


<p style="text-align: center;">Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report</p> <p style="text-align: center;">23 June 2021</p>	
<p>Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Formal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to Columbia Market Nursery School</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Originating Officer(s)	Anna Zucchelli – Heritage at Risk Project Officer Michael Ritchie – Place Shaping Team Leader
Wards affected	Weavers
Key Decision?	Yes
Forward Plan Notice Published	25/05/2021
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live

Executive Summary

This report relates to a formal offer of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant (HBG) of a maximum of £10,000 to Colombia Market Nursery School to contribute towards the cost of repair of the grade II listed railings, gate and gate piers and reinstatement of missing lanterns in front of the school.

The HBG would act as match funding for a grant of £15,000 from the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT). The proposed work will improve the condition and appearance of the gates and railings in a highly visible location within the Hackney Road Conservation Area and will ensure their future sustainability through appropriate conservation repair. The funding will additionally allow school children, parents and local community groups to learn about the conservation work and the history of the former Columbia Market through talks and informative sessions as part of the Heritage of London Trust's 'Proud Places' programme.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to issue a formal offer of grant,

subject to conditions, of a maximum of £10,000 to Columbia Market Nursery School towards the cost of repair to the historic gates and railings.

2. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into the grant agreement and any such other agreements required to affect the grant as detailed in paragraph 1.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The gate piers and iron railings in front of the school are listed separately from the school itself. Both are listed at grade II and are located in a highly visible location on Columbia Road within the Hackney Road Conservation Area. The gates, gate piers and railings are the last remaining elements of the Columbia Market complex, demolished in 1950 to make way for housing.
- 1.2 The proposed works will improve the condition of the gates, gate piers and railings and their future sustainability will be secured through appropriate conservation repair. The works will enhance the appearance, character and setting of the listed building, neighbouring listed buildings and the conservation area. This meets the conditions of the Historic Buildings Grant.
- 1.3 Whilst the grant is usually reserved for buildings at risk or considered vulnerable, there have been no applications in 2021/22 and there are sufficient funds in the budget. Unlike some other grant applications, this project offers a significant community engagement element and is an opportunity to allow school children, parents and local community groups to learn about building conservation and the history of the former Columbia Market through talks and informative sessions as part of the Heritage of London Trust's 'Proud Places' programme.
- 1.4 The Historic Buildings Grant would make up a shortfall in funding for the project, the majority of which is made by the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT). Without this additional funding, the full project may not be able to go ahead. HOLT have also supported numerous other restoration projects in the borough with funding.

2. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 Columbia Market Nursery School was built by the London County Council in 1930 and is one of the first municipal nursery schools built in the country,

reflecting shifting patterns of family life and concern for infant health and well-being. The building is of timber frame construction with weatherboarding and pitched tiled roofs, with unaltered folding partitions dating from 1935, which open onto an open courtyard. The building style is experimental for the time, using new materials and construction techniques not previously used, such as pre-fabrication.



Figure 1: Columbia Market Nursery School today

- 2.2 The gate piers and railings are older and date from the mid-19th century. The gate piers are made of polished granite with Portland stone caps. One pier contains a carved lion bearing a shield and two piers carry lamp standards, with missing lanterns. The railings originally surrounded Columbia Market (see figure below), paid for by the East End philanthropist, Angela Burdett-Coutts, with the intent of providing the surrounding poor with wholesome food at a fair rate. Unfortunately, it was unsuccessful from the start as traders preferred existing markets at Covent Garden and Billingsgate. Used briefly as workshops and a workhouse, it was demolished in the 1950s to make way for housing. The gate piers and iron railings on Columbia Road are all that is left of this magnificent building.



Figure 2: Columbia Market building (railings and gate piers to front) on Columbia Road (1870-1900)

- 2.3 The railings and gate have missing ironwork elements, e.g. finials, but the structural integrity is good. There are isolated failed mortar repairs to the Portland stone plinth base, as well as inappropriate cement repairs to Portland stone carved lion in far-left gatepost. Heavy corrosion to the lantern supports has caused the stone cap below to crack.
- 2.4 It is proposed to repair or replace the missing finials on a like for like basis. The dwarf walls and plinths will be cleaned using the DOFF cleaning method to investigate for failed mortar repairs and open joints and a steam cleaner to the carved stone lion. Repair will be in lime mortar to match appearance of Portland stone where required. Elements of sliding timber gate will be repaired where required and repainted. Iron gates will be stripped of paint and repainted. The missing lanterns will be reinstated, and corroded posts reinstated (this will require listed building consent, yet to be received, but the works are acceptable in principle).
- 2.5 The proposed work will improve the condition of the gate piers, gates and railings and their future sustainability will be secured through appropriate conservation repair. It will enhance appearance, character and setting of the listed buildings and conservation area.
- 2.6 The funding will additionally allow school children, parents and local community groups to be involved in the conservation work through talks and informative sessions as part of the Heritage of London Trust's 'Proud Places' programme - [Heritage Visits | Proud Places | London](#). The Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) were recently involved in funding the repair of the Northumberland House Arch at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre - [Northumberland House Arch | Heritage Visit | Proud Places](#). The conservation work will

support cross curricular learning across Early Years and Primary/ Secondary stage Arts, Science, Mathematics, English and craft. Early Years pupils will be able to experience, first-hand, tools, materials and design. At more advanced Primary and Secondary level, pupils will be able to experience aspects of physical materials, (nature and physical property in use and design), geometry and mathematics – in the construction and erection of the gates.

