

# The Building Exploratory

**A Learning Programme for Alexandra Park and Palace**  
Feasibility Report, March 2012

# The Building Exploratory

## 1. Executive Summary

On receipt of the brief to assess the feasibility of setting up a learning programme at Alexandra Park and Palace, the Building Exploratory felt certain that the site presented resources and subject matter around which a rich and varied offer could be built.

In order to explore our first impressions we undertook a detailed research exercise to help establish the potential scope of a programme: the content, the size and shape of the learning audience and what funding streams were available for supporting it.

We concluded that the Palace offered considerable scope in terms of content, with its unique built heritage, television history and the site's environmental attributes, to create a rich and varied learning programme.

From early on in the process it became evident that a programme should begin with a primary school audience. Through our conversations with Haringey schools and local education specialists, we established a high level of interest and a thirst for cross-curricula and also that very few opportunities exist in the borough for schools to participate in cultural learning.

We looked at the school curriculum in detail, specifically at where Alexandra Palace might intervene to enrich it, and found it laden with possibility for delivering to schemes of work in core subjects especially History, Geography, English and Science.

Our review of the wider political and economic context confirmed that setting up a learning programme is a timely and relevant proposition. The Henley Review stresses the importance of cultural learning, while the government's response to it promotes the engagement of schools with local heritage sites.

Finally, we looked at potential sources of funding and concluded that a schools learning programme at Alexandra Palace would meet the criteria of many of the key grant giving trusts and foundations and that it had a particularly good fit with the Heritage Lottery Fund's "Your Heritage" funding stream.

This document reports on the research we undertook and the reflections we have had about the opportunity to put Alexandra Palace on the map as a cultural learning venue and to meet the needs of local people to develop their knowledge of and celebrate their neighbourhood. A learning programme would have the additional benefits of increasing footfall and raising awareness of the wide range of events and activities that take place on the site. All of which help to address the Palace's vision to become "*a successful, valuable and sustainable asset for all including the local community and stakeholders.*"

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## 2. Proposed Learning Programme

Following consultation with teachers and other educators in the London Borough of Haringey, and having looked in detail at the heritage, history and environmental qualities of Alexandra Park and Palace, we recommend piloting a formal learning programme of taught workshops with local primary schools as a starting point.

It is proposed that an initial six workshops are developed for Key Stage 2 students (upper primary school pupils, aged 7 to 11 years, in Years 3 to 6). Alexandra Park and Palace's history, in particular its significance as a Victorian leisure and entertainment venue and as the site of the first television broadcast, lends itself to specific elements of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum. In addition, this particular group will be relatively easy to recruit as Key Stage 2 pupils currently form the single highest group of schools visitors to museums and other heritage organisations.

The six workshops proposed are interactive and provide experiential learning opportunities with clear learning objectives. They would be delivered on site in the TV studio, boxing club, or an equivalent space, and in the Park. Taking inspiration from the site, the workshops deliver across the National Curriculum, though are particularly strong in History, Geography, English and Science. In addition to addressing the Curriculum, the workshops will enrich it with a sense of place and will celebrate the wonders of the local area: its unique history, landmark buildings and natural environment.

The workshops are outlined below and full details of National Curriculum links, venues and resources required to deliver them can be found in Appendix One.

### **1. History: The Victorians: Entertainment and leisure**

Children learn how the Victorians spent their leisure time through an exploration of Alexandra Palace and Park. In addition to the site itself, the session will use the panoramic view of the surrounding area to identify Victorian landmarks and development, as well as objects, paintings, historic photographs and drawings. Pupils will learn why Alexandra Park and Palace was built, and how it was used, and participate in Victorian games and a music hall performance. Children will be encouraged to come to the workshop dressed in Victorian costume.

