



Minutes

Merton Heritage Forum

Tuesday 17 October 2017

Merton Heritage Centre, 2nd floor, Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre

Present:

Cllr Nick Draper (Chair), Cllr John Bowcott,
John Hawks (Merton Priory Trust),
Cypren Edmunds (High Path Community Association)
Rebecca Watts (LWLPS); Tony Scott (Merton Historical Society)
Norman Plastow (Wim. Soc & Wimbledon Windmill)
Seif el Rashidi (Living Layers Project); Cllr Geraldine Stanford
John Strover and Joyce Bellamy (MCGC&H)
Anthony Hopkins, Sarah Gould (Minutes ,) James McGinlay
and Jill Tyndale (LBM)

Apologies:

Tony Burton and Sandra Vogel (MCGC&H),
Chris Baker (Wimbledon Club)
John Davis (Mitcham Tree Wardens Group)
Cllr Philip Jones

Item	Actions
<p>Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting: The group agreed the minutes as an accurate record of the last meeting.</p> <p>1.The Canons – project update JM gave the group an overview of the Canons project and progress to date/ This is an exciting project that will bring many improvements to the Mitcham area. An application for £5.2 million was made to the HLF Parks for People grants scheme. The project is intended to celebrate sympathetic building improvement work at the Canons and to attract more people to the adjoining park over the next 4 years. During Phase 1 the bid was worked up with community and Heritage input. There has been considerable community engagement from MCGC&H, ward councillors and the local schools cluster, as part of the bid.</p> <p>80 – 90% of the £5.2million will be capital funding but there is also revenue funding for interpretation work and staging events. The latter will take the story of the Canons to a new audience.</p>	

A major part of the project will be the restoration of Canons House. The upper floors will be converted to commercial office space, whilst the basement will be used as community space. The nearby obelisk, pond, dovecote and historic garden walls will also be overhauled. Neighbouring flowerbeds will also be restored and a sensory garden will be introduced, linking in heritage themes.

LBM will act as the main agent, with responsibility for a 5 year enhanced plan, ongoing management and maintenance of the site.

The community space will be used to attract a wider audience, with interpretation support from MCGC&H and local schools. Part of the project involves production of a Heritage management plan, a conservation area plan and architectural plans for restoration. £4.4 million has been secured for the project.

It is important to maintain momentum – a planning application has been submitted and Listed Buildings consent is imminent. The project will involve work on green spaces and a cinder track, reconfiguring the car parks and creating areas for play and congregation. Improvements will start from 2018 onwards, with a specialist contractor appointed for the restoration work.

Interpretation work will start from 2017/18 onwards, including opportunities for archaeological work on site before development. The Canons will be access friendly and specialist architects will be employed to balance restoration and access needs. The office space will allow for active use of the building to ensure sustainability and a new audience. The basement will be used for digital technology and interpretation, not just static displays. It will also host community events with ready access.

On the Madeira Hall site, a café and toilets will be added. Space will also be created to allow routes through to Cricket Green. LBM will also look at future uses of Madeira Hall to complement the café.

Volunteers will be a major resource for ongoing management and maintenance. The £5.2million project costs include £100K worth of volunteer input.

Car parks will be re-orientated for better access and there will be a stronger tie-in between the Canons, Madeira Hall and the Leisure Centre. Physical works will start in late 2018, with most physical changes occurring in 2019/20.

There is a need to manage public expectations – events will be staged to help pace and promote the project.

JB – Friends of Canons and volunteers are litter picking and clearing vegetation to prevent it from overflowing. The Conservation Area judge was very impressed and the area has achieved an “outstanding” mark for the second year in a row.

ND –as a councillor he is very proud that HLF recognises the importance of this project. It will not only benefit the people of Mitcham but will also attract visitors and involve intergenerational work, as well as being economically sustainable .

GS – Will the project be raised at the Mitcham Community Forum?

There was some discussion around how the former News of the World running track will feature in the project and whether it will be upgraded or re-named. ND and GS feel that the name should remain unchanged (Park Place)

CE feels that the track has not be investigated that much. Do HLF work with Sport England in this respect? The Mitcham track was designed as imperial rather than metric – it is never going to be equivalent to a modern running track but should be user friendly.

ND – it has a lot of amateur use. Sport England appreciate its impact but have no great interest in the site, as it is not a modern track. Tail sections will be added at the end of the track – the original had a straight section at each end to allow for sprint training.

Re: The proposed new café = SG asked if there were any plans to operate this on community café lines, involving people with special needs as staff - e.g. students from Cricket Green school, who would benefit from the work experience. This type of inclusiveness has worked really well in other community cafes. JM confirmed that a number of options would be considered.

ND – the project represents many business opportunities – making the park more attractive will draw more visitors – the project will create a community focus for Mitcham and hopefully local suppliers will support the café. There is also potential to link with “Sustainable communities “ – using community orchards, or sharing unwanted/surplus fruit crops.

2. Living Layers of London (HLF) project

Seif el Rashidi gave a presentation on the project which is being run by the University of London and a range of partners. Via the project website, people can access a range of historic maps of London. They can also add information about particular sites, including small electronic versions of exhibitions – this is a good opportunity for publicising historic sites, museums and collections across the Capital.

