


Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee report	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director of Place	Classification: Unrestricted
Offer of Historic Buildings Grant to the Diocese of London for the repair of the How Memorial Gateway	

Lead Member	Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Originating Officer(s)	Michael Ritchie – Place Shaping Manager
Wards affected	Bromley North
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	N/A
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live

Executive Summary

An application for a Historic Buildings Grant for the repair of the How Memorial Gateway has been received from the Diocese of London. It is proposed to offer a Historic Buildings Grant of £47,500 for the repair to match fund a grant of £10,000 from the Heritage of London Trust. The How Memorial Gateway is on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk register – these grants will enable the repair and future sustainability of the gateway, as well as its removal from the register.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve the recommendation to issue a formal offer of grant of £47,500 to the Diocese of London for the restoration of the How Memorial Gateway, Bromley by Bow.
2. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into a grant agreement and any other such agreements required to affect the grant and the use of the grant as detailed in paragraph 1.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The grant will match fund a grant of £10,000 from the Heritage of London Trust. The repair works will repair the grade II listed structure, improve its future sustainability and will allow for the structure to be removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.
- 1.2 The gateway forms the entrance to St. Leonard's Priory open space, which after being neglected for many years, is now being cared for thanks to garden volunteers from Bow Church. It is therefore the right time now to repair the gateway as well.
- 1.3 This recent activity has created an opportunity for more local residents and visitors to enjoy the space and engage with the history of the site. During the restoration works, the Heritage of London Trust will also provide community engagement in local schools through their 'Proud Places' scheme (See [Youth Engagement | Proud Places | London](#)).
- 1.4 The outcomes of the works funded through the Historic Buildings Grant meet the grant's guidance as they are external works which will provide maximum visual benefit to the general community.

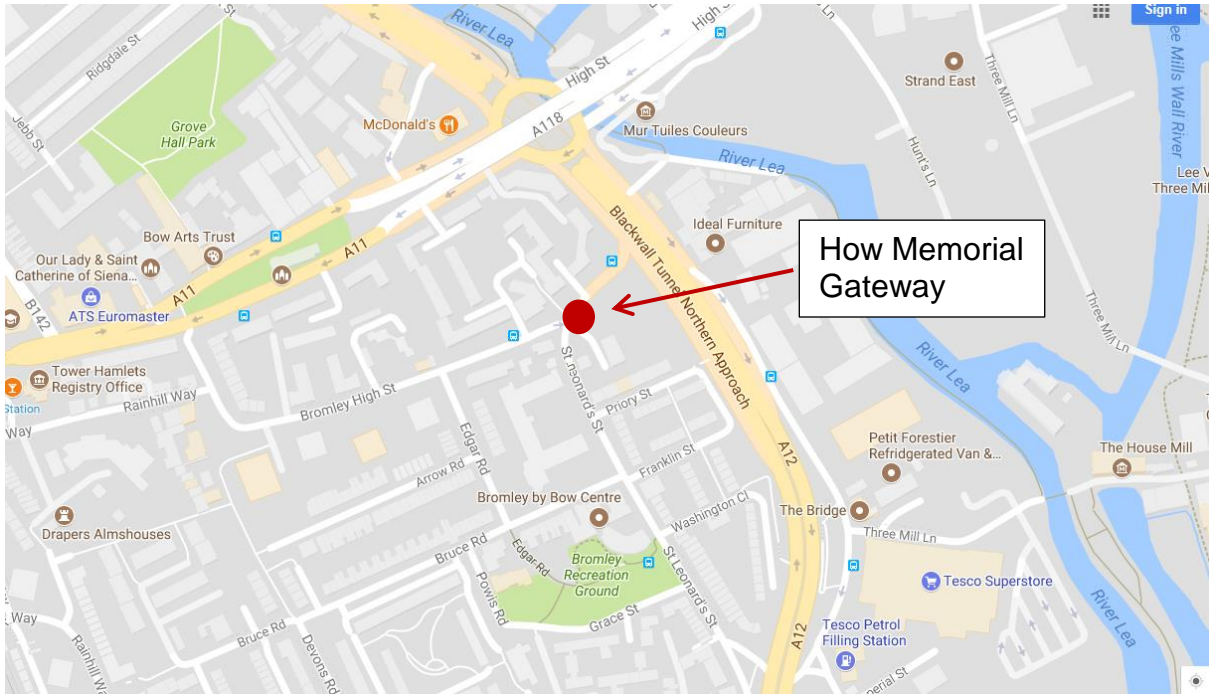
2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Other grant options have been investigated, but organisations like Historic England are reviewing their grant programmes in light of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, of which the focus is less on capital works projects and more on tier 1 and 2 local authorities (Tower Hamlets is tier 3).
- 2.2 If no work is carried out and the gateway is left to decline in condition further, which will likely lead to a higher future repair cost.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