### **2. English: Create and film a Victorian drama for TV**

During this workshops pupils will be inspired by Alexandra Palace's association with the history of television, and develop story building and script-writing techniques. Pupils will create and film a short drama about the experience of a Victorian child visiting Alexandra Palace for the first time. Characters will be based on those in *Hetty Feather* and *Sapphire Battersea*, novels set during the

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Victorian period, and written by popular children's author Jacqueline Wilson, whose books have also been adapted for CBBC.

### **3. English: Make a TV advertisement for Alexandra Park and Palace**

Pupils will explore the history and significance of Alexandra Park and Palace, and what it has to offer as a place to visit today, through a short walking tour and using historic objects, maps and photographs. Having been introduced to the language and techniques of adverts, pupils will create and film a TV advertisement for Alexandra Park and Palace.

### **4. History: TV history and John Logie Baird**

Pupils visit the TV studio and learn about the history of TV and children's programmes. Pupils are introduced to John Logie Baird, participate in a re-enactment of the first transmission of an image, and investigate how TV sets have changed since the first broadcast to today's digital versions, on which many channels are available around the clock. Pupils are encouraged to consider how TV has changed people's experience of world since the 1930s.

### **5. History and Geography: Local area mapping and development**

Pupils will investigate why and how the area around Alexandra Park and Palace has changed over time, using the panoramic view of the local area, historic and contemporary maps, paintings, architectural drawings, and census data. In particular, pupils will learn how Victorian housing and municipal development transformed their local area. In addition to understanding Alexandra Palace's location in relation to the rest of London and the world, children will explore how the different groups of people that make up their community have influenced how their local area looks.

### **6. Science: Habitats, mini-beasts and animal adaptations**

Children explore three different habitats in Alexandra Park: woodland, grassland and lake, to identify the vertebrates and invertebrates that live there, and how they are adapted to their environment. Children will use magnifying glasses to search for small living creatures and use cameras to record them. Most of this workshop will take place outside (weather permitting), and children will gain an understanding of the huge range of species with Alexandra Park, and learn about classification and adaptation.

### **3. Context and Considerations**

The workshops proposed are based on the needs and interests of local schools, local and national education policy and detailed consultation with local teachers and education professionals. Underpinning the workshops presented are the following considerations:

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- Links between the most significant features and history of Alexandra Park and Palace and the National Curriculum. Our experience highlights the need for workshops to be closely and explicitly linked to the National Curriculum.
- National and local education priorities to improve literacy attainment.
- Discussions with the learning team at the National Media Museum, confirming the popularity of literacy workshops using the history of television as inspiration.
- Local learning is a requirement of the National Curriculum at every Key Stage. Alexandra Park and Palace represents an opportunity for schools to cover this requirement and combine history, literacy and science learning with a study of the local area.
- The dearth of local cultural learning opportunities, which force most schools to travel into central London to take part in the opportunities available there. For example facilitated schools workshops on Victorian life are offered at many museums and heritage organisations. Central London however is not easily accessible to many schools in Haringey by public transport. A list of cultural organisations offering learning activities for schools can be seen in Appendix Two.
- Lack of green spaces accessible to school groups in Haringey.
- A varied programme covering several subject areas, designed to entice schools to participate in two workshops during a daylong visit. This would provide schools that are not within easy travelling distance with the opportunity to maximise the potential of their time and the learning opportunities available.

### **Consultation with local teachers and education professionals**

It is worth reporting the results of our consultation with local teachers and education professionals in some detail. We spoke to six primary school teachers and a teaching assistant, all of whom have whole school responsibility for trips and cultural learning, a school business manager, a head teacher, and Haringey's school literacy advisor. (See Appendix Three Teachers' consultations.)

Many schools local to Alexandra Park and Palace visit on a self-led basis, to participate in sports, science and art activities. Schools also visit museums in central London, and take advantage of activities at local libraries, visit churches in their area and participate in a range other learning opportunities available in the borough including Bruce Castle, Haringey Environmental Education Centre and a local book shop.

