

FO Friends of BP Broomfield Park

Response to July 2025 consultation 'Unlocking Broomfield Park for the Community'

Introduction

This response to the consultation has been developed collaboratively by representatives of volunteer groups with significant park knowledge and specific expertise. It is based upon outline ideas that will be developed further in the coming weeks and months. We hope that our response will be helpful in informing the design development.

Key factors to consider for the long term

- Sustainability
- Increased biodiversity
- Resilience of planting
- Trees suitable for climate change
- Ongoing maintenance
- Possibilities for future changes when priorities and funding permit

The House

Broomfield Park only exists because of the house. Without it the park would have long ago disappeared under housing. The story of the house and its owners deserves to be remembered as part of London's history.

Memorialising the house should include not only the physical structure but should seek to have a range of resources which raise awareness of the importance of the house and its history. These could include physical information boards but also a range of online materials that can be accessed from a range of devices.

Design considerations

- Include a substantial vertical element e.g. a chimney or staircase. The contemporary memory of the house should be visible from the surrounding landscape.
- Delineate the footprint of the building in a mix of ways including existing walls, floors and new planting rather than just having a low brick wall as shown on the example drawings on the consultation boards.
- Include seating and social spaces but ensure that spaces are visible and safe. Avoid rough sleeper/drug-user spaces.
- Avoid enclosed spaces. Remember "[Make Space for Girls](#)".
- Ensure surfaces are easy to mow/maintain around the structures.
- Focus on views from the house into the landscape. These could be signalled with trees or hedges.
- Reuse materials from the house in innovative ways.

- Create new layers in the historic landscape that link the past with the present.
- There should not be any new permanent building within the space.
- Introduce innovative ways to engage with the history of the site.
- Liaise with the group who are looking at the items salvaged from the house and consider ways in which these could be used, e.g. 3d printing of key artefacts that could then be incorporated into the design.
- Make clear through the design the ways in which the history of the house and park is part of a living changing landscape.

The Lakes

Water flow into the lakes needs to be improved. Over time the flows from a northern lake, the historic canal, and the ponds along the north of the park have all been cut off. The lakes are thirsty for water and all they get is the polluted water running in from the Thames Water surface sewer and sometimes rainwater.

Note: there is Japanese knotweed on the edge of the lake. An eradication programme, using a professional company, needs to be put in place immediately to ensure this is not a problem when contractors come on site. As the knotweed is beside the water there are more stringent requirements for eradication and notification.

Design considerations

- Improve water quality by de-silting and improving planting.
- Reveal the way water runoff enters the lakes and what happens to it throughout the park in order to start to make clear the way water works in the park and the environmental implications of this.
- Create contemporary interventions that enhance the sound of water. This links to the historic Baroque Water Garden.
- Ensure the the safety and wellbeing of the waterbirds
- Manage the trees where appropriate but do not remove mature trees unless it is completely unavoidable.
- Retain important trees to reflect the changing environment.
- Include hardy, resilient planting to provide shelter for the water birds. A native only approach to planting is not necessarily desirable except when choosing water plants and marginal planting.
- Further discussion is needed to understand how a hard edge to the lakes could be restored when there are so many mature trees to consider.
- Improve the pathways across the lakes and consider access, biodiversity and links between the lakes.

The Landscape

The setting of the house in the wider landscape is historically vital and a prime requirement. Restoration will have to be practical in terms of maintenance but should pay respect to the potentially commanding position of the house. The views from the main avenue, the house, and the summer house should be restored.

The walled garden is not a natural landscape, it is an ornamental one built up of layers of historic intervention over centuries. This should be reflected in the design of the new landscape.

Design considerations

- Link the memorialised house with the landscape.
- Include interventions to draw attention to key views that enhance the park when viewed from the memorialised house and also when looking back at the house from across the gardens.
- Do not remove mature trees.
- Consider how to introduce a modern interpretation of the Baroque Garden. Note: do we have access to the survey that has already been undertaken of the lawn behind the house where there has been found evidence of Baroque terracing?
- Further discussion is needed about the shape of the lakes and the paths – see above.
- SuDS – some pathways are subject to flooding in heavy rainfall.
- Embrace other areas of park - paths along long border should be wrapped into the project.
- Plant trees that will grow to a substantial size and provide shade for 100s of years to come.
- Include a diverse range of planting to enhance biodiversity.