

**THE FUTURE OF HORNSEY TOWN
HALL**

**Advisory panel report to Haringey Council
Executive Committee**

November 2004

Contents

Executive summary	3
Recommendations	5
Introduction	7
Our vision for Hornsey Town Hall	8
Enabling development	10
Quality	10
Interim arrangements	11
Ownership and Management	12
Appendix:	
Terms of Reference	16
Membership	17
Schedule of Meetings	17

Executive summary

Context

Haringey Council has given notice that it intends to relocate its staff from Hornsey Town Hall in 2005. The Council's Executive Committee considered the future of the building and surrounding site in February 2004, and in response to substantial public concern and interest in the future of the complex, established our panel to advise them on community needs and aspirations.

Through our work we have become aware of the importance of this building for local people, as a geographical centre for Crouch End, as a physical resource, but also as a focus of community feeling, helping to define the particular characteristics of this part of the borough. It is also apparent that Hornsey Town Hall is not just a resource for Hornsey and Crouch End, but for the whole borough and wider community of north London, and is of national architectural significance.

Vision

Over the past eight months, we have worked closely together to arrive at a shared vision for Hornsey Town Hall: a building restored to its former glory as a vibrant and viable centre for Crouch End and the wider community, providing a range of artistic, cultural and educational facilities, with the package underpinned financially by appropriate commercial uses and development. We urge the Executive to adopt this vision.

Constraints

At the same time, we considered the risks inherent in seeking to achieve this vision: the constraints imposed by the building itself, and its listed status; the Council's current and increasing maintenance liability, the finances needed over time for full restoration and adaptations for modern uses.

We welcome the position of the Council as expressed to us; that the site should be dealt with as a whole; that community aspirations should be recognised while taxpayer liabilities are minimised; and that proceeds generated from the site should be used for restoration. The Executive should confirm this position.

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Unsurprisingly, there are a range of views on how our vision for Hornsey Town Hall might be realised: One position argues for the whole project to be taken forward by a charitable trust, separate from the local authority, overseen by trustees; another that a private developer, subject to appropriate safeguards for community interest, would be best placed to drive the development.

The way forward

We considered carefully the risks and benefits of the different approaches. We suggest, as a possible "middle way"; that appropriate commercial and non-commercial capital could be harnessed in partnership with the Council and the community in a "tripartite" approach, working together with an appropriate charitable trust, to develop a high quality scheme, and that longer term community interests should be entrusted to such a trust. Our recommendations are set out on page 5.

It is now for the Executive to decide on an appropriate way forward, balancing risks and benefits, and acting in the best interests of the local area, the wider community and the authority.

Recommendations

Community aspirations

That the Executive consider and adopt the community aspirations for Hornsey Town Hall, as set out on pp8ff;

Interim arrangements

That the Executive agree to establish a working relationship between officers and a community partnership/"sounding board" to engage with local community organisations wanting to use the immediate available space in the Town Hall and assist in looking at possible funding revenues and arrangements for the future of the Town Hall. This grouping to be drawn initially from among existing panel members.

That the Executive arrange for Listed Building Management guidelines to be drawn up by the Council in conjunction with English Heritage, before the building is made available on an interim basis, to protect the listed elements of the building.

Means of achieving community aspirations

That the Executive consider a "tripartite solution". This will involve the formation of a broad-based charitable community trust to work from an early stage of this project with the Council to agree common objectives and a plan to achieve those objectives. Appropriate capital (both commercial and non-commercial) should then be sought.

Once the project nears the end of the development stage and the Council is satisfied that the scheme:

- Has appropriate trustees and governance;
- Has the support of the community;
- Is financially sound;
- Is appropriately resourced.

Then a long lease on Hornsey Town Hall should be granted to the trust.

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This might entail a staged approach:

- Establishing a community partnership to work with the Council to agree an outline of future plans for the whole site, and assist in drawing up development specifications and trust proposals. When considering the appointment of a development partner it will be important that the development partner is specialised in mixed use schemes, including high quality restoration work, creative and sensitive development, and works with an architect of appropriate standing and experience. It will be important that the process is open and accountable, and offers a "level playing field", so that, for example, bids from a non profit-making entity might be entertained at this stage.
- Taking forward the "tripartite" vision, seeking appropriate capital (both commercial and non-commercial), while work to finalise trust arrangements continues;
- After the appropriate period at which the Executive are satisfied that development has been completed, are confident of the community partnership's ability and happy with projected financial future of the Town Hall, then the Town Hall should be transferred to the trust which has been established by the community partnership on a long lease.