How Memorial Gateway

- 3.1 The How Memorial Gateway is located at the east end of Bromley High Street and serves as the entrance to St Leonards Priory open space, a former churchyard, backing onto the A12.



3.2 The gateway is dated circa 1893/4 and is the entrance gateway to the former churchyard of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Bromley-by-Bow, which was also known as Bromley Church. The gateway is in the form of a gabled Kentish ragstone gothic arch, with limestone dressings, and double buttresses at each side. It is dedicated to memory of the former reverend and vicar, George How who died in 1893. The religious origins of the site date back to 12th century, when there was a large Benedictine nunnery on the site dedicated to Saint Leonarda and founded by the then Bishop of London. In the 1480s, William Chaucer based one of his fictional characters on the Prioress in his book the Canterbury Tales. After the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII, some of the priory buildings were demolished, but the chancel of the Church of St Leonard's Convent remained. Huguenot refugees in the 17th and 18th centuries built their tombs in the churchyard, some of which may remain. The chancel was rebuilt in 1843 as the Parish Church of St Mary with St Leonard. The church was struck by a bomb during the Second World War and was destroyed. In 1969 the Blackwall Tunnel Northern Approach Road was built over the church and much of the old grounds. All that is left now are some tombstones, part of the boundary wall and the memorial gateway. An interpretation panel has recently been installed on the site.



3.3 The gateway is grade II listed and currently sits on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. Listed buildings and structures, as well as conservation areas, are considered for inclusion on the register on the basis of condition of the

historic fabric, as well as vulnerability in terms of potential loss of special architectural or historic interest.

- 3.4 The gateway is in a fair condition with no obvious structural issues; however, it suffers from sulphation staining which has caused blistering and erosion of the stonework. The gateway has previously been repointed in cementitious mortar and some cementitious render on quoins and coping stones, causing further erosion to stonework. There are also some missing stone details such as coping stones. The open space in which the gateway is located has, until recently, been neglected, leaving the heritage of the site vulnerable.
- 3.5 It is proposed to clean the gateway to remove any organic and atmospheric staining. The stonework will be defrassed, removing loose, friable and blistered stone on the surfaces. This will ensure that water cannot be trapped below the surface layer which is currently accelerating erosion of the stonework. Areas of eroded stonework will be repaired with a suitable colour lime mortar, with mortar repairs where required. Cracks and fissures will be filled and grouted with lime putty. Missing stone sections will be replaced on a like for like basis, matching profiles on existing originals. Repairs will be carried out with stone indents, matching the existing stone in colour and texture. A limewash shelter coat will further stabilise and protect some of the vulnerable stonework, unifying the whole appearance of the stonework.
- 3.6 In addition to the gateway, the boundary wall of around the open space is in a very poor condition and is a health & safety concern, suffering from plant growth, cracking, and malicious damage. Significant rebuilding is required and replacement of missing or damaged stone elements.
- 3.7 Odgers Conservation Consultants have produced condition surveys and schedules of works produced for both the gateway and the boundary wall.

St Leonards Priory open space

- 3.8 St. Leonards Priory open space is owned by Bow Church on behalf of the Church of England's London Diocese. LBTH manages the site and is responsible for its upkeep. The open space is a former graveyard and there are still several burials and gravestones on the site.
- 3.9 For years, St. Leonards Priory open space has been neglected, with overgrown vegetation and anti-social behaviour, making it an unfriendly place to visit and spend time.
- 3.10 In 2020, garden volunteers from Bow Church, with the help of the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, have been working to tidy up the space and

make it more accessible to the local community. In 2022, Bow Church were awarded a grant of £12,500 from the council's Community Gardens Fund, with which they have started to recruit more volunteers from the local community, with the help of a paid volunteer co-ordinator. The funding has also been used to provide picnic benches to establish a seating area for workshops on food-growing and horticulture for the local community and community activities, as well as for people to sit and enjoy the garden. The funding has also paid for raised beds to grow edibles and floristry plants. As a result of these activities, more people have been encouraged to visit the open space.