3. OFFER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANT

- 3.1 The Council operates a Historic Building Grant scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset which these buildings represent. The provision of this type of grant is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and section 57 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 3.2 Each year the Council makes £25,000 available for its Historic Buildings Grant scheme. The money is allocated from the Planning & Building Control budget. Funds are now rolled over from previous years where they have not been allocated to specific projects. Normally preference for the Historic Buildings Grant is for buildings on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register, however there are currently no further applications for the grant or expressions of interest for the grant and there are sufficient funds in the budget.
- 3.3 The Historic Buildings Grant reserve currently holds £ 42,000, with a further £25,000 grant being allocated in 2021/22, giving total available funding of £67,000. A total of £12,000 has been allocated to Greenlight Youth Club (GDSC decision on 21 April 2021), leaving uncommitted funds of £55,000. If £10,000 is awarded to Colombia Market Nursery School, £45,000 would be left to fund future projects.
- 3.4 In addition to this, HOLT is offering a significant contribution towards the cost of the repair - £15,000 - and it would be a shame to lose this funding if it was not matched and the full works cannot go ahead. HOLT have recently supported other heritage projects in the borough with funding, e.g. the clock tower on Bow Church, painted statues on Raine House and the William Kent arch at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre. The project will offer learning opportunities for children and is a fantastic opportunity to engage local pupils in building conservation and local history.

- 3.5 Grants are targeted to achieve maximum visual benefit to the general community, with preference given towards reinstatement of architectural features (usually external). The building or structure must be included on the national or local list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest or situated within a designated conservation area. The railings are grade II listed, located within the Hackney Road Conservation Area and are highly visible to the general public on Columbia Road, therefore they meet this grant criteria.
- 3.6 As a condition of the grant, three comparable quotes along with clear drawings/ photographs of the proposed works are required; these have now been received and a contractor chosen. The quotes have been inspected and choice of contractor approved by the Heritage at Risk Project Officer.
- 3.7 The total cost of the works is estimated at £24,020. HOLT is offering a grant of £15,000, which would leave a shortfall of £9,020. It is therefore requested that the offer of Historic Buildings Grant will be up to a maximum of £10,000. This amount is less than 60% of total cost of the overall works and therefore meets this grant criteria.
- 3.8 The school would like the work to commence before the start of the summer holidays to allow for pupil engagement. If this is not possible, then this date will be referred to September 2021.
- 3.9 As a condition of the grant, a sign acknowledging the Council's grant will be displayed on site throughout the duration of the works. The Council's Comms team have also been informed of the proposed works.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed works would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of a highly valued community asset, contributing to the setting of the Hackney Road Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings.
- 4.2 The project proposes to involve a wide audience in the conservation work through talks and informative sessions as part of HOLT's 'Proud Places' programme.
- 4.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 *Best Value implications*

The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy. The restoration of this listed cultural asset part funded through the grant will benefit the wider community and is considered to offer excellent value for money.

5.2 *Environmental*

The works will improve the appearance of the conservation area and improve the long-term sustainability of the gates and railings themselves.

5.3 *Risk management*

The Council has not committed itself to a payment of a grant at this stage. A formal offer of grant can only be made on receipt of three detailed comparable quotations. Payment of the grant cannot be made until the work is completed and assessed to be of a good conservation standard by the Council's Conservation Officer or Heritage at Risk Project Officer.

5.4 *Crime reduction*

The railings and gate will continue to provide security to the school.

5.5 *Safeguarding*

The school will have safeguarding in place during the works as listed below by the headmistress:

- We will ask to have DBS information sent to us,
- We will make sure any workers are aware of our safeguarding policies and abide by them
- We will ensure all gates are clear for access.
- We will ensure all staff and parents are aware of the works.
- No unsupervised access to the nursery.
- There will be a designated safeguarding lead on site at all times.
- Ensure we have the contact details of the supervisor.
- They will be informed they are not able to take photos of the nursery or children
- A designated photographer will be able to record the work done.
- We will ensure the children are well supervised when they view the works and participate in any related activities.

6. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 LBTH allocates grant funding of £25k per annum to fund projects relating to historic buildings. Any monies that are not spent in a year are transferred to the balance sheet and held in a ringfenced reserve for future use. The

reserve has a balance of £42k, giving total available funding of £67k for historic building projects.

- 6.2 Commitments totalling £12,000 have been made in year against this funding. Therefore, there are sufficient uncommitted funds available from the 2021/22 grant and historic buildings reserve to meet the cost of this project. There will be no additional impact on general fund balances.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to make the grant described in this report.
- 7.2 The evaluation of the grant application was made in compliance with the Historic Building Grant scheme criteria.
- 7.3 Monitoring of the use of the grant will be supported by appropriate agreement terms. The agreement will ensure that the funding is used in compliance with the purposes stated in the grant application and the conditions highlighted in this report. This will assist the Council achieving Best Value in line with the law.
- 7.4 There are no immediate legal equality issues arising from this report.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- List any linked reports
-
- State NONE if none.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Historic Buildings Grant application form

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A