons, however, in Wanstead Park are part of one of the planting scheme and there are some species which are of national or international importance.

Members were informed that Rhododendron were a notable heritage feature and that significance includes both rare or unusual cultivars and the landscape use of Rhododendron at Wanstead Park. Officers said there was a potential need to exclude the Rhododendron at Wanstead Park from the Epping Forest eradication programme. Members noted this and understood the reasoning behind currently keeping Rhododendron at Wanstead Park

Resolved – that the report be received.

5. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.**

There were no questions.

6. **ANY URGENT BUSINESS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.**

There was no urgent business.

7. **TO AGREE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved – that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed once further information was received from officers regarding progress that they had made.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

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Committee(s)	Dated: 26 September 2016
Epping Forest and Commons Wanstead Park Steering Group	
Subject: Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, August 2013 SEF 45/16	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Decision

Summary

Historic England commissioned the Compass Archaeology Consultancy to produce a Strategic Assessment of Wanstead Park's Heritage Status.

Working closely with City of London Officers, the Friends of Wanstead Parklands and the London Borough of Redbridge, the resulting report identifies 151 heritage assets and 32 heritage events, which together contribute to the Wanstead Park's Grade II* status as a Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest.

Key findings from the report will be used to develop the Conceptual Options documents for Wanstead Park.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- a. Welcome the publication of the Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park by English Heritage.
- b. Recommend that the report be reviewed and considered as part of the development of a conceptual options plan for Wanstead Park.

Main Report

Introduction

1. Wanstead Park is a Grade II* Park and Garden and was first included on Historic England's register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in 1987 and was revised from its original Grade II designation to II* in 2001
2. Following a spectacular decline of the private park and mansion in the early 1800s the park was at risk of being lost to residential development. Significant

parts of the park were acquired and added to Epping Forest by the City of London in 1882. Further parts were saved from development by Wanstead Golf Club in 1893 as well as by the London Borough of Redbridge at Blake Hall Sports ground. The Church of England (Wanstead Parish) owns the Grade I listed St Mary's Church.

3. The Park was declared at risk by Historic England (HE) under the previous title of English Heritage, as it then was, and added to the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR) in 2009 due to concerns that the designed landscape was in poor condition, divided under separate ownership and management, and was at risk of further decline.
4. In January 2013 HE commissioned independent Consultants Compass Archaeology (with a consortium of experts) to carry out an assessment of the heritage status of Wanstead Park at a strategic level, informed by assessment of the condition of individual features. The project was wholly funded by HE with the objective of addressing the 'Heritage at Risk' (HAR) status of Wanstead Park. It is therefore an essential guide as HE has a statutory responsibility with regard to any development of plans for the future management and conservation of Wanstead Park.
5. Compass Archaeology's report forms part of a rich body of study at Wanstead Park and was preceded by the 1990 City of London financed, Wanstead Park, A survey of the landscape by the Debois Landscape Survey Group. This study focussed thinking about the significance of the historic landscape and informed some decisions in terms of capital investment and ongoing maintenance at the time.
6. In November 2014, consultants LDA were engaged by the Wanstead Park Steering Group to develop a long-term 'Wanstead Park Conceptual Options document' to identify and prioritise opportunities for capital investment to conserve and improve Wanstead Park. A key objective for this work was to identify an activity program that would enable Wanstead Park to be removed from the HARR.
7. This report summarises the findings of the Strategic Assessment and Conservations Measures for Wanstead Park report of August 2013 by Compass Archaeology. Proposals are outlined for taking forward the report's findings as part of the Wanstead Park Conceptual Options Plan development.

Background

Project Brief

8. The project brief for the study identified three primary aims, these were:
 - a. *Gazetteer compilation*: To create a comprehensive gazetteer of Wanstead Park's heritage features;
 - b. *Condition Assessment*: To assess systematically the extent, nature, and vulnerability of the heritage assets in Wanstead Park;

- c. *Management recommendations*: To provide an informed basis to enhance the condition and value of features, including the identification of sites where targeted investigative work is recommended
9. The desired final outcome of the project was to produce an assessment of the heritage status of Wanstead Park at the strategic level and an informed assessment of individual features that can be used to address the HAR status of the Park.

The Study Methodology

10. The study was carried out in four main stages.
- a. Collation and analysis of research materials/sources pertaining to the known history and archaeology of the Park;
 - b. Walkover surveys of the whole Park identifying possible heritage features and their condition;
 - c. Technical survey work in the Park and on electronic records;
 - d. Production of a written and illustrated report and an updated site survey cross-referenced to the gazetteer detailing the results of the above stages and possible management strategies/mitigation for the conservation of the heritage features.
11. The results of the study were presented in a main report (Attached) and in three substantial appendices (Not attached):
- a. Appendix I: The Gazetteer
 - b. Appendix II: Sources Review
 - c. Appendix III: UCL validation of LiDAR dataset and establishment of mapping control network

