

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE Executive
DATE 16th January 2008
SUBJECT Disposal of Philips Park Lodges
REPORT OF The Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the proposed disposal of the two listed former lodge buildings in Philips Park, for the purpose of securing their refurbishment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the disposal of the two lodges as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

The disposal proposed will not result in loss of revenue income, and future costs of maintenance will be transferred to preferred bidders.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

There are no financial consequences for the Capital Budget as the refurbishment of the two lodges will be funded by the preferred bidders.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

New East Manchester, Marketing Brief – September 2006

WARDS AFFECTED

Clayton, Bradford

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Anti-Poverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
NO	NO	YES	NO

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Philips Park opened on 22nd August 1846 as one of the world's first municipal parks, intended for free use by the public. The popularity of the park has continued for well over a century. Many of its original features remain to this day, including the carriage drive, serpentine paths, plantation and amphitheatre.
- 1.2 Philips Park Cemetery is adjacent to Philips Park, on the northern side of the River Medlock which separates them. Like Philips Park, the Cemetery has been listed by English Heritage as a grade II site on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

In addition to the listed status of the cemetery itself, four of the architect's Paull and Ayliffe's original gothic revival-style structures are listed as grade II monuments: the gates and piers of the main entrance at the junction of Alan Turing Way and Briscoe Lane, the Cemetery Office and Entrance Lodge to the north of the main entrance, and the Anglican Mortuary Chapel which is sited on high ground 190m north-east of the main entrance.

The two former Lodges (Cemetery Office and Entrance Lodge) and Chapel are three separate listed buildings formerly occupied and used for cemetery purposes. This use ceased some 20+ years ago and since then the buildings have been vacant and their condition has deteriorated. They require extensive works to bring them back into productive use and to restore their historic features.

The Cemetery Office and Entrance Lodge occupy a prominent position on Alan Turing Way, opposite Sportcity and all three buildings form part of the landscape of Philips Park, which has recently undergone a major upgrade. There is momentum for change and the aim is to encourage new uses for these historic buildings and spaces to make sure that regeneration is sustainable in the long-term and provides economic, social and environmental benefits.

As one of the primary green spaces in East Manchester, Philips Park was treated to a range of improvements as part of the 2002 Commonwealth Games. This included new sports and play facilities, path improvements, re-roofing of the Cemetery Office, Entrance Lodge and Chapel, new park furniture, new signage and many other developments. The work carried out so far has proved very popular with the local community, as shown by the success of the annual 'Party in the Park' festival and other events.

The main pedestrian entrance to Philips Park Cemetery is at its western end, at the junction of Alan Turing Way and Briscoe Lane. There is also a pedestrian footbridge crossing the Medlock from the north east of Philips Park. There are vehicle entrances to the north on Riverpark Road.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS

2.1 ENTRANCE LODGE

Built in 1867, the lodge is a two-storey dwelling measuring approximately 6m x 8m and is located on the right at the main entrance to the Cemetery –western end, at the junction of Alan Turing Way and Briscoe Lane. The property has a steeply pitched gable roof; external walls are in coursed rubble masonry with window surrounds in sandstone ashlar. To the rear of the property is a tower. There is limited outdoor space to the building and pedestrian access is taken from the main cemetery entrance. The perimeter of the property is overgrown with vegetation.

Summary of Condition of Building

- The building is in a very dilapidated state as a consequence of water ingress and neglect.
- Inspection does not identify significant evidence of structural movement of masonry walls in the areas accessible.
- Ground and first floors are of suspended timber construction. These are in a very poor state and will require complete replacement.
- The roof structure is of relatively lightweight construction and with extensive rot to the common rafters at the bearings.

2.2 CEMETERY OFFICE

Built in 1867 this is a substantial building measuring approximately 24m x 12m and is located to the left of the main pedestrian entrance at its western end. It is part single/part two storey and includes a clock tower and spire (clock no longer in place). The building has an associated long rear yard area. Currently both pedestrian and vehicular access is from the main entrance to the large cemetery. External walls are constructed in course rubble masonry with surrounds to windows and door openings and string courses in sandstone ashlar.

Summary of Condition of Building

- The building is free from significant evidence of structural movement. There is no plaster work remaining on the internal walls
- Timber floors are extensively rotted and will need to be entirely replaced
- External masonry is reasonably true to line and level and generally free from evidence of structural movement
- There is local evidence of foundation movement to an internal wall. This will require further investigation and possible local underpinning.
- Masonry; forming the right hand side of the front elevation tends to lean outwards up to eaves level by approximately 60mm in height. This is believed to be a consequence of roof spread.
- The upper roof structure remains reasonably intact with deterioration particularly to the wall plates and feet of the common rafters.
- There is concern as to the stability of the gable peaks which remain unrestrained

- The condition of the suspended ground floor is such that access to the building should be undertaken with great care. First floors are inaccessible.

