

**Alexandra Park & Palace Informal Joint Meeting of the  
Advisory Committee and Consultative Committee**

**on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

Report Title: **Alexandra Park and Palace design issues and planning/listed building consent/advertising consent applications**

Report of: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To update the Committees on a number of design issues where a planning/Listed Building Consent/advertising consent application is in prospect, so that advice may be passed on to the Board for decision on 23 May

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Committee endorses the content of the proposals by the owner of Little Dinosaurs, the prospective advertisement consent and principles of prospective planning/Listed Building Consent applications around the Place as outlined below

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**3. Executive Summary**

3.1 This report covers:

- Outline proposals by the owner of the Little Dinosaurs soft play centre in the Grove, as discussed on site by members of both Committees on 9 April;
- The content of a proposed application for advertisement consent to take advantage of the blocked window openings on the S façade of the Palace and at the W and E ends to publicise activities at the Palace, to explain our history and our plans;
- To outline the scope of proposals to tidy up the design of the area outside the Bar and Kitchen;
- To explain the interim strategy for protection of areas adjacent to the NW tower and the N façade where spalling brickwork making areas of the site and neighbouring properties inaccessible

3.2 The Committees are invited to endorse the proposals in each case for approval by the main Board

## Background

### **4. Little Dinosaurs soft play centre – Building alterations and improvements to surrounding area**

- 4.1 The operator of the Little Dinosaurs soft-play centre in the Grove has a number of proposals for the property relating to both the building and the surrounding grounds. In order to assist discussion at this meeting Committee Members were invited to a site visit on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013. Ten Members were able to attend and they met the operator, Jason Jenkins who explained his proposals. Mr Jenkins will be present at the Committee meeting to answer questions if required.
- 4.2 The first proposal is to extend the footprint of the building on the northern side to incorporate the present N. veranda, already partly in filled. A drawing of the layout is shown in Appendix 1; the main point is to show the red infill walls, with apologies that other details are less legible at this scale. The rear elevation of the extension will be re-aligned with the existing storage sheds to make a continuous wall. Windows will be maintained in the new wall and the cladding will be dark-brown to match the existing sheds.
- 4.3 This proposal will require Planning Permission and Members are asked to consider and advise the Trustees according to the Functions of the Advisory Committee and constitution of the Consultative Committee.
- 4.4 Comments by members on the site visit related to the detail of the rear wall, its material construction, style of windows and future maintenance. It was noted that the wall would result in the loss of one of the three verandas around the building.
- 4.5 The second proposal relates to improvements to the grounds of the building. This includes a planting scheme to soften the impact of the building on the Park and installation of artificial grass to improve the areas of high footfall which are muddy and unattractive. Wooden play structures are also proposed to replace the existing plastic slides and see saws. The wooden equipment will be of higher quality, more robust and more attractive than the existing items.
- 4.6 Some members made comments regarding alternative surface materials such as gravel and a hedgerow to screen the gas bottles at the western end of the building.
- 4.7 One comment was received by email a few days later from Denise Feeney: We stated some concerns as to the materials for the walling, exterior planting and ground treatments to be used - but as long as they are in keeping with the historical nature of the Grove, I feel any improvements will enhance the community use of the building.
- 4.8 **Some, or all of this proposal will require Planning Permission and Members are asked to consider and advise the Trustees according to the Functions of the Advisory Committee and constitution of the Consultative Committee. The advice will be reported to the Board in due course.**

### **5. Advertising consent application, Alexandra Palace**

- 5.1 Through the consultation process regarding the Regeneration project a number of respondents have commented on the lack of visible information regarding the past, present and future of Alexandra Palace on the outside of the building. This has also been a consistent comment from mystery shopping exercise and customer feedback gathered during the day to day running of both the Palace and Park. Though it is recognised that banner systems should not be placed for permanent use (please see Appendix One for further information on Palm

Court entrance banner system) on the brickwork, it is felt that the blue plywood panels blocking the former window openings on the W, S and E facades of the Palace could be better used to inform our visitors about the Palace and Park

“Class 5: Advertisements on business premises” is the Advertising Consent category under which we should apply for permission. The Class description states that “business premises” means any building in which a professional, commercial or industrial undertaking is being carried out or that any commercial services are being provided for the public. The term would include: office buildings, banks, shops, theatres, cinemas, dance halls, etc. Class 5 only permits advertisements for the goods or services available at the particular premises (*Source - outdoor advertisement and signs a guide for advertisers (DCLG)*)

The regulations of Class 5 are as follows:

**Class 5: Advertisements on business premises**

**An advertisement permitted in Class 5 must not:**

- Have any letters, figures, symbols or similar features in the design over 0.75m in height, or 0.3m in height if they are in any Areas of Special Control of Advertisements;
- Have its highest part at more than 4.6m above ground level, or 3.6m in any Area of Special Control of Advertisements;
- Have its highest part above the level of the bottom of the first floor window in the wall where the advertisement is;
- Be illuminated, unless the illumination is intended to indicate medical or similar services or supplies are available at the premises;
- If the premises are in any Area of Special Control of Advertisements, exceed in area 10% of the external face of the buildings, measured up to a height of 3.6m above ground level.

