



The Grotto

Wanstead Park

Project Board Meeting
07 May 2024



Agenda

- Options Presentation
- Options Decision
- Next Steps/AOB

Meeting Purpose

The Project Board is asked **to decide which of the options should be further detailed** and progressed towards submission for statutory approval.

Repair costs stated are preliminary estimates. They include contingencies and predicted inflation to Q2 2025. They do not include costs for professional fees beyond RMP, fundraising, community engagement, contract administration, landlord insurance etc.

Options presented at Workshop 1

3 Options were presented at Workshop 1:

Option 1, with a cost range of £340k - £370k, comprised the essential repairs required to remove the heritage asset from the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR) - but would not necessarily warrant it remaining in good condition in the long-term. The proposed short term 'surface' repairs would not address concealed defects and root causes of deterioration, leaving the Grotto vulnerable to future decay. They would not lead to a reduction in the projected maintenance regime, the lack of which has contributed to the asset's listing on the HARR.

Option 2, with a cost range of £510 - £560k, comprised the essential repairs to remove the structure from the Heritage at Risk Register, plus internal and structural repairs required to maintain the Grotto in good condition for the longer-term.

Option 3 with a cost range of £910k - £1m, comprised the essential and recommended repairs in Options 1 and 2, the restoration of the stone steps adjacent to the main façade, re-profiling of window arches and reinstating some of the original fabric to the main façade.




Outcomes from Workshop 1

The workshop agreed that **a combination of Option 1 and Option 2**, including in-depth repairs to the front facade to reduce its maintenance burden, would represent the sustainable minimum level of intervention that we need to make. This is presented as **Option A** today.

Option 3 was a desirable option for many of the stakeholders in the workshop. It is presented as **Option B**.

None of the options was within the existing repairs budget of £164k.



Options for Structural Support

A range of options for the structural support of the Grotto was presented at the workshop.

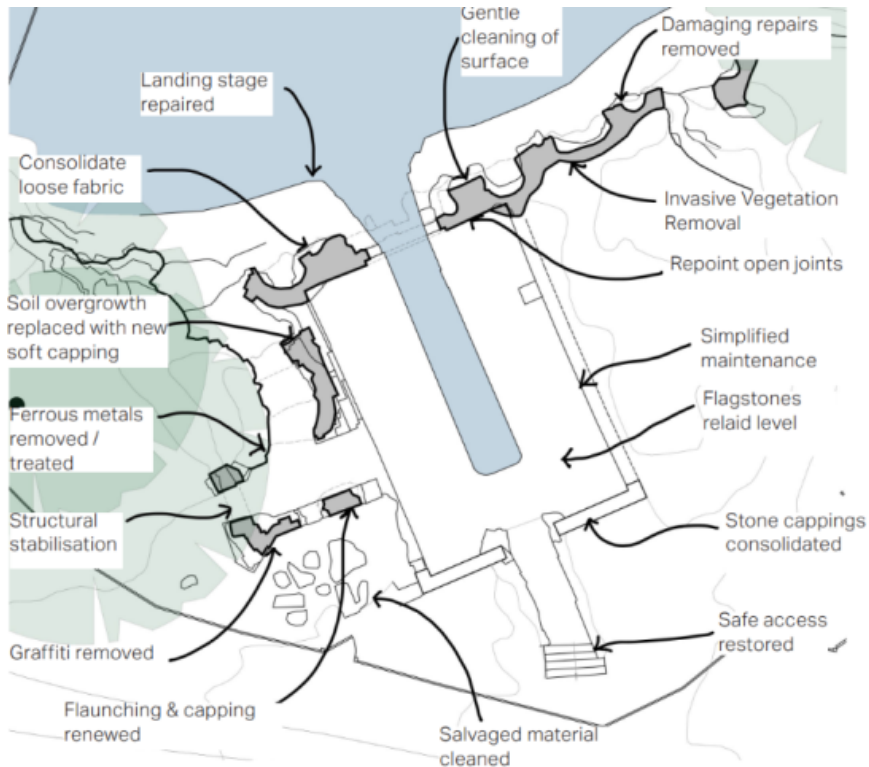
The preferred structural support option was for the creation of return walls adjacent to the Grotto façade built on the alignment of the original boathouse walls.

It was confirmed at the workshop that all the structural support options presented could be technically delivered in conjunction with any of the repair or restoration options presented.

Option A - a hybrid of Workshop 1's Options 1 & 2



Designed to remove the asset from the HARR, it also addresses underlying defects within the difficult-to-reach front facade. This will make maintenance easier, large repair less frequent and ensures the asset remains off the HARR.



