

HERITAGE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

GHK ARCHITECTS

Project: Readymoney Fountain
Client: The Royal Parks
Title: Heritage Design and Access Statement
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Readymoney Fountain from the east.

Architects Designers Historic Building Specialists

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INTRODUCTION

Listed Building Consent is being sought for the provision of a free standing "Tulip" drinking fountain adjacent to the Readymoney Fountain on the Broadwalk in Regents Park.

Following the 2014 Quadrennial Inspections which identified stone repairs and pointing in urgent need of attention the operation of the drinking fountains at Readymoney was reviewed and listed building consent was granted for lining the existing basins with bronze basins and the provision of replacements spouts to counter water leaking into the masonry and consequential decay of the masonry and pointing.

The sole access point to the monument interior and the plumbing is at high level on the south face and is quite small. Subsequent investigations have now established that access to the interior of the monument to carrying out of the necessary plumbing alterations is extremely difficult;- nigh impossible and presents major a Health and Safety challenge. Besides the interior is a confined space with little or space for carrying out the repair operations.

Given above and the fragile condition of the masonry it is considered that turning off the waterworks and removal is a very high priority. It is recognised that the drinking is much used asset and it is proposed to provide a new fountain on the east side of the paved area where there are existing below ground water services.

Otherwise Readymoney will be repaired as previously proposed in the 2014 submission. These conservation repairs mostly consisting of repointing, stone consolidation and some stone indent repairs to replace failed stones. Mild cleaning will be carried out to remove soiling on the spire and marble work. The water supply to drinking fountains will be cut to mitigate water tracking into the masonry.

LISTING

The Ready money Fountain is Grade II listed

Drinking fountain. 1896. Designed by Robert Keirle, architect to The Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association for Sir Cowasjee Jehangir. White Sicilian marble, pink and grey Aberdeen granite. Gothic design set on octagonal base of 3 steps. Rectangular plinth with large D-shaped faceted basins on paired colonnettes to each face; flanked with cubic standing blocks for children. Above the marble super structure fountain has triplet colonnettes at the angles supporting star enriched friezes and gabled spire with pinnacles of small spires at angles. Crocketed gables on 3 faces contain carved busts of the donor, the Prince Consort and Queen Victoria; the 4th has a clock. Each face with enriched pointed arch on half-length pilasters flanking the water spout set in geometrically patterned carved marble.

The monument is known as the Readymoney Fountain after its benefactor Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, and was presented as a token of gratitude to the people of England for the protection enjoyed by him and his countrymen under British rule in India. The fountain cost £1400 and was opened by Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck.

CONDITION

The monument was extensively repaired in 1999-2000 and is in fair/condition although the deterioration of the old stone work is now more obvious against the new and may be accelerating.

The marble spire and corner pinnacles have had indented marble repairs and some enrichments, pinnacles and cusps, have been replaced with new carved pieces. Other parts of the marble in the spire and frieze and other high level stonework look to be open textured and friable. Some spalling is occurring notably on the south facing elevation. Algal growths are widespread on the weathered marble. The small cracks in the marble may be water traps. The finial to the west face pediment is missing.

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In the middle section of the monument there are pointed arch panels marble with grey granite imposts framed by engaged polished granite shafts at the corners. The grey granite is in poor condition and spalling/friable. The column shafts are in reasonable condition however there is some surface disaggregation and loss of sheen on the west side shafts. There is an open fissure on the south west corner shaft. The carved marble capitals are all heavily weathered, however some original detail remains on the east side capitals.

The granite bowls are in fair condition. All have a build-up of lime scale on the bowl interiors. There are open joints at previous repairs and some indent repairs are missing. The bronze water spouts were installed in 2000 do not match the original design. All spouts have passive infra-red sensors that do not function well as the sensor beam is blinded by the curve of the spout and handling is required to induce water flow. The spouts are too high and difficult to reach for most children and smaller adults and they are used as grab handles giving rise to possible contamination. Because of the stepped plinth the fountains are not accessible by persons with disabilities.

Waste water from the fountains bleeding through the lower joints in the masonry beneath the bowls. There appears to be a direct link between the level of leakage and fountain usage. The basins backfall into the masonry and excess water accumulates on the basin shelf penetrating the masonry joints in the core construction at the start and end of each discharge and leaks are occurring at the waste outlets.

Access to the interior and the immediate source of the leaks is impossible without major invasive works involving some dismantling of the masonry. This factor coupled with restricted access to the interior of the monument and the confined space in the interior suggest the best way to mitigate damage to the stone masonry is turn off the water works and provide a replacement drinking fountain nearby the immediate vicinity.

Accordingly it is proposed to install a bronze "Tulip" Fountain. This fountain type which is particular to the Royal Parks commissioned through a design completion sponsored by the Royal Parks Foundation and Tiffany.

The Tulip Fountain has a simple refined and elegant form and is compatible with a wide range of design of existing artifacts and street furniture of many periods and styles. It will blend unobtrusively in the setting and not detract from Readymoney and it's pre-eminence as a landmark and focal point on the Broadwalk and Regents Park generally. The fountain was designed to suit modern means of manufacture and is compliant with Water and Public Health Regulations.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Existing small access panel at high level on South Elevation



Existing spouts difficult to reach even by adults.



Difficult access for children



Uncontrolled overflow from fountain ponding on masonry



Water from spout lodging on basin shelf.

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Leaks though masonry joints on north side.



Active leaks though masonry on west side.



Active leaks though masonry on south side.



Weed growths on failing masonry joints



An example of the proposed Tulip Fountain in Kensington Gardens

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Kensington Fountain under construction.



Close up of Fountain bowl.

SITE LOCATION PLAN, Not to scale



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DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Fountain is to replace the existing drinking water provision at The Readymoney Fountain which will be discontinued to prevent water penetration in the stone masonry and mitigate accelerating deterioration and so maintain the heritage value and appearance of the asset and setting consistent with its landmark status and Royal Parks standards.

The new fountain is approximately 700mm high on level ground and will be more accessible and easier to use than the existing fountains. The existing are relatively high and difficult to access by children and smaller adults. Because of the steps they cannot be accessed by persons with disability.

The new fountain will be small scale with a simple clear profile and will not compete visually with the Readymoney Fountain.

The Readymoney Fountain will be repaired in accordance with LBC 2014/7027/L decided March 5 2015. Only works that are essential to ensure longevity the masonry fabric will be carried out. Original materials will be retained except where there is complete failure and they no longer perform their intended function. All repairs and new material will be carefully fitted to the existing by skilled masons and craftsmen.

The proposed works comprise localised cleaning, minor stone repairs with new matching stone indents to replace the missing pieces, pinning of cracks in balusters and other stones and repointing. The lighting standards will be serviced, repaired and redecorated.

The visual appearance of the asset and its curtilage will be unchanged.

ACCESS STATEMENT

Existing access arrangements and drinking water provision will be unchanged. The provision of the new fountain will provide easily accessible drinking water for most if not all Park users. Access to the area will be restricted during the course of the works.

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