Study Results

12. The results of the study have been summarised by the primary aims as listed in the project brief above.

Gazetteer Compilation

13. Perhaps the study's most enduring outcome is item 8c above, the compilation of the Gazetteer of heritage assets and events at Wanstead Park. Entries in the gazetteer followed a proforma and are presented in a format compatible with HE's Historic Environment Record (HER) system.
14. In total, 151 primary heritage assets have been identified, plus a further 36 HER events (a significant point in history worthy of record). Gazetteer items were listed in a broadly chronological form and identify each of the heritage features within Wanstead Park, including below-ground archaeology, landscape features, historic features and now-lost historic features. The chronology used and the number of features associated with each era are listed below:
- a. Prehistoric entries, 13
 - b. Roman entries, 12
 - c. Medieval entries, 6
 - d. The Early house and estate (pre-1720s) entries, 21

- e. The second house and estate (post-1720s) entries, 60
- f. Post-1825 entries, 31
- g. Unknown entries, 8
- h. Wanstead Park events entries, 36

Condition Assessment

15. The gazetteer was used as the main resource for compiling data on the current condition, value and significance of heritage features in the Park. The main report focuses on the heritage features which the authors considered are in the poorest condition, face the most severe threats or have the greatest 'heritage value'. Five categories of heritage features were reported on:

- a. *The Water System*: The modern Wanstead Park is based around its lake system which comprises one of the main features of the designed historic landscape. Leakage and water management issues are identified as key challenges facing Wanstead Park today and are one of the reasons the Park was placed on English Heritage's HAR.
- b. *The Landscape Monuments*: After the lake system these are the most prominent surviving landscape features within the Park and are all associated with the designed landscape. Features include the Mounts, the Great Amphitheatre, the site of Wanstead House, the islands and planted avenues and areas of trees. Excessive tree and shrub growth is the main threat impacting on such features affecting access, interpretation and visibility of the monuments rather than their actual survival.
- c. *The Historic Structures*: There are four main historic structures within the Park, the Boathouse Grotto, Temple, St Mary's Church and the Golf Club buildings. Only the Grotto and the Temple are owned and managed by the COL. The condition of the Grotto is considered to be particularly poor with failing mortar and encroaching trees and shrubs. The Grotto is one of the few surviving features from the 1760s and also has an aesthetic appeal. The Temple was found to be generally in good condition without structural problems and a considered a management success for the City in the way it had been restored and made accessible to the public.
- d. *Buried Archaeological Features*: A wide variety of buried archaeological features were identified by the study with considerable evidence that much of it is still intact. In general these features were not considered to be under any threat however a large proportion of them have not been investigated and the true status or significance cannot yet be confirmed.
- e. *The Park in General*: The Park as a whole could be considered a heritage feature and as such was considered to be in a relatively poor condition. Poor accessibility of paths and excessive tree and shrub growth were among the main threats facing the park today.

Management recommendations

16. The Strategic Assessment acknowledges that its recommendations are related solely to the 'historic environment'. In the preparation of any Parkland Plan it is advised that they should be considered alongside other key criteria eg hydrology and biodiversity to find a balance between the different aims and to identify mitigation strategies where conflict exist.
17. The study's recommendations are presented in the form of a practical management strategy with the recommendations falling into three main categories:
 - a. The need to protect and maintain the heritage features surviving within Wanstead Park;
 - b. The desire to increase our knowledge of the history and archaeology of the Park;
 - c. The desire to increase visitor enjoyment and engagement with history and archaeology of the Park.
18. Using the five feature categories identified in paragraph 15 above a range of projects were identified: Broadly speaking these can be summarised as follows:
 - a. The main problem facing Wanstead Park is the future of the water system and we were encouraged to undertake the hydrology assessment;
 - b. Tree and scrub encroachment is adversely impacting views and paths and a program of clearance is advised;
 - c. Securing the Grotto as a stable structure within a managed setting;
 - d. Preparation of an archaeological policy for the Park;
 - e. Promotion of a community led archaeological research program.
19. Since the publication of the Strategic Assessment report a number of its key recommendations have been implemented, eg the JBA Hydrology Study, Review of the historic planting of Wanstead Park by Lear Associates, and initiation of a program of vegetation management to open up paths and around the Grotto.
20. Individual project implementation, such as above, has resulted in improvements on the ground and a better understanding of technical issues. To achieve an eventual aspiration of Wanstead Park being taken of the HAR actions are best implemented in the context of an agreed plan that addresses the spectrum of issues and needs within the Park and not just the historic environment issues.
21. An overarching conclusion of the Strategic Assessment is that the findings and recommendations should be integrated within a wider assessment of the Park's needs.

Proposal

22. It is proposed that we welcome the publication of the Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park by English Heritage.

23. It is further proposed that the report's recommendations be reviewed and considered as part of the development of a conceptual options plan for Wanstead Park.

Conclusion

24. The August 2013 Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park report by Compass Archaeology Report provides a comprehensive statement on the current status of the Park's historic environment. It is recommended that the report's conclusions be taken forward as part of the development of a conceptual options plan for Wanstead Park.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers:

Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, Compass Archaeology, August 2013.