Key Proposed Works:

- Structural stabilisation as required (in brickwork)
- Invasive vegetation removed
- Essential repairs to the entire site
- To the front facade also:
 - Cleaning of the surface to reveal hidden defects
 - Removal of inappropriate materials & repairs which are contributing to fabric deterioration
 - Dismantling and reconsolidation of the most vulnerable areas of fabric in areas where maintenance access will be limited (i.e. at height)
- Flaunching renewed (existing capping retained)
- Existing Flagstones re-laid level
- Potential replacement of overgrowth with soft capping

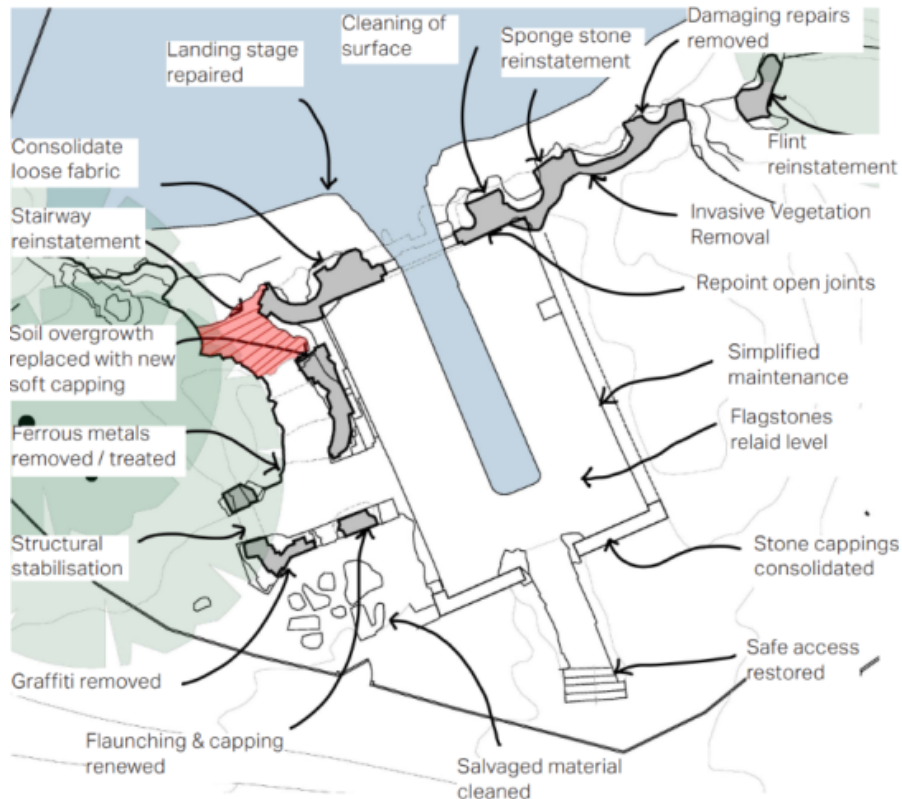
For information, the original Option 2 also included:

- Replacement of structurally sound but visually inappropriate past repairs
- Works listed to the front facade extended to whole ruin

Option B - Workshop 1's Option 3



Designed to remove the asset from the HARR and to enhance the significance and readability of the Grotto's front facade. Includes the works outlined in Option A and re-captures some of the facade's impact on the waterside.



Key Proposed Works:

- Structural stabilisation as required (in brickwork)
- Invasive vegetation removed
- Essential repairs and addressing underlying defects to the entire site
- To the front facade also:
 - Cleaning of the surface to reveal hidden defects
 - Reinstating missing fabric to restore the Grotto's original grandeur
 - Concealing inner wall with sponge stone, aligning with the original construction materials and maintaining historical authenticity
 - Reinstating the undulating profile to recapture the unique character of the front facade - extent TBC
 - Restoring flint cladding into the historic recesses, preserving and enhancing the Grotto's aesthetic appeal
 - Reinstating sponge stone surrounds to openings, removing harsh lines and restoring the organic form of the facade
- Existing Flagstones re-laid level
- Potential replacement of overgrowth with soft capping

Option B



Option B



Likely Additional Scope

Repair Costs: £1m+

Works: Further restoration of front facade
Improve public access
Improve biodiversity
Potential removal of fence

Repair Costs: £910k - £1m

Funding: COL £150k HOLT £14k **GAP: £746k - £836k**

Programme: Delivery by end of 2027 subject to funding

Risks: Lack of funding; small pool of potential funders & need to compete against schemes nationwide; funding more likely as part of wider Parkland scheme.

Higher costs from additional scope to attract funding

Higher development costs to cover fundraising

Lack of staff to deliver larger project

Higher professional fees (beyond RMP) to develop full technical design

Longer planning process or lack of statutory permissions as restoration proposals can be divisive

Underlying defects increase scope & costs

Considerably longer programme (12-18 months for additional scope)

Some additional delivery costs once pond flooded

Benefits:

Project likely attractive to funders

Higher impact for same/similar COL budget

Better outcomes for public & heritage asset; positive impact also on

HARR Park & Conservation Area and community engagement

Potential to phase works to follow Option A if COL made additional matchfunding available (as part of Wanstead Park funding application?)

Next steps

May 2024: Project Board to provide their steer on the options as presented

May/June 2024: Project team to brief Members of Epping Forest and Commons Committee and seek their views (as project cost now meets threshold for scrutiny by CoL Committees).

May/June 2024: Project team and fund-raising sub-group to undertake further research and enquiries into potential funding sources.

June 2024: Wanstead Park Programme Board established to review active projects with dependencies or links to the Grotto project and make its recommendations on their respective programmes, scope, budgets and funding sources.

July 2024: Recommended option(s) and next steps for this project to be reported to Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

Thank you