Introduction

Haringey Council has given notice that it intends to relocate its staff from Hornsey Town Hall in 2005. The Council's Executive Committee considered the future of the building and surrounding site in February 2004, and in response to substantial public concern and interest in the future of the complex, established our panel to advise them on community needs and aspirations.

We have met ten times, taken expert evidence, and made a number of visits to the town hall and other former town hall sites in London. These visits were undertaken to enable us to become familiar with funding issues, usage of other town halls, and governance.

This report sets out our vision for the Hornsey Town Hall complex, which we urge the Council to adopt, looks at practical uses for a viable future for the complex, and considers questions of enabling development, quality, ownership and management, interim arrangements and the need for continuing community involvement.

The debate on the future of Hornsey Town Hall has tapped into a groundswell of community interest and involvement. Expectations have been raised, and it is important that the council continue to work with local people.

I would like to place on record my thanks to all our members, who have put in an enormous amount of hard work and effort, all on a voluntary basis, the expert witnesses who gave up their time to assist us, and the Council officers who have supported us.

Councillor Judy Bax,
Chair, Hornsey Town Hall Advisory Panel.

Our vision for Hornsey Town Hall

A building restored to its former glory as a vibrant and viable centre for Crouch End, the wider Haringey community, and the whole of North London, providing a rich mix of cultural, community and educational activity for all age groups, with restoration and community uses underpinned financially by appropriate high-quality development, commercial uses and grant aid;

The public assembly halls in regular use for drama, film, music, dance, events, exhibitions; the public rooms used for meetings, education and artistic activities; the rest of the town hall partly adapted for creative and cultural activities, and possibly partly remodelled for office space;

A re-modelled piazza at the front of the complex, with residential development all as part of an integrated complex.

Practical uses for a viable future

We considered uses for the Town Hall site, getting a detailed understanding of community aspirations. Following further investigation and expert advice, this list was reduced to those uses that were considered practical. It is considered that all uses could be accommodated within the heritage and physical constraints of the building, subject to details and further research.

Practical uses for the complex were considered to be

Public square

- Piazza style remodelling;
- Café;
- Occasional markets.

Public Assembly Halls

- Performance space primarily for music and dance, including drama although it was recognised that it could not be exclusively used for full theatre provision;
- Paid rehearsals space;
- Exhibitions and fairs;
- Community meetings and hire;

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Educational uses by schools and other youth related activities;
- Possible use of balcony for separate conference or film use.

Town Hall

- CAB accommodation;
- Business accommodation;
- Voluntary Sector accommodation;
- Small scale retail kiosks;
- Bar /Restaurant.

Council Chamber

- Lecture hall;
- Film Rooms;
- Conferences and consultations, such as the "Children's Parliament";
- Wedding and other ceremonies.

Weston Park and Mews Annexes

- Business space;
- Small conferences, community hire;
- Nursery/Play Centre;
- Specialist retail in Mews building.

Car Park

- Limited residential development;
- Additional business space;
- Opportunity for new thoroughfares, gardens and landscaping,
- Car parking.

Enabling Development

Enabling development is defined in a strict sense as development that would not otherwise be allowed but for its ability to cross-subsidise other parts of a development that would otherwise not be viable.

We recognised that the constraints of likely funding and viability would entail some form of enabling development. While a very limited amount of residential and commercial (i.e. café/bar) development would be acceptable in any event on a site of this size and location, further development could only be justified if it secured future community requirements and heritage benefits.

The scale of development is a concern, as is the worry that a commercial developer would be inclined towards excessive development to maximise profits. It is important that in any proposal the boundaries are clearly set in the development brief.

Quality

Hornsey Town Hall is a building of national architectural significance with outstanding interiors. We welcome the fact that the Council has worked closely with English Heritage, and produced a detailed Conservation Plan, which will inform future restoration and development work. Continued close working with English Heritage is essential.

The Town Hall was chosen by RIBA as one of its five "buildings of the year" in 1935; we consider it vital that any restoration and development on the site should aspire to similar quality. We have an opportunity now to make a significant architectural contribution to Crouch End; choice of architect is crucial here, and all parties, including the Council and local people, must be involved in that decision.

Interim arrangements

We considered the need to maintain occupancy of the town hall as far as possible after council staff vacate, and the possibility of short-term community uses. This is important for local traders, for the large number of local organisations particularly in the artistic, cultural and youth fields in need of short-term space, to assist in preventing further deterioration of the fabric, and as a demonstration of commitment to a positive future for the site.