In Haringey, a group researching conscientious objectors in WW1 have been able to highlight their research by linking it to various maps. They have also raised their project profile by linking their own website to the “Living Layers” site.

The project has the advantage of being able to use historic maps to chart change over time in a particular area. The project team are also working with schools – students have been identifying particular sites on the historic maps and linking these to Geography and History project work.

The project web browser allows you to zoom in to look at maps of a particular

JM to check this.

area in different historical periods and to show development – for instance comparing historical and modern satellite maps.

It is also possible to search the website using terms to show specific images, and information e.g. local museums. It is also possible to highlight the history of a particular street.

The process for adding information to the project website is very simple – it is also possible to search by date to highlight given timeframes.

The site offers a good way of sharing information and raising awareness of familiar places – allowing the public to find details in an easy and visual way.

Schools are using the project software to accurately place photos on historic maps. Historic England guides are also using the site for interpretation.

SG – the Forum has already looked at the possibility of highlighting local sites and attractions on other sites (e.g. Izi travel and the draft site created by Nicholas Hart.) These both have benefits but many organisations and community groups struggle with capacity issues, making regular updates tricky. SG asked Seif to tell the Forum about his project as the Living Layers content management system is much easier to use and there is no pressure regarding the volume of content to be added, or the need for regular updates. This should make it much more user friendly for sites / groups wishing to highlight their collections, services, or create online display materials.

ND – less willing to contribute to this type of maps project due to fears regarding editing e.g. the problems associated with Wikimaps / Wikipedia. It requires careful administration to ensure the accuracy of information. Is there any role for volunteers to act as administrators and encourage participation from areas previously less engaged with heritage?

SR – there is a huge role for volunteers in checking and approving information. Living Layers also involves intergenerational work, particularly promotion. He is keen on securing a wide range of involvement but this does not necessarily mean many hours of commitment.

Re: accuracy – there is the option to flag any incorrect data – this can then be passed to the administrators for checking. The project is based on public engagement but the University of London will not compromise its reputation by publishing inaccurate material. It is possible to add incremental information – adding details and corrections.

RW – what is the duration of the project?

SR – a 3 year development phase, with an additional 5 years beyond that. (8 years from 2018 onwards.) There is also a commitment to HLF of allowing 20 years access to the online material.

RW – how does this differ from Historypin?

SR – the volume of historic maps available and the opportunity to pool resources from historic institutions for public use.

CE – will there be an app version?
SR – a mobile friendly version is a key objective – people will also be able to upload photos taken as they are walking around.

RW – will the site feature Wandsworth material?
SR – yes – he has contacted every London borough.
Seif's email address is: Seif.EIRashidi@sas.ac.uk

SR – Forum members can view the Living Layers website at:
<http://alpha.layersoflondon.org/>

3. Living Wandle project update

RW – gave an update on the various projects being funded through the Living Wandle partnership.

The LWP team (Rebecca, Kelvin and Sarah) have now had their contracts extended to May 2018.

Priory chapterhouse development

Contractors (H A Marks) will be on site from 30 October, with completion due by 23/3/18. Marcus Beale will be project managing the development.

River restoration and eel project

The Wandle Trust and National Trust have completed various river restoration work. Eel passes were installed in Morden Hall Park in June.

There has also been a focus on local weirs – the Wandsworth weir being a particularly tricky structure. Work on fish habitats near Deen City Farm has been completed with support from the Environment Agency.

Wandle Vistas – the vistas shortlist has been decided and includes Mitcham Common; the amazing view from the 7th floor of St. Mark's car park and Wimbledon Park.

JB – much of the work will be finished by December as the project has attracted many interested volunteers. There is particular enthusiasm to highlight vistas from Sutton to Mitcham Town Centre. St. Mark's car park offer 365° views – this open panorama really needs to be exploited as per a similar car park in Peckham. On a clear day the Mitcham vista offers views of everything from listed buildings in Wimbledon, out to Crystal Palace – showing change over time.

The 10 chosen vistas will form a community resource, including film material. They will also be used to produce supplementary planning guidance, although it may be hard work to get this accepted. The material should influence management of these vistas in the future.

JB - industrial structures also have their own place in the landscape, including electricity pylons.

Forum members to contact Seif if they would like to be involved in the project or need more info

GS – Future Merton are working to develop projects encouraging youth engagement with the landscape – they have put forward lots of ideas including a community café and allotments initiative. Peckham has created a small business start-up linked to their car-park – landscape viewing centre – encouraging businesses into the area.

RW – Phase 1 – as a starting point for the new year, LBM money may be available for business improvement. There is already a lift service in the car park building and infrastructure in place.

Discovering the Source – copies of the 3 guided walk leaflets are available from LWP and more need to be printed.