2.3 CEMETERY CHAPEL

Built at the same time as the Entrance Lodge and Cemetery Office, the Chapel is located within the cemetery although is highly visible from Briscoe Lane. There is no outdoor space associated with the Chapel, being bounded on all sides by the cemetery pathways. The main building is rectangular measuring approximately 16m x 27m. The main body of the church has a steeply pitched roof with a gable at the west and a hip at the east. At the south-east is a rectangular tower approximately 30 metres high with a steeply pitched slated spire. External walls are constructed in coursed sandstone rubble masonry with a pitched face.

Summary of condition of building

- The building is free from significant evidence of structural movement. Inspection does not identify significant evidence of foundation movement or distortion as a consequence of roof spread.
- The building is in a dilapidated condition, principally as a consequence of water ingress.
- Much of the roof timber-work is believed to be reasonably sound, being well ventilated.
- There is significant evidence of deterioration of timber at the bearings. Left unattended this will eventually result in partial collapse of the roof.
- External coursed rubble masonry is generally sound. The sandstone ashlar is in a variable condition and with extensive lamination.
- A small amount of masonry has been robbed from the perimeter walls and a small number of blocks are displaced
- Virtually all the plaster work is perished and will require to be stripped
- Access is not available to the tower; the former door opening is in-filled with masonry.

There are varying constraints as the buildings are all Grade II listed and the internals are in very bad repair which require extensive funds to refurbish and make them into a habitable condition. The option therefore to leave the buildings and do nothing would only lead to further deterioration. The consequences of this means ongoing investment from the City for continued maintenance of the buildings and surrounding fence protection.

3 MARKETING

- 3.3 A marketing exercise was undertaken in 2002 by the Council, which failed to generate any options of viable use for the buildings within the Park or any firm offers at all. In 2006 it was decided that the best method of securing the long term future use and restoration of these buildings would be to put them to the market again. This time a comprehensive marketing exercise would be undertaken, pro-actively targeting interest from various Building Preservation Trusts, developers, individuals and other organisations to acquire one or more of the buildings. An extensive marketing exercise was carried out by NEM and MCC in Autumn 2006. As a result of this exercise only three offers were received for the two lodges. No offers were received for the Chapel.

Although the property market for residential and commercial property has improved significantly in East Manchester over the past 5 years, the poor response was considered to be a result of the high cost of restoring listed buildings in very poor condition compared to the value of the buildings when restored. The level of investment to refurbish the two lodges is likely to be in the region of £400,000 - £500,000. It should be noted that the restoration of the buildings for commercial use is constrained by the need to create a new vehicle access onto Briscoe Lane. It is estimated that this access would cost in the region of £100,000 and makes such a use not economically viable.

4 SELECTION

- 4.1 Responses were received from Ancoats Building Preservation Trust and Heritage Trust for the North West, both of which were unable to bring forward a deliverable scheme. The former proposed that the Council offer a dowry as part of the disposal and the latter, failed to demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria.

Following an assessment of the three bids by the Council's Valuation and Property Department and NEM, the party that was selected are a local couple with a long standing personal interest in the properties, who have the experience of tackling refurbishment schemes, available funding and the commitment to be able to undertake this refurbishment project. The properties will be refurbished for residential use, one of which will be occupied by the purchasers. The Council's Valuation and Property Department and NEM will work closely through the terms of disposal to ensure the properties are refurbished to a detailed brief and within an agreed programme.

None of the three bids were able to offer a premium for the two lodges due to the cost of restoration compared to the value of the buildings once restored.

5 TERMS OF DISPOSAL

- 5.1 Heads of Terms have been prepared following discussions with the proposed purchaser and the Council's Valuation and Property Department and these will form the basis of the building agreement and subsequent lease. The proposed terms for disposal are as follows:

- The purchaser will be required to enter into a building agreement for the refurbishment of the two lodges which will contain the following conditions:
 - The building agreement will be for a period of three years, within which time the purchaser will be required to refurbish both lodges.
 - Planning permission and listed building consent are obtained for the refurbishment of the lodges and any necessary external works.
 - The purchaser must confirm that it has the financial resources to undertake the scheme to its completion.
 - Development obligations to ensure the former lodge buildings are built to an agreed specification and within an agreed programme. Performance will be monitored throughout this agreement.