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All those spoken to during the consultation were enthusiastic about the prospect of a schools learning programme at Alexandra Park and Palace. In particular schools would be keen to participate in facilitated workshops, using a local resource. This would cut the costs and time associated with travelling to museums and other cultural learning venues in central London and would allow younger year groups to participate in cultural learning activities. Often it is not feasible for younger children to travel a great distance on public transport, and the cost of hiring transport for trips is prohibitive. Furthermore, Alexandra Park is one of only a few local green spaces in which school children can learn about natural habitats.

Schools in Haringey appear to have little or no budget for trips and cultural learning activities. The head teacher at St Michael's Primary School explained that the budgets of Haringey schools are stretched as a result of a decision made 30 years ago to entice teachers to work in the borough, which resulted in a legacy of schools receiving outer London financial allocations, but paying inner London costs. All the teachers we spoke to told us that they seek out free cultural learning activities where possible, with one telling us that they only participate in free activities. Where there are costs for museum and cultural learning workshops schools ask parents for contributions, although this is limited to £1 or £2 per pupil. One teacher suggested that whilst Haringey schools might participate in workshops for free, a charge could be made for schools outside the borough.

Improving attainment in literacy is a requirement within most School Improvement Plans across the London Borough of Haringey, although priorities vary in individual schools. Whilst supporting the target of improving literacy can be addressed with specific schools workshops at Alexandra Palace, literacy skills can also be developed in a cross-curricular way, for example through facilitating speaking and listening activities as part of history workshops.

All the teachers we spoke to said their schools would be keen to participate in all of the workshops proposed: Victorian leisure and entertainment, literacy and drama linked to TV history, local area development, and habitats and mini beasts. It was stressed by teachers that workshops should be closely linked to the National Curriculum, standard schemes of work and current teaching guidance, and those workshops that focussed on two areas, such as teaching the Victorians through local history, would be particularly well received. Several of those consulted expressed a specific interest in local area history and geography workshops.

Consultation resulted in several offers of help to develop and promote the proposed schools' programme. The head teacher at St Michael's Primary School is keen for her school to be involved in piloting workshops, and also suggested speaking at a meeting of the head teachers' network, of which she is a member. Haringey's schools literacy advisor has offered a slot on the agenda of the

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Literacy Coordinators' meeting in June, which all the literacy teachers in the borough attend, as well as providing contacts for the borough's three head teachers' networks.

## **Schools Audience**

Our research on state schools in Haringey established that there are 52 primary schools and 11 secondary schools in the borough. The names, addresses and number of attending pupils are listed in Appendix Four, alongside the modes of travel available to each and travel times by foot or public transport. Appendix Five maps this data for presentation purposes.

This shows that there are 13 primary schools within a one-mile radius or a 30-minute walk of Alexandra Palace. A further 14 primary schools are within a 30-minute journey by local bus. Connections with schools in the east of the borough are more difficult, though eight more schools can reach the palace within 40 minutes, by a combination of underground and train to Alexander Palace station. Unfortunately 17 schools are more than a 40-minute journey by public transport or foot and consideration would need to be made as to whether these schools could stomach the longer journey or would need to come by minibus or coach.

For future reference it is worth noting that the majority of the borough's secondary schools, nine in total, are within a 30-minute journey either by foot or on public transport, with only three secondary schools at a distance of more than 30-minutes travel time.

A sense of the size of the school audience in Haringey has been achieved by calculating the number of classes of primary school children in the borough, approximately 630. This means that were Alexandra Palace to work exclusively with Haringey primary schools and deliver 150 workshops per annum, as is proposed in the following section, it would take more than four years for every child in the borough to experience a workshop. The market for the programme would increase further, should interested schools in the areas immediately surrounding Haringey and further afield become eligible to attend.

## **Extending Audiences**

Given the levels of need, interest and the size of the audience supports the proposal that Alexandra Palace pilots learning programmes for school groups before developing other audiences. Schools offer the potential for large numbers of visitors to the Palace and will ensure that the visiting audience reflects the diversity of the communities that live in the London Borough of Haringey.

The proposed Key Stage 2 schools programme can be adapted easily for younger children at Foundation and Key Stage 1, and also for secondary school students at Key Stage 3. Within the proposed programme, potential exists to pilot adaptations of two of the workshops with Key Stage 1 pupils almost immediately, as the History and Geography and Science workshops have close links to the

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lower primary school National Curriculum. Besides adapting the workshops proposed above for younger and older schools audiences, we suggest that in time a fuller programme of workshops could be developed to cover:

- History: Victorian engineering
- Design Technology: Moving images
- Science: Changing seasons
- Science: Plants and growing
- Links relevant to performances and other events taking place at the Palace

Extending audiences beyond schools could stem from the work with pupils, who often repeat their visits to cultural and heritage venues with parents and other family members. In the future, a family programme could easily be devised from the interactive and hands-on activities proposed for the schools' workshop programme.

During conversations at Alexandra Park and Palace it was suggested by Rick Wills that there was a need for after-school clubs for children attending primary schools in Tottenham. However, our research shows that there is a 30 to 40 minute journey to Alexandra Park and Palace by public transport from schools in eastern parts of Haringey. An after-schools club programme would therefore need to be run on an outreach basis in this locality, as it is unlikely to be feasible for children to visit Alexandra Park and Palace during the hour-long slot that is usually allocated for after-school activities. As considerable resources would be required to develop such an outreach programme, which would not result in audiences visiting the site, we propose that working with schools in this way is considered at a later date.

We have considered the current potential to offer a programme of learning activity for older people at Alexandra Park and Palace. The potential for a long-term programme of activity for an older people's group would require the development of a comprehensive series of activities and considerable resource. It is unlikely that there is sufficient material to support an ongoing learning programme for older people at the Palace, the subject matter would therefore have to stray into areas of less relevance to the site. Furthermore, it would be necessary to recruit older people to such a group through outreach, which would require a significant amount of time investment. One off activities could be devised, though at this stage therefore, we recommend that, rather than targeting older people in isolation, a periodic public adult programme could be developed from the wealth of research and expertise surrounding the site's history consisting of self guided activities and guided tours for families, adults and older people on a similar basis to the successful London Open House weekend.



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## 4. Implementing a Learning Programme

In order to implement a learning programme at Alexandra Park and Palace, the following would need to be in place:

### **A tried and tested set of workshops**

Workshops would need to be fully developed and refined and workshop resources gathered and reproduced. Piloting the programme prior to an official launch would provide opportunities to fully develop and testing both workshops and resources.

### **An audience of receptive teachers**

The building of relationships with schools by piloting key workshops would begin to establish a track record of successful delivery of learning activities.

### **Suitable learning venues**

Venues at the Palace, such as the “boxing club” and BBC studio, would need to be tested, and any adaptations required for hosting groups of school pupils would need to be made. Risk Assessments for each activity and space would also need to be carried out.

### **A functioning administration system**

A system for managing and recording bookings and dealing with teachers’ specific requirements would need to be developed as would a system for ensuring that any staff member that would come into contact with children was fully checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

### **An experienced learning officer**

A learning officer would need to be recruited to run the programme. The post holder would need to be reasonably experienced, with the maturity to work independently from a wider learning team. A typical job description for such a post is given in Appendix Six.

The table below assumes that the recommendation to pilot the learning programme is followed and sets out the steps and realistic timing for the development and delivery of a programme. The appointment of the learning officer could come at an earlier stage in the process, should Alexandra Park and Palace Trust wish to make this commitment prior to securing grant funding.

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## Suggested Timetable for Implementing the Programme

Task	Timing
Start to build reputation/relationships with teachers by attending head teachers meetings and events	June/July 2012
Detailed workshop Design and resource development and design  Establishment of systems for administration and CRB checks	July/August 2012
Launch of pilot for teachers with demonstration of workshops	September 2012
Pilot new workshops during autumn term 2012	October to December 2012
Review of programme and workshops  Applications to trusts and foundations  Preparation and submission of application to Heritage Lottery Fund	January to March 2013  <i>Delivery of workshops could continue during this period to maintain audience.</i>
Apply for Learning Outside the Classroom quality badge	January 2013
Recruitment and appointment of learning officer	May/June 2013
Induction of learning officer	July/August 2013
Launch of three year learning programme  Apply for Sanford Award accreditation.	September 2013

### Learning Spaces and Resources

Two spaces have been identified by staff at Alexandra Palace for the delivery of the proposed schools' programme: the "boxing club" and the BBC studio. We recommend that the three proposed workshops, which investigate the history of television, should take place in the TV studio. The history and geography workshops should be delivered in the "boxing club" on the ground floor. Most of

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these workshops will also involve participants exploring the outside of Alexandra Palace and its panoramic view of London. The science workshop will take place in the Park.

The suitability of these venues for use by schools groups needs to be fully assessed. It is possible that some refurbishment work would need to be carried out in order to bring them up to a standard acceptable for visiting teachers and pupils, so that they are safe for young children and conducive to learning. The old boxing club could easily become a flexible learning space. In addition to space for delivering workshops, areas are required for meeting and greeting school groups, for the storage of children's coats and bags, and a space where children can eat packed lunches. This will be particularly important to encourage school groups to visit Alexandra Park and Palace for a full day.

In addition, school groups will require access to well maintained and clean toilets.

Storage for resources used in the workshops will also be required and consideration should also be given to a flexible space that can accommodate future audiences and activities, including messy art workshops.

## **Resources Required**

The space where the workshops take place will need to be equipped with furniture including tables and chairs and access to a laptop computer with a projector and screen or an interactive whiteboard would be necessary as would a good internet connection.

The specific resources required to deliver the each workshop can be found alongside the detailed outline of workshops in Appendix One. They include: historic and contemporary maps and photographs, games, flip cameras, magnifying glasses and clipboards.

## **5. Financial Implications & Funding Opportunities**

We are optimistic about the possibilities of funding a learning programme at Alexandra Park and Palace. Learning about heritage is high on the political agenda and funders are generally interested in the subject and aware of its benefits.

There is little if any funding available from statutory sources, either local or central government, and while there are numerous trusts and foundations whose priorities closely match the proposed learning programme, they are heavily oversubscribed and applications are time consuming. With a few exceptions they offer relatively small grants for one year only. This means that a number of smaller grants would be required to cover the costs of a comprehensive learning programme. Appendix Six outlines the key trusts and foundations interested in heritage learning that could be approached to fund the programme. It covers the

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guidelines and priorities, sums typically awarded, the application process to be followed and provides key contacts.

In our view the best option would be to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is countering trends by doubling the sums applicable to each of its funding programmes. "Your Heritage" is the pot most relevant to community learning and from April 2012, the maximum grant will go from £50,000 to £100,000. Some match funding is required to secure these grants, but not more than 10% or £10,000 should Alexandra Palace decided to make an application for the maximum grant.

If presented as a discreet project, there is no reason why an application to HLF under this programme should impact on a larger application to for capital funding, though it could be included in the latter.

It would take some time to develop an application, but in our experience HLF provides excellent guidance for through the process and there is a relatively quick turn around time of 10 weeks from the date of submission.

## **Charging?**

In our view the Alexandra Palace should think about providing the service free of charge in the first instance in order to secure grants, test the programme, and to ensure that the service is as inclusive as possible. In the longer term however, once a reputation for quality has been established, the introduction of charges should be considered, particularly for schools from outside the London Borough of Haringey.

Though many teachers expressed a clear preference for free workshops and claimed to have little if any budget for outside trips, passing on the cost to parents, other schools clearly do have budgets and regularly pay for trips out.

Cultural organisations in the borough, or used by schools in the borough, including Haringey Council facilities such as the Environmental Learning Centre, currently charge schools for the workshop sessions they deliver. Others offer a combination of free basic workshops and advanced or specialist workshops for which a charge is made, such as Kenwood House. Please see Appendix Two for charges made for school workshops by other organisations in Haringey.

## **Outline Budget**

The direct revenue costs of the learning programme would be around £45,000 per annum. This would cover the basic running costs of the programme including the salary and NI of the learning officer, marketing the programme, purchasing and maintaining the resources required and also paying for freelance delivery support in order that 150 workshops can be delivered each year, or 50 per school term. A rough breakdown of costs follows.

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<b>Item</b>	<b>£</b>
Learning Officer	30,000 (including Employer's NI, but not pension)
Marketing	6,500
Resources	5,000
Freelance delivery	3,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,000</b>

If the costs of any capital improvements or investments in fixtures and fittings and one off resources were limited to £10,000, then the total costs of a three-year programme would be £145,000.

An application of £100,000 to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a three-year grant would therefore need to be matched by further funding of up to £15,000 per year for the duration of the programme.

This investment would merit the following return:

- 150 workshops per year (110 by officer, 40 workshops by freelance agent)
- Almost one third of Haringey's KS2 pupils could be reached in a year
- 5,000 per year children and their teachers would be engaged with per year

## **6. PEST and SWOT Analyses**

To ensure that the proposed learning programme was relevant and realistic, we decided to conduct a PEST and a SWOT analysis (See Appendix Seven for full details of issues considered). We would advise that both exercises are repeated by Alexandra Palace, whose staff team have a far better understanding of the local context, to confirm the assumptions we have made.

The SWOT analysis confirms the huge potential for using the site as a focus for cultural learning given its unique resources, history and heritage. The opportunities are many, specifically those of addressing the palpable need local schools have for high quality cultural learning activities, and the potential for a learning programme to support the Palace's wider regeneration plans.

It also highlights the need for further development work to realise this potential and the need to address the transport issues which will could prove to be a barrier for up to a third of schools in the borough located more than 40 minutes travel time from the site.

Recruiting a learning officer with a relevant level of experience and crucially the ability to work unsupported would be essential to the success of the learning programme.

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## **PEST Analysis**

The PEST analysis confirms that the climate is good for establishing a learning programme at the Palace. Cultural learning remains high on the wider learning agenda as does the improving educational attainment, and the government has recently pledged to increase its support for visits by young people to heritage sites.

The London context, following last summer's riots in Tottenham, strongly suggests the need to enhance young people's sense of place and of belonging and the need to celebrate the unique resources of neighbourhoods.

Economic circumstances are of course difficult, nevertheless considerable opportunities exist to fund a heritage learning programme and as schools become increasingly autonomous they have more control over how they allocate budgets.

While creating digital resources could provide a solution to the identified need to encourage learning about Alexandra Park and Palace, nothing compares to first hand experience of magnificent heritage sites.

## **7. Summary and Recommendations**

On the basis of detailed research and consultation with learning professionals in Haringey, we have established the viability for creating a cultural learning programme at Alexandra Park and Palace. We recommend that in the first instance a programme is devised for Key Stage 2 pupils in Haringey primary schools. Furthermore that the programme focuses on the site's history, built heritage and environmental resources and is closely linked to National Curriculum requirements for that age group.

We recommend piloting the programme prior to submitting an application for three year funding to Heritage Lottery Fund in order to develop and test the proposed workshops, establish support amongst teachers and identify match funding. Though we believe that the programme should be fully funded and offered to schools free of charging in the first instance, the Palace should consider phasing in charges once a reputation for delivery has been established.

Some consideration needs to go into assessing the suitability of learning spaces within the Palace's estate and making any necessary improvements, and to helping schools located more than forty minutes from the Palace access the site, either by offering transport or activities to fill a day long visit.

The Building Exploratory would be delighted to support the creation of a learning function at Alexandra Palace and could be involved at a number of levels. Either taking charge for the development and piloting of workshops and preparation of applications for funding and recruitment of a learning officer or supporting a member of staff in this or simply advising and sharing our knowledge and experience with you.