

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 21 May 2024
Subject: Hampstead Heath - Hill Garden Pergola - Update Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: The City Surveyor	For Information
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Summary

This report is provided to provide background information on the Hill Garden Pergola, to provide an update its current condition and comment on next steps.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

1.0 Background

1. The Hill Garden Pergola (Pergola) is located within Golders Hill Park on West Heath and was Grade II* listed in 1978. It is a beautiful structure consisting of a high-level walkway approximately 250m long with two sections of stone columns supporting Oak framework linked by a bridge over a footpath.
2. It was designed by Thomas H Mawson for Lord Leverhulme, who owned The Hill House, which is now in private ownership. The pergola was built in three phases from 1905 to 1925. After the death of Lord Leverhulme in 1925, The Hill House was bought by Lord Inverforth, who died in 1955. The Pergola was bequeathed to and used by Manor House Convalescent Hospital, who renamed it Inverforth House. Mawson's association with the Pergola is key to its historic significance.
3. In 1985, the Greater London Council (GLC) purchased the remaining parts of the structure and 1.5 acres of land from the hospital, separating it from Inverforth House. Following the abolition of the GLC in 1986, the London Residuary Body managed the gardens and Pergola for a period. The City of London Corporation then took on the management of the Pergola in 1989.

4. After severe storms in 1987 and 1990 caused considerable damage to the colonnades and timbers, the City Corporation undertook essential repair work to the eastern part; referred to as Section 1. The western section of the Hill Garden, which is referred to as the Colonnade Walkway forms Section 2. See drawing in Appendix A.
5. The Pergola comprises two sections, connected by a bridge: Section 1 has reconstituted stone columns and oak framework along its entire length. The oak framework had two large domes that have been removed due to instability and eight smaller ones remain in place. It has an internal walkway at ground level, along with several internal storerooms. This section was where most of the repairs/restoration was conducted by the City Corporation when ownership was first taken.
6. Section 2 is known as the Colonnade Walkway, with a paved walkway underneath a stone column and oak framework, and stairs into the Hill Garden. It also contains the Belvedere structure consisting of a high-level viewing terrace with amazing views and adjacent open structure with tiled roof. Stairs on either side of the structure lead to ground level, and there are several storerooms underneath.

2.0 Current Position

7. Due to age and weathering, the oak frameworks on both sections of the Pergola has been deteriorating for many years. This deterioration has increased in the last couple of years, partly due to lack of significant funding but also due to the escalation of extreme wet and windy conditions, especially as the Pergola is in an exposed location.
8. Section 2, the Colonnade Walkway, is the most critical element. The oak framework is now extremely rotten and compromising the overall stability of the Colonnade Walkway. The reconstituted stone columns are intrinsically linked to supporting the oak timbers with each element of fabric reliant on the other to remain in situ. It is now reaching a stage where all will have to be removed along with the integral stone columns if no capital funding is forthcoming.
9. Section 1 is also showing signs of deterioration, with the two large domes ('The Temple' and 'Summer Pavilion') both having to be removed at the end of 2022 as following a period of structural monitoring they had become a health and safety risk.
10. The rest of the elements that make up the Pergola, i.e. brickwork, paving and walkways, are in reasonable condition. However, they do require constant restoration and repair works to maintain this status; currently funded within Cyclical Works Programme (CWP).
11. Due to lack of historic maintenance and health and safety concerns, monitoring surveys are conducted twice a year, or more if the weather conditions have been particularly wet and/or windy. Since circa 2019, the Pergola has been closed to the public and staff during these conditions because of the high health and safety

risk. A more extensive survey has recently been commissioned, that should inform future strategies for the Pergola.

12. If appropriate maintenance works are not undertaken to this statutorily protected asset, it will inevitably deteriorate further, risk being added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register (HARR), and lead to increased repair costs. Failure to invest in the Pergola may also contribute to the eventual loss of this irreplaceable historic asset while posing a reputational risk to the City Corporation, as well as possible health and safety implications.
13. A briefing note was issued by City Surveyors Department in 2021 to report the then condition of the structure, the outline project need and estimated costs to undertake a capital project to address safety concerns through significant repair/replacement of the structure. Due to central budget pressures at the time, this was never taken forward to a formal bid. Since then, City Surveyors Department has continued to maintain and the structure under its CWP.

3.0 Proposal & Next Steps

14. The City Surveyor can use existing CWP backlog funding to undertake feasibility studies to define programme, refine costs and provide options. This will be complete in around 3 months. Due to the heritage status of the structure, specialist advice is required to ensure the Pergola retains its character and that any proposed works meet statutory conservation policy.
15. In lieu of these surveys, the current estimated cost for a capital project to replace and undertake significant repairs would be in the region of £2m to £4m, this would get the structure in to a maintainable position.
16. CWP recently approved approximately £220,000 of funding to spend on the Pergola over the next five years. This will allow regular monitoring surveys to continue, essential works to be conducted to ensure structural safety, stabilise the structure and hopefully allow the oak framework and columns to be kept in situ until a decision is made on the Pergola's future.

4.0 Conclusion

17. Future funding should be sought to undertake significant repairs and/or replacement of the Pergola. Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) activities to maintain, monitor and stabilise the structure will continue whilst a decision the Pergolas future is in progress. A future bid for more substantial works will be presented by the Environment team in the coming months.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Drawing 379-11 AR02

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