

Report Title:	Brocket Task and Finish Group
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Gerry Clark, Chair of Task and Finish Group
Meeting and Date:	Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel 16 May 2017
Responsible Officer(s):	
Wards affected:	Boyn Hill

REPORT SUMMARY

- 1 The Brocket in Boyn Hill Avenue is a Grade II listed building owned by the Council, most recently used as a pupil referral unit up to July 2014.
- 2 A feasibility study was carried out by the Council into the future use for the Brocket. The study concluded that given the parking restrictions and the layout of the listed building, in particular, the principal reception room and stairs, the building is best suited to wholly residential use.
- 3 Following a recommendation by the Audit and Performance Review Panel, it was agreed by the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the future use of Brocket.
- 4 The Task and Finish Group at their last meeting on the 21 March agreed recommendations which this report now requests approval from the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to submit for Cabinet consideration.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and recommends to Cabinet Prioritisation Sub-Committee that they:

- i) Consider the suggested potential uses for the Brocket in Appendix 8 to identify whether the suggested use(s) fall into category a), b) or c) and then determine the preferred option:

2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Background to the Task and Finish Group

- 2.1 The Brocket in Boyn Hill Avenue is a Grade II listed building displaying arts and crafts influences.
- 2.2 The building was originally designed as a residential dwelling and, as such, the rooms, whilst larger than average for a house, are domestic in their scale. The main feature of the house is its main entrance; panelled reception room and

staircase which are both its greatest feature but also its main limitation in terms of usage.

- 2.3 The building came into the ownership of Berkshire County Council in 1950 and has been in public use ever since. More recently it has been used as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) before being vacated in July 2014 and has been empty ever since.
- 2.4 The property sits within mainly a residential area with the large house next to it converted to flats whilst within close proximity is a guest house, restaurant and the Lady Elizabeth residential home.
- 2.5 A number of uses were considered by officers in 2016 including conversion of the property to flats, its use as a Registrar's Office and Council/Community meeting rooms and/or a mixed use of both.
- 2.6 In June 2016 the Council commissioned CSK Architects, a specialist practice working with listed buildings to undertake a feasibility study. As part of this exercise the Architects took input from the Registration Service as outlined in the briefing document as attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.7 The Architects prepared an initial report in June 2016, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 2. The report concluded that the building is best suited to wholly residential use.
- 2.8 In September 2016, following a review of the Architects proposals, Cllr Stretton put forward comments and alternative proposals with regard to the building's use with a continued focus on its use as a Registrar's office and Community use. A copy of this proposal is attached at Appendix 3. These proposals were submitted to the Architects for their review and comments which are attached at Appendix 4.
- 2.9 The Architects were of the opinion that the proposed alternative changes and its use as a public building would not be acceptable in terms of Conservation/heritage policies. The main reception room would not be able to accommodate the needs of large ceremonies (with a maximum seating capacity of 32) given the constraints of modifying such an architecturally sensitive area of the building and the access issues that exist to maximise the use of the building given the central location of the reception room and stairwell as a thoroughfare. Any additional parking at the rear of the building would impact negatively on the building resulting in a loss of the listed brick garden wall which falls within the listed curtilage, the screen of trees and a large part of the garden area for car parking purposes (at a cost in excess of £30,000). A report carried out by the Tree Officer is attached at Appendix 5.
- 2.10 In conclusion, the Architects considered in 2016 any proposed interventions to facilitate a Registry Office within the listed building would not be acceptable in terms of Conservation policies. The building was originally designed as a dwelling and as such the rooms are, whilst larger than average for a house, domestic in their scale and not suitable for use as a public building. The Registry Office requires a large dedicated ceremony room which The Brocket is unable to provide. Alternative public uses will have the same issues of having to

adapt the building to become fully accessible, with the intervention of ramp/lift etc. The issue of additional parking requirements will also apply leading to further on street parking or the destruction of the rear garden, loss of part of the listed garden wall and removal of important tree screening all of which would be detrimental to the fabric and setting of the building.