We welcomed the commitment given by the Council that Hornsey Town Hall would not be left standing empty, and we urge the Executive to agree that a working relationship between officers and a community partnership is established to engage with local community organisations wanting to use the immediate available space in the Town Hall and assist in looking at possible funding revenues and arrangements for the future of the Town Hall.

We further recommend that listed building management guidelines are drawn up by the Council in conjunction with English Heritage to protect the listed elements of the building, before it is made available.

Ownership and management

The panel heard evidence from a number of sources on the question of the "means to the end".

One option is for a charitable trust or company limited by guarantee with charitable status to take the project forward. A structure of this type would be able to apply for external funding, and would be governed by a board comprising individuals with particular skills and interests, appropriate for the aims of the charity, and representatives of the council.

The composition of such a vehicle would have to be considered carefully, especially the timescale needed to establish a trust and mechanisms to ensure effective representation and balance.

English Heritage guidance suggests that an independent charitable trust is a good way of preserving historic buildings, and all the former town hall-managing organisations examined by the panel are independent of their local councils, although including councillors on the Board of trustees. Some receive grants, others do not.

We also heard evidence on the possible disadvantages of the trust model, from the uncertainties and often protracted timescales associated with fund-raising, to the difficulties of borrowing significant amounts of capital and attracting skilled and experienced trustees while balancing potentially conflicting local interests.

The Shoreditch Town Hall model, presented to us by its former director Roland Jeffrey, impressed us, for example. But we also noted that the services of a specialist recruitment agency were required there to attract appropriately qualified trustees.

Nevertheless, the panel is drawn to the idea of a trust as a clear manifestation of local interest and involvement, particularly perhaps in respect of managing the community facilities we envisage in the complex.

The Crouch End for People grouping have established a trust, the Hornsey Town Hall Trust Limited, and are asking the Council to gift the entire site to the trust. The CEfP proposals were presented in outline to the advisory panel by their representative on the panel.

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We understand however that the Council will need to be convinced as to the viability of these proposals, and might be reluctant on behalf of taxpayers and residents to proceed with such a wholesale transfer to a self-appointed group however intentioned. The CEfP proposals are to be put separately to the Executive. The advisory panel did not support the immediate "gifting" of the site to a trust, because this option did not offer adequate safeguards in terms of viability, risk transfer for the council or community interest.

For the panel's part, we welcome the Council's commitment to safeguard the public interest in the site on a continuing basis, and recognise its desire to protect taxpayers from ongoing liability.

The panel also spent some time looking at the question of commercial development. We should record here our thanks to the professional advisers Donaldsons, who assisted us greatly by preparing indicative costings for the uses proposed for the Town Hall complex, and estimates of likely income from development, and from the various uses.

These costings do suggest a breakeven point in terms of funding restoration, and even the possibility of generating income, but at a significant level of development and commercial activity. This underlines the dilemma of the exercise: How much development would be acceptable, and how much income might a trust be reasonably expected to generate?

We were also presented with ideas about possible ways of working in partnership with a commercial developer.

We heard that there were clear benefits to this approach: Access to capital finance, skills and expertise, effective risk transfer for the Council, business incentives to invest and achieve a successful outcome on time and on budget.

But a commercial developer would of course require a return on capital, and tensions might arise between the company's duty to its investors and shareholders and the interests of local groups.

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We were interested therefore to hear from Sylvie Pierce, managing director of Capital and Provident Regeneration Limited, and previously chief executive of Tower Hamlets Council, on possible partnership arrangements centring on capturing the expertise of a private developer while preserving community control and long-term interest.

We considered carefully the risks and benefits of the different approaches.

We suggest that the solution should be to proceed in stages.

1) A broad-based charitable community trust should be formed, to work from an early stage of this project with the Council to agree common objectives and a plan to achieve those objectives

2) Appropriate capital (both commercial and non-commercial) should then be sought.

3) Once the project nears the end of the development stage and the Council is satisfied that the scheme:

Has appropriate trustees and governance;

Has the support of the community;

Is financially sound;

Is appropriately resourced.

Then a long lease on Hornsey Town Hall should be granted to the trust.

This sort of approach means that the council and community trust are in control of the development phase, ensures that management of community facilities is effectively transferred at an appropriate stage to the trust, and provides time for the trust to prove its credentials for managing the Town Hall in the long term.

Legal arrangements for such an approach would need to be sophisticated and robust, and essential safeguards are needed; around the quality of architect, the parameters of development, the clarity and effectiveness of partnership arrangements, and the continuing involvement of local people.