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Committee(s)	Dated: 26 September 2016
Epping Forest and Commons Wanstead Park Working Group	
Subject: Review of the historic planting of Wanstead Park SEF 46/16	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Information

Summary

Heritage England recommended commissioning a 'study with recommendations for care' of veteran trees within Wanstead Park as part of the process to achieve the removal of the Park from their Heritage at Risk register. The City of London commissioned Lear Associates in 2015 to undertake this work.

The Lear (2016) survey focussed on revisiting 30 out of a possible 89 trees originally identified as being planted in the 18th century by the Debois Landscape Survey Group study of 1990. The resurvey confirmed much of the age assessments made by Debois (1990) and further identified trees possibly forming part of the original structural planting associated with the Little Amphitheatre and the Boathouse Grotto. Two further trees in particular were considered potentially significant.

Proposals for taking forward the conclusions of the survey have been made.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to: Note the report

Main Report

Background

1. Wanstead Park is a Grade II* Park and Garden and was first included on Historic England's register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in 1987 and was revised from its original Grade II designation to II* in 2001.
2. In 1990 the City of London (COL) financed, Wanstead Park, A survey of the landscape by the Debois Landscape Survey Group. This study included a site survey indicating the location of selected trees 89 of which were reported as having planted between 1700 and 1800.
3. The Park was declared at risk by English Heritage (EH), as it then was, in 2009 due to concerns that the designed landscape was in poor condition, divided under separate ownership and management, and was at risk of further decline. In

2013 EH published the report 'Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park' by Compass Archaeology. Following its production we were provided guidance by EH on their view of the measures they would like to see progressed if Wanstead Park was to be removed from the 'Heritage at Risk' (HAR) register.

4. One of the requirements highlighted by EH was the need to commission a 'study with recommendations for care' of veteran trees within Wanstead Park. The City of London (COL) commissioned Lear Associates in 2015 to undertake this work and this report outlines the main findings of their survey and makes recommendations on how we can use the knowledge gained in the heritage management of Wanstead Park.

Project Brief

5. The project brief was developed in consultation with EH and had four objectives:
 - a. Field survey to consider extant trees indicated by Debois as having been planted in the 18th century;
 - b. Collect data and carry out reassessment of the Debois estimated planting date;
 - c. Describe how each tree fitted into the design of the garden designer potentially associated with putting it there;
 - d. Investigate further the link between Fulham Palace and the collection at Wanstead Park.

The Summary Findings

6. 27 of the 89 trees identified by the Debois (1990) study as planted in the 18th century were selected for resurvey. Those omitted were mainly Hawthorn and Holly. Of the 27 a number could not be located and an additional six large, potentially ancient or informative, trees were included. In total assessments were undertaken on 30 trees
7. The study confirmed the Debois (1990) age assessments with only a few exceptions with the oldest trees located around the Little Amphitheatre and the Boathouse Grotto.
8. Oak tree (no 15) was considered to be highly significant as it appears to be a remnant of the plan set out by the Garden designer George London and which is depicted on the Kip and Knyff (1728) plan. A second oak (No 25) is aligned with one of the most recognisable axial lines, clearly visible in the Kip and Knyff (1728) and Rocque (1735) plans, and is potentially very significant. It was recommended that more accurate dating of these trees by micro core sampling would be desirable.
9. There was some evidence to indicate that a small number of yew trees are aligned with the Little Amphitheatre depicted in a 1735 plan by John Rocque. It is possible these trees survive from the structural planting of the Little Amphitheatre and are part of a second phase of design layout in 1723-25.
10. Six yews and a large Sycamore in the area of the Grotto were thought to date from around the construction of the Grotto in 1760. Early images show this area

to have been relatively treed and Lear suggests would have been a relatively shady 'bosky' space from which visitors would emerge through the Grotto into the light amplified by the expanse of Ornamental Water. This contrasts with recent works where the area has been opened up to promote views of the Grotto that appeal to visitors today but which previously may not have been as integral to the design concept for the Grotto.

11. As well as recommendations for further study it was advised that girth measurements and ring counts of any trees to be removed from the park. Particular concern was expressed over the impact of compaction on trees with recommendations to decompact paths close to trees, however, little evidence was given of any impact on tree health arising from compaction.

Proposal

It is proposed that:

- The ongoing management of notable trees identified by the Debois (1990) and Lear (2016) studies at Wanstead Park should form part of the thinking for future landscape conservation plans for Wanstead Park.
- Prior to any tree felling work within the park and assessment is undertaken as to the need to take age measures from trees being worked.

Conclusion

A resurvey of selected trees identified by Debois (1990) as having been planted in the 18th century was undertaken by Lear (2016). The resurvey largely confirmed the tree age conclusions made by Debois and was also able to identify possible original plantings linked to particular garden design episodes.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers:

Compass Archaeology (2013): Strategic Assessment and Conservation Measures for Wanstead Park, English Heritage

Debois Landscape Survey Group (1990): Wanstead Park: A survey of the Landscape, City of London

Superintendent of Epping Forest (2015) Wanstead Park: Landscape restoration and regeneration progress update, EFCC Committee Paper 11th May 2015

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