- 2.11 The Chair of Audit and Performance Review Panel then requested a report on the Brocket. Following consideration of the report by the Audit and Performance Review Panel they recommended that the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the future use of the building.

Task and Finish Group

- 2.12 The Task and Finish Group was subsequently established by the Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel with the terms of reference show in Appendix 6.
- 2.13 The Task and Finish Group published its Terms of Reference and gave full opportunity for stakeholders to have their say, including residents, Ward Councillors and local groups including the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, Maidenhead Civic Society and the Maidenhead Community Arts Council.
- 2.14 The Task and Finish Group invited comments on the (current) Development proposal and gave the opportunity for interested parties to identify any other viable, sustainable and affordable options.
- 2.15 An Open Day was held, which was attended by 150 people and was publicised in the Maidenhead Advertiser and promoted in an interview broadcast on Radio Berkshire.
- 2.16 The Public Consultation feedback was analysed by the Chairman and a summary included in the attached meeting Minutes of the last meeting on the 21 March 2017 at Appendix 7.
- 2.17 At that meeting, in order to enable a conclusion to be reached, the Chairman identified three possible classes of use for the property:

a) Public Use - Meeting current identified needs from within existing budgets.
Demonstrably fulfilling a previously assessed and budgeted activity and therefore replacing an existing or proposed facility (subject to planning approval).

b) Public Use -Meeting a newly identified need and requiring new funding to be assessed and approved. Demonstrably required to fulfil a newly assessed need to provide an additional facility (subject to budget and planning approval).

Or

c) Development Options - Preserving the listed features and utilising the site for the creation of new dwellings or other commercial use to generate significant revenue for the Borough (subject to planning approval).

All options subject to public scrutiny and must represent value for money for residents / Council Tax payers.

2.18 At the final meeting, it was noted that two local groups had asked for more time to complete their responses regarding future use and this time was allowed. The following Recommendations were then agreed and minuted:

- We propose a one month (end April) deadline for submission of proposals to the Working Group from those local groups who have not yet responded but asked for additional time (i.e. Maidenhead Community Arts Council and Maidenhead Heritage Centre Trust) to include outline funding requirements to assist with the viability assessments. (No further submissions were received).
- It is proposed that Cabinet then considers the suggested potential uses for the Brocket listed (in the minutes) below in Bold (now shown in Appendix 8) and reviews any submissions received within the one month deadline to identify whether the suggested use(s) fall into category a), b) or c) (above) and then determines the preferred option.

Table 1: Options

Option	Comments
To approve the recommendation to Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee Recommended option	It allows the work of the Task and Finish Group to be formally considered.
To amend the recommendation to Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee	

3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Future preferred use of the Brocket decided by the Council	No decision	May 2017	N/A	N/A	17 May 2017

4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a duty to efficiently manage its assets and has legal powers to hold and transfer/dispose of land under sections 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
No decision is made on the preferred use of the Brocket and the building continues to remain vacant and not utilised	Medium	Formal consideration by Cabinet Prioritisation Sub-Committee	Low

7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 None beyond those set out in the report.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Significant consultation has been carried out on options for the Brocket.

9 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
16 May 2017	Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider report
17 May 2017	Cabinet Prioritisation Sub-Committee consider recommendation
24 May 2017	Work commences on taking forward preferred use for the Brocket

10 APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Registry Service Requirements
- Appendix 2 - CSK Architects Initial Feasibility Study
- Appendix 3 - Cllr Stretton Comments version 3 September 2016
- Appendix 4 - CSK Architects Response to Cllr Stretton Comments
- Appendix 5 - Tree Officer comments
- Appendix 6 – Terms of Reference of Task and Finish Group
- Appendix 7 - Minutes of Task and Finish Group 21 March 2017
- Appendix 8 - Potential uses identified in the consultation

11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None

12 CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Commented & returned
	Lead Member/ Principal Member/Deputy Lead Member		
Alison Alexander	Managing Director		
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director		
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director		
Rob Stubbs	Section 151 Officer		
Terry Baldwin	Head of HR		
Mary Kilner	Head of Law and Governance		
	Other e.g. external		