Wandle Fortnight

Micro grants were available . Around 2500 people took part in various events and the programme was very successful. Wandle Valley Forum has arranged a 'Wandle Meet Up' on 29th November for people wanting to reflect on this year's Wandle Fortnight and discuss plans for next year. More info at: <http://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk/>

Living Wandle Conference to be staged on 20 October – the main discussion topic to be “Celebrating the landscape in an urban context” Bookings via Eventbrite. (RW reported on 1/11/17 that this event was well received and helped to raise the profile of the Wandle nationally.)

If anyone would like to get a flavour of what the LWLPS has done over the past 3 and a half years, a video is available on: <https://wandlevalleypark.co.uk/the-living-wandle-partnership/>

Living River – a performance was staged in July at Battersea Arts Centre featuring 28 young people from Wandsworth and Merton. They staged a promenade celebrating the river, performed their own songs and gave a new take on the Jeremy Kyle show.

Wandle education programme – this is now complete and the Wandle Trust are looking at how to roll it out in the future - the legacy of the project is very important.

Wandle Treasures Map – this featured in the Merton Arts Festival and will be displayed at the Heritage Centre throughout November.

Mapping the Mills – Building Exploratory, with support from Wandle Industrial Museum, are researching mills along the river. The project includes staging guided walks along the Wandle, a published account of the research undertaken and creation of a printed map.

Wandle Rain Gardens: Dates have been released for workshops aimed at people wanting to learn more about rain gardens, to reduce flooding and the impacts of climate change. (See attachment)

GS to ask Future Merton for an update on use of the St. Marks car park.

local residents association or Colliers Wood Community Association)

Merton & Morden

St. John the Divine and Nelson Gardens (Approach Merton Abbey School and High Path Residents Association)

Graves at St. Mary the Virgin, Merton Park (Approach John Innes Society, Church group of Merton Park Residents Association)

SG to invite groups to take part in the scheme and discuss its remit. She will also work with council colleagues to discuss LBM support, the relevant communications structure and organise risk assessments. Adopting groups will be invited to take part in initial site visits, plus a meeting to establish a framework for their work and how to raise awareness of the relevant sites. The first part of the scheme (winter months) will involve preliminary research, photography and the setting up of a site monitoring system. A range of project outputs will be produced (as agreed with adopters) to link in with major promotion of the scheme in May (Local History Month, Museums & Galleries Month and the 2018 Heritage Discovery Day.)

5. Discussion of Objective 4, Merton Heritage Strategy

Group discussion focussed on the LBM London Borough of Culture bid.

ND – this is a superb opportunity – London boroughs will submit competitive bids to secure the status of Mayor of London’s Borough of Culture for the next 2 years. Merton’s bid is based on a small officer contingent and will rely heavily on community involvement and ideas. Merton stands as good a chance as any borough and if successful, the initiative will benefit people, places and events.

AH – community organisations, schools, Arts and Heritage services will be invited to take part in a range of workshops to discuss methods for engagement. LBM really wants community groups to be involved in the bid – there is a 6 – 8 week submission deadline .

ND – to date, 21 boroughs are bidding. The winning borough will be awarded £1 million to support its programme. There will also be smaller prizes for the runners up. The LBC project strongly relates to Heritage Strategy objective 4 – organisations must interact to make it work – there will be a lasting legacy. Talking and working together will be good for local organisations, there will also be commercial, volunteering and corporate benefits.

ND hopes that Forum members will be able to attend one of the meetings scheduled for 30 October (between 12 and 8pm) to discuss LB Culture plans and opportunities (details to be circulated.)

TS expressed surprise at the short notice for meetings – this may limit the number of local organisations who can attend.

ND – Due to the schedule for submission, LBM only has a short time to get the community directly engaged - it is important for groups to confirm their willingness to be involved asap.

Sarah Tanburn will contact local organisations to invite them to attend the 30 Oct meetings

<p>6. The latest additions to the Local List (see attachment) JT circulated the latest list of suggested additions to the local list. She would appreciate candid feedback about their merit for inclusion and help to fill gaps in the information about particular sites.</p> <p><u>Ridgway Stables</u>(Wimbledon) is under threat and so local listing has been suggested. The stables behind the Dog & Fox pub are not on the list.</p> <p><u>The Manor Club</u>, Merton Park – The John Innes Society may be able to provide information on the building. – some parties feel that whilst the building is interesting, it is not spectacular in architectural terms.</p> <p><u>16 Copse Hill</u> – NP feels this is interesting but not unique. ND – not keen on including this property.</p> <p><u>Merton Hall</u> – JT – development proposals have provoked controversy and there is a public petition opposing the changes. Historic England has been asked to comment on the proposals.</p> <p>7. Planning application outcomes Discussion of this item was postponed as the meeting had overrun.</p> <p>8. Dates of next meetings. SG has consulted Democratic Services to ensure that future Forum meetings do not clash with Committee meetings involving the Heritage Cabinet member, or councillors with Heritage remits. The next meeting has been scheduled for 6 March 2018. The second has been pencilled in for 16 October 2018 – however the latter date has yet to receive corporate confirmation..</p>	<p>Members to send feedback to JT asap.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting: 6 March 2018, Merton Heritage Centre, 7 – 8.30pm.</p>	