

13. HEATHBRAE HOUSE – WATER WHEEL RESTORATION

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The purpose of this report is to seek \$5,000 from the Board's 2002/03 Discretionary Fund to contribute to the restoration of the water wheel in Heathbrae House in association with the Aynsley Terrace – Living Streets project.

INTRODUCTION

One of the important components of any Living Streets project is partnership. This is fundamental through the collaboration process and is an equally important component in the physical environment. In other projects this has come in a number of ways, eg. school children preparing artwork, residents helping plant street trees and residents involved in the day-to-day maintenance of the street environment. In the Living Streets projects, residents have been encouraged to enter into these sorts of partnerships with the Council. It has always been desirable to see more residents removing high boundary fences and merging the streetscape with private property or simply "softening" the boundary fence in accordance with the Council's "Living Fences" initiative.

The owners of Heathbrae House have offered to remove their front fence and, furthermore, to allow public access to a portion of their property frontage, as part of the Aynsley Terrace – Living Streets project. This is a fantastic opportunity to enhance the quality of the project, as well as demonstrating an excellent example of the types of partnerships that are fundamental to successful Living Streets projects. The neighbours to the south of Heathbrae (number 27) have also given consent to utilise a portion of their driveway as part of the concept described below.

THE CONCEPT

The primary purpose of providing public access is to display an historic water wheel used to pump water from road level up to the houses on the elevated bank. Research suggests that this wheel is the only remaining one of several that performed this function. It is proposed to meander a pathway (branching off the main public footpath) into the frontage of Heathbrae House leading to the water wheel on the southern boundary, then take the path back onto the public footpath across the neighbour's driveway at number 27. The area is currently very overgrown and therefore the concept includes tidying up and landscape planting of the frontage. The high front boundary fence will be removed and replaced with a low chain fence, located at a new boundary separating the areas of Heathbrae House where public have access from the rest of the Home. A seat, possibly constructed from