- On completion of the refurbishment works the purchaser will enter into a separate lease for each lodge. These leases will be subject to the following provisions:
 - Each lease will be for a period of 250 years
 - The rent will be a peppercorn
 - Use of each lodge will be restricted to use as a single dwelling house
 - The purchaser will not be allowed to assign the lease without the landlord's consent and any assignment will be subject to an overage provision, in respect of any super profits generated in the sale.

6 CHAPEL

- 6.1 Further work is being undertaken to explore the potential with Heritage Trust for the North West.

7 CONCLUSION

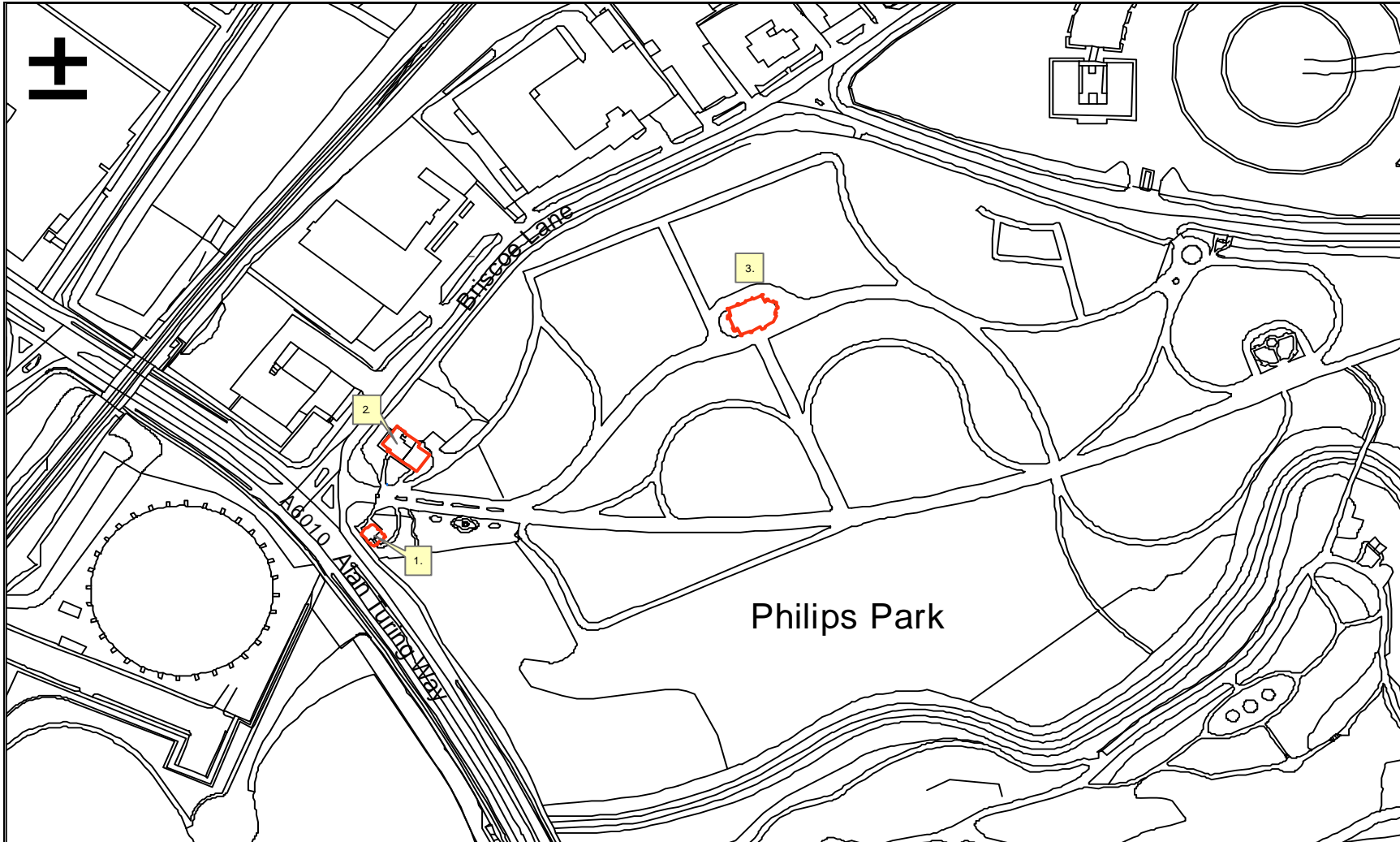
- 7.1 The level of investment in the two lodges is likely to be in the region of £400,000 - £500,000 and will see these prominent historic buildings brought back into beneficial use as residential accommodation after many years lying vacant.
- 7.2 The refurbishment of the two lodges will be in keeping with NEM and the Council's wider ambitions for the regeneration of the area and will complement the extensive investment that has taken place in Philips Park. This report therefore seeks approval to dispose of the two lodges on the terms set out in this report.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR KEY COUNCIL POLICIES

- 9.1 Environment: This development will secure the refurbishment of two listed former lodge buildings within Philips Park, which have stood redundant and derelict for the last twenty years.
- 9.2 Employment: The refurbishment of the lodges will be undertaken by the Lessee who will also be employing local labourers to assist in the restoration works.