Offer of a Historic Buildings Grant

- 3.11 Buildings on the Heritage at Risk register or within conservation areas at risk are a priority for the Historic Buildings Grant. The works proposed will enable the gateway to be removed from the Heritage at Risk register. Grants are targeted to achieve maximum visual benefit to the general community. The gateway forms the entrance to a public open space, which is now more welcoming thanks to recent volunteer activity, encouraging more visits by local people.
- 3.12 The external works proposed to the gateway meet the grant guidance criteria. The Diocese received three comparable quotes as part of the tender process in January 2023 and a tender report was produced. A contractor has been chosen. The cost to repair the gateway has been quoted as £57,500 (including VAT).
- 3.13 £10,000 has been offered as a grant for the gateway by the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT), leaving a shortfall of £47,500.
- 3.14 Works to the boundary wall has been quoted as £25,000. Whilst it is proposed that works to the gateway and the boundary wall are carried out simultaneously by the same contractor, the cost of the works will be met by a separate budget. This Historic Buildings Grant application is specifically for the repair works to the gateway and not the boundary wall.
- 3.15 The total cost of the works at St. Leonard's is £82,500. The council's guidance for historic buildings grants states that the minimum eligible for grant funding is £1,000 and should only cover up to 60% of the overall cost of the works (including VAT). This grant offer would comply with this guidance as £47,500 is 58% of the total cost of the works, £82,500.
- 3.16 It is proposed to offer a grant of £47,500 to the Diocese of London to repair the gateway. The grant will only be paid on satisfactory completion of the work to a good conservation standard, as assessed by a conservation officer.

- 3.17 At present, the Historic Building Grant scheme has yearly budget of £26,250. With roll-over from 2022/23, the current budget for 2023/24 is £98,500. If a grant of £47,500 is offered for the How Memorial Gateway, there will be £51,000 remaining in the grant budget for 2023/24. There are currently no other applications for grant funding this year.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed works, funded by the Historic Buildings Grant, are not considered to have any equalities implications. Indeed, the works will improve the public realm for local people and visitors to the site and will provide opportunities for community engagement in the history of the site.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- Best Value Implications

The Historic Buildings Grant will match fund a grant from the Heritage of London Trust, reducing the contribution required.

- Consultations

LBTH Parks and the Diocese have been consulted on the proposal.

- Environmental (including air quality)

N/A

- Risk Management

The Historic Buildings Grant will only be paid on satisfactory completion of the work to be assessed by a conservation officer.

- Crime Reduction

Better care of the garden and structures and increased use of the St. Leonard's Priory open space is likely to reduce anti-social behaviour here.

- Safeguarding

N/A

- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment

N/A

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The report is seeking approval to issue a formal offer of grant of £47,500 to the Diocese of London for the restoration of the How Memorial Gateway, Bromley by Bow. The grant would be funded from Historic Buildings grant funding

- 6.2 The Historic Buildings grant budget is £26,250 per annum and any amounts unspent are moved to the Historic Buildings reserve. The balance on this reserve will be £72,250 once the unspent budget in 2022/23 is transferred to the reserve. In total there is £98,500 (£72,250 reserve balance plus £26,250 budget for 2023/24) available to spend and no other commitments against this sum.
- 6.3 There is therefore sufficient funding available to meet the cost of this grant and there are no other commitments against the annual budget provision or reserve.
- 6.4 The grant conditions state that the minimum eligible for grant funding is £1,000 and can only cover up to 60% of the total cost of the works (including VAT). The approval of this grant would meet these conditions.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has a legal duty to obtain Best Value when funding grants of any variety. The use of a competitive process to determine the identity of the construction contractor assists the Council to demonstrate Best Value. In this case the employer of the Contractor is the Diocese and not the Council. However, had the construction contract been a Council contract then Council's would have obtained 3 quotes in the same way that the Diocese has done. Therefore, selection of the contractor via this process may provide strong evidence of compliance by the Council of the Council's Best Value duty.
- 7.2 The Council will also enter into a grant agreement on suitable terms to allow the Council to monitor the progress of the works and ensure that payment is made only in respect of properly performed construction work. This also will assist the Council to demonstrate Best Value.
- 7.3 The Council has the legal power to make this grant if it so wishes.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- None.

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

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A.