


Grants Determination Sub-Committee Wednesday 6 July 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director of Place	Classification: Unrestricted
Historic Buildings Grant to Bow Church for the How Memorial Gateway	

Lead Member	Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Originating Officer(s)	Anna Zucchelli, Heritage at Risk Project Officer Michael Ritchie, Place Shaping Manager
Wards affected	Bromley North
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Forward Plan Notice Published	30/05/2022
Exempt information	None
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

Executive Summary

An application for a Historic Buildings Grant for the repair of the How Memorial Gateway has been received from Bow Church. It is proposed to offer a Historic Buildings Grant of up to £17,000 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. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to issue an offer of grant of up to £17,000 to Bow Church for the repair of the How Memorial Gateway.
2. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into a grant agreement and any other such agreements required to affect the grant 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 As there are plans to encourage more visitors to the open space over the rest of the year, there is an opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the space and engage with the history of the site. The Heritage of London Trust will also provide community engagement through their 'Proud Places' scheme ([Youth Engagement | Proud Places | London](#)).
- 1.4 The outcomes of the works funded through the Historic Buildings Grant meet the grant's criteria as they are external works which will provide maximum visual benefit to the general community.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

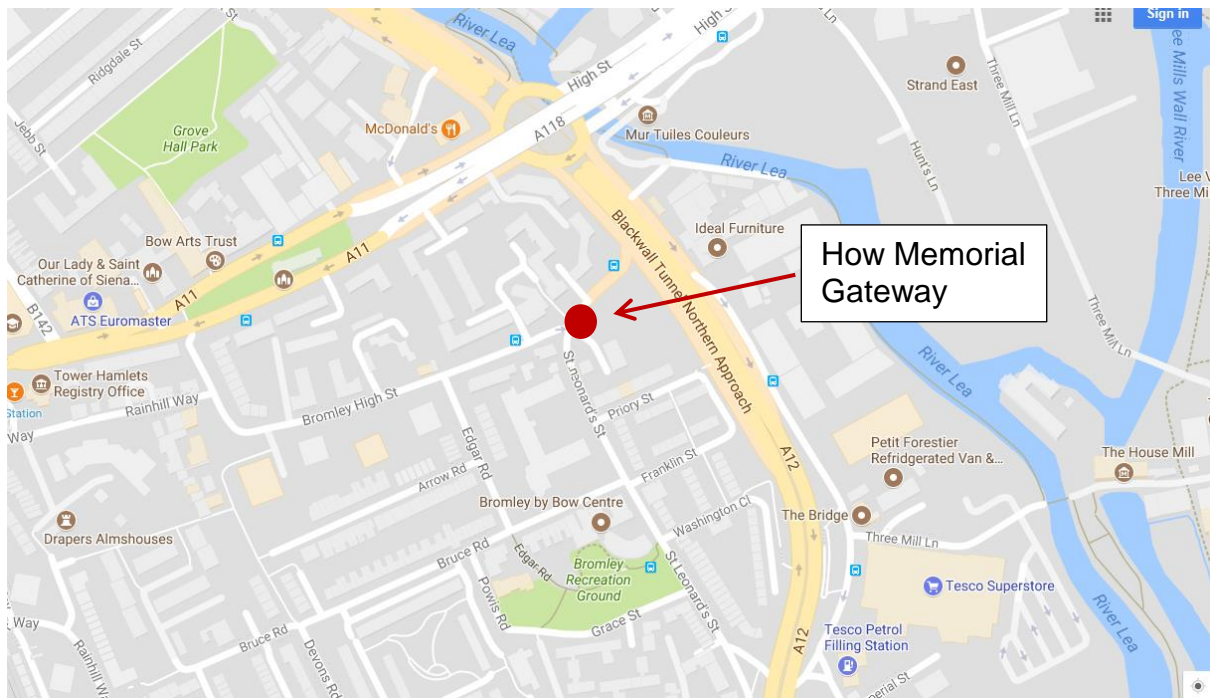
- 2.1 Alternative funding could be sought through the Local Infrastructure Fund, but this is not guaranteed, and the next consultation round isn't until November 2022, so the opportunity for community engagement through events within the St. Leonards Priory open space over the rest of the year would be lost.
- 2.2 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).

2.3 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.



3.3 The gateway is grade II listed and currently sits on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

- 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.
- 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.

St Leonards Priory open space

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 For years, St. Leonards Priory open space has been neglected, with overgrown vegetation and anti-social behaviour. During the pandemic, garden volunteers from Bow Church have been working Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park to tidy up the space and make it more accessible. With a recently awarded grant of £12,500 from the Council's Community Gardens Fund, the gardening group plan to recruit more volunteers from the local community, with the help of a paid volunteer co-ordinator. The funding will also be 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 will pay for raised beds to grow edibles and floristry plants. Several community events are proposed during 2022 which will encourage visitors to the open space.

Offer of a Historic Buildings Grant

- 3.8 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 building to be removed from the Heritage at Risk register. Grants are targeted to achieve maximum visual benefit to the general community. The gateway forms an entrance to a public open space. Events organised through the Community Gardens funding will bring more visitors to the space. Given that there will be a lot of activity in and increased visitors to St. Leonard's Priory open space over the next few months, it would appear the right time to repair the gateway.

- 3.9 The external works meet the grant criteria; however, a formal offer of grant is conditional on the receipt of a specification/ method statement, drawings/ photographs and comparable quotes from three contractors. Odgers Conservation Consultants have been appointed to produce a condition survey, specification and schedule of works to allow 3 contractors to quote. The estimated cost of the works is £25,000 to £27,000 (including VAT).
- 3.10 £10,000 has been offered as a grant by the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT), leaving a shortfall for the works of between £15,000 and £17,000.
- 3.11 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). This grant offer meets this condition as £17,000 is 60% of £27,000.
- 3.12 It is proposed to offer a grant of a maximum of £17,000 but if the chosen contractor quotes less than £27,000 for the work then a lower amount will be paid. The grant offer would be subject to conditions, i.e., a detailed condition survey, specification, schedule of works and copies of the contractors' tender returns. The grant will only be paid on satisfactory completion of the work to a good conservation standard, as assessed by the Heritage at Risk Project Officer or the Conservation Officer.
- 3.13 At present, the Historic Building Grant scheme has yearly budget of £25,000. With roll-over from 2020/21, the current budget for 2021/22 is £60,000. If a grant of £17,000 is offered for the How Memorial Gateway, there will be £43,000 remaining in the grant budget for 2022/23. There are currently no other applications for grant funding this year.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is unlikely that the works proposed funded by the Historic Buildings Grant will 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 the Heritage at Risk Project Officer or the 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 award a grant of up to £17,000 to Bow Church for the repair of the How Memorial Gateway. If approved this grant would be funded from the Historic Buildings grant budget.
- 6.2 The Historic Buildings grant budget is £25,000 per annum and any amounts unspent are moved to the Historic Buildings reserve. The current balance on this reserve is £42,000 and a request has been submitted to increase this by £14,000 in 2021/22. If this request is approved the balance on the reserve at 1 April 2022 will be £56,000.
- 6.3 There is 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 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

- List any appendices [if Exempt, Forward Plan entry MUST warn of that]
- State NONE if none.

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