Appendix

Terms of Reference

1. The role of the panel is to advise the Council how it may best meet community aspirations for the Town Hall complex.
2. Community aspirations are defined as the likely views of the community on the conservation and enhancement of the heritage and public value of the Town Hall complex. The Panel must work within current council planning and environmental policy.
3. The panel's primary purpose is advise on the desire and need for community and cultural uses and also to advise on likely community views on forms of enabling development that may be necessary (see 5)e below). The panel will not consider school use as a feasibility study is currently being undertaken by the local education authority.
4. The panel will not be the sole representative of community views as this will be obtained through public consultation when the Council commences to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance. The panel is to advise on proposals for this consultation.
5. To suggest means of achieving the community aspirations through a development, management and ownership structure for the future within the criteria that the council has laid down
 - a) Any proposals will not be funded either in capital or revenue terms by the Council
 - b) Any proposals must have a realistic chance of commencing within two years
 - c) Any proposals cannot depend on unidentified financing.
 - d) The Council is prepared to consider retaining the freehold ownership but all future responsibilities must be undertaken by the developers/future management.
 - e) All future use options including commercial and residential enabling development to be considered that are acceptable in planning policy terms and are practically achievable.
6. The panel to report its deliberations to the Council's Executive members in September 2004.

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Membership

Cllr Judy Bax(Chair)	
Cllr David Winskill,	Crouch End Ward Councillor
Cllr Quincy Prescott,	Hornsey Ward Councillor
Marian Janes	Hornsey Conservation Area Advisory Committee
Sheila Kavanagh,	
Ahmet Arda, Andy Kinloch	Crouch End for People
Jacob O' Callaghan	Hornsey Historical Society
Sally Billot	Voluntary Sector Funding Expert
Eleanor Greenaway	Crouch End Arts Group
Kevin Pinnock	Hornsey Town Hall Project
Chris Warburton	Hornsey High Street Group
Ray Rogers	Conservation expert
Chris Freeman	Crouch End Traders Association
Emily Ward	North London Performing Arts Centre
Kate Graham	Architectural Heritage Fund
Liz Sich	Crouch End festival Chorus
Bridget Cherry	20 th Century Society
Richard Reidy	Friends Of Hornsey Town Hall
Manoj Ambasna	Collage Arts
Charlie Sharp	Involved with past Town Hall projects

Schedule of Meetings

The panel has met as follows:

Date	Presentations/witnesses
21 April 2004	Kate Graham, a Panel representative for the Architectural Heritage Fund gave a presentation about the work of her organisation.
25 May 2004	Delcia Keate, from English Heritage spoke about the role of English Heritage. Liam Hart, Council Planning project officer gave information about the Planning Brief process for the Town Hall
6 July 2004	Neil Gammie of Donaldsons spoke about the findings of their previous feasibility study on the Town Hall. Ian Christie, Cinema expert provided information about the viability of cinema uses at the Town Hall. Liz Sich, a Panel member gave presentation on demands for concert facilities and

HORNSEY TOWN HALL ADVISORY PANEL: REPORT TO HARINGEY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

	rehearsal space
26 July 2004	<p>Roland Jeffery, a founding director of Shoreditch Town Hall Trust and Panel member Jacob O' Callaghan gave presentations on trusts.</p> <p>Neil Gammie reported on the costings that Donaldsons had completed on the Panel's suggested uses for the Town Hall.</p>
9 September 2004	<p>Neil Gammie of Donaldsons updated the Panel on the viable development options for the Town Hall.</p> <p>Martin Charter, Council Arts Officer provided information on availability of grant funding and feedback on research compiled on potential demands for the Town Hall from the arts sector.</p> <p>Gerald Almeroth presented the pros and cons to a trust and commercial developer partner style of management for the Town Hall.</p> <p>Andrew Travers gave his advice to the Panel about the future of Hornsey Town Hall.</p>
20 September 2004	<p>Emily Ward, Frances Walsh and Odiri Ighamre-Aiken provided information on how the Town Hall could be used by children and youth for educational purposes.</p> <p>We received a presentation by Crouch End for People and the Hornsey Town Hall Trust on their plans for the Town Hall.</p>
6 October 2004	<p>Sylvie Pierce, a Managing Director for Capital and Provident Regeneration Limited, gave a presentation on how her company was working in partnership with local authorities to restore and develop buildings.</p>
25 October 2004	
9 November 2004	
22 November 2004	