*Source: Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers (DCLG)*

It is important to recognise Alexandra Palace as a Grade 2 listed building and therefore any normal permits within class 5 would also require listed building consent. We are currently in further discussions with the Borough’s Planning Department to ensure that we have supplied all required information before submitting the application.

## 5.2 Process for consent

The consent will be decided by the Planning Committee (in some circumstances they may delegated the responsibility to an officer in the Planning team). In deciding whether to approve the application, the Planning Committee are guided by two issues – amenity and public safety.

### a) Amenity

*In practice, amenity is usually understood to mean the effect upon visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of the advertisement or where passers-by will be aware of the advertisement. In assessing amenity, LPAs will always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood. For example, if the advertisement displayed is in a locality where there are important scenic, historic or architectural features, the LPA will consider whether it is within scale and keeping of these features. This is of particular importance given APP’s listing and location within a Conservation Area.*

### b) Public Safety

*Public safety means the considerations which are relevant to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land, over water or in the air. For example, the LPA must*

*assess the likely effects of the advertisement on the behaviour of drivers. The LPA does assume that advertisements are intended to attract attention – what matters is whether it will be so distracting or confusing that it would create a hazard. The LPA will likely consult other relevant bodies, such as the highways authority, if an advertisement is visible from a major road.*

### 5.3 Detailed proposals

Appendix 11.1 illustrates the proposals location by location

Location 1 (Palm Court entrance) is for temporary event signage which will only be used occasionally during event or busy days. Use of this signage will be limited to 52 out of 365 days.

Location 2 (Far right side of Palm Court entrance outside the Bar & Kitchen) Past, Present, Future: Artwork demonstrating the heritage, current activity and future ambition of Alexandra Park and Palace.

Location 3 (Windows on the tower next to the beer garden but facing the view) Regeneration and directional signage.

Location 4 (South Terrace Board Next to east light well) 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event signage.

Location 5 (BBC Studios) Directional signage and historical information on the BBC at Alexandra Palace.

Location 6 (Left and right windows outside of the Ice Rink) Directional signage, regeneration panels, and past, present and future signage as previously designed.

### Summary

**The process for achieving both advertisement and listed building consent is complex and has a long timeline. We are approaching SAC/CC at this stage so that advice can be given to the Board in advance of the formal application process. The overriding objective is to inform our visitors about Alexandra Park and Palace and its amazing past, present and future.**

### 6. Area outside Bar and Kitchen

The area outside the Bar and Kitchen is not very welcoming to those wishing to eat/drink outside in the summer. It is finished in black top tarmac, there is no shade/shelter, and it contains/contained a number of pieces of relocated historic fabric which were deteriorating. In 2012 we obtained temporary consent for the removal to a safe place of the cast iron panels, which had previously been part of the old racecourse grandstand. In a place where they were at risk of being nudged by vehicles, and being made of brittle cast iron, I do not propose reinstatement but storage in the basement for reuse in a less risky environment.

One “historic” feature remains – the cement urn in the middle of the square planter bed, boxed in with a “split log” effect more reminiscent of a log cabin than a London park. It is proposed that this feature is dismantled and the urn stored in the Park Yard for reference. It is currently structurally unstable and may not be safely conservable for reinstallation in a public place. It is understood that it came from the Italian Garden on the site of the West Hall.

The intention is to resurface the area with tar-bound chippings to match the surface on the east of the S Terrace, and delineate new seating areas with moveable screens and planters, and in fine

weather place umbrellas there. This would be a much more flexible and appropriate design, without prejudicing the use of the area to support events (eg for unloading) as required.

**The Committee is asked to endorse this proposal to the Board, pending a full Listed Building Consent submission.**

## **7. Protection of areas adjacent to north facade**

There is an ongoing problem with the faces of the buff bricks around the Palace which are prone to spalling when water/frost gets behind them, which tends to occur when the pointing erodes. The NW corner tower and the W end of the N facade are particularly badly affected due to weathering. This note is to advise the committee that we may need to take measures to protect owners of adjacent property from falling fragments of brick, pointing and cement render, in particular car parking areas outside the lab health club and the N service yard. Full repair of this facade would involve extensive scaffolding and would be very expensive, so is not currently programmable. The netting is the most likely cost effective temporary solution, and this facade is less visible than the S facade where it was previously suggested (and rejected). **The Committee's endorsement of this measure in principle is requested.**

## **8. Recommendations**

That the Committee notes the contents of this report and endorses the design proposals in detail/outline described at section 4-7 above (and associated Appendices 1-3 below) for each item as appropriate, for consideration by the main Board.

## **9 Legal Implications**

The Council's Head of Legal Services has no comments on this report, save to confirm the need for the Committees to frame their comments to the Board on the advertising consent application referred to at paragraph 5 of the report, in accordance with the DCLG guidance. Where this does not prove possible, then reasons for departing from the guidance should be given.

## **10 Financial Implications**

The Council's Chief Financial Officer notes the proposals set out in the report and at this stage has no further comments to make. Should these proposals be endorsed, further reports will be submitted to the Trust Board which should then address any financial implications of taking these forward.

## **11 Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Little Dinosaurs Proposed Site Plan
- 11.2 Appendix 2: Creative concepts and locations for Alexandra Park and Palace branding on W, S and E facades