



Haringey Council

Briefing note for the Muswell Hill, Alexandra, Fortis Green and Highgate Area Forum

Date : 12 March 2014

Purpose of Briefing

- To update the Muswell Hill, Alexandra, Fortis Green and Highgate Area Forum about progress with the Alexandra Palace regeneration project.

1. Regeneration project

In the summer of 2012 the Alexandra Park and Palace Trust (APPCT) consulted widely about a regeneration plan for the whole place based on a design masterplan by Terry Farrell Associates. This plan was broadly welcomed by over 2000 respondents. It formed the basis of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the Victorian theatre as a new cultural and performance space and former BBC TV studios as a visitor attraction. The Stage 1 bid for £17m towards a £24m project was successful. This allowed us to proceed to the next phase, design and submission of fully costed proposals. The design team, led by internationally renowned architects Feilden Clegg Bradley, have just been appointed.

The Trust is also taking professional advice about the feasibility of finding one or more private sector partners to invest in a hotel and our events business. If and when proposals emerge from this process we will consult on them fully.

To encourage people to see the place in a new light, we are promoting “meanwhile” uses of some of the derelict or underused spaces such as the theatre, where some interim repairs have allowed us to use the auditorium for the first time in recent history.

2. Conservation of the fabric

The Trust has also commissioned a full study of the condition of the fabric of Alexandra Palace from the conservation architects Purcell. We are now studying the initial findings, and the intention is that this will lead to a ten year programme of maintenance and repairs to the 140-year old building. The HLF project (above) will be addressing the most important historic interiors, which were mostly untouched by the 1980s fire. But many of the areas rebuilt following the 1980s fire are now themselves in need of urgent repair and (in some cases) rebuilding. The mechanical and electrical plant too is in need of replacement or overhaul, as confirmed by the survey. The Trust is now putting together a prioritised plan for addressing these issues in conjunction with the regeneration project and to support the existing events business.

3. Events report

The basis of regenerating the Palace is a thriving events business, which is generating profits to support the Trust’s work in respect of the Park and Palace. There is sustainable growth in live sports events, concerts and exhibitions. However as always individual events come and go over time, so to remain competitive we are always looking to attract new business.

4. The Park

The challenge of maintaining the Park is significant, given that it is heavily used especially when the weather is good. There has also been some storm damage over the winter, and we have lost some large trees. However there has been recent progress eg in renewing the timber decking around the lake.

We will be looking at the issue of car parking in the course of 2014. Survey work is currently being conducted as part of an options appraisal. Any changes proposed will be fully consulted on.

We are also looking a number of environmental improvement projects, which Mark Evison will outline in greater detail at the meeting.

5. Learning and community

We have recently made some improvements to the Transmitter Hall (aka Boxing Club) to allow us to reopen it later in the year as a centre from which to deliver our learning programmes to commemorate the centenary of WW1, in which Alexandra Palace had a part to play as a refugee and then internment camp. Our learning officer Isobel Aptaker will be engaging with local schools to bring this story to life from September 2014. It will include a small exhibition about the impact of WW1 at Alexandra Palace. This project has bene mostly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We will also be using the Transmitter Hall once works are complete around Easter to host community events, including guided tours of the Palace which will start there.

DW 26.02.14