Key:

- 1. Entrance Lodge
- 2. Cemetery Office
- 3. Cemetery Chapel

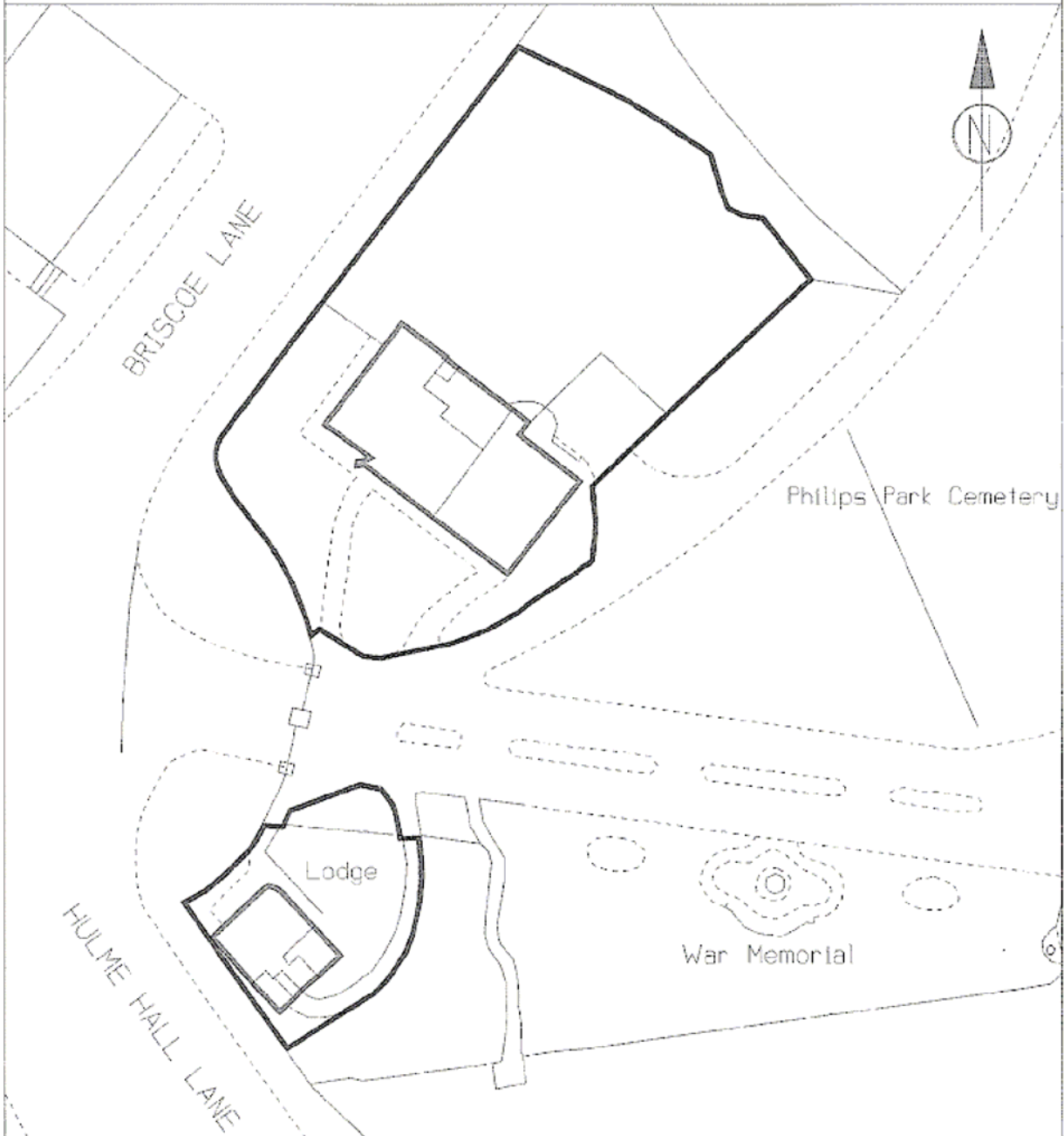
PHILIPS PARK - LOCATION MAP

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PLAN REFERRED TO



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Serial No. N 2839	Plan No. N 2839/4	Scale: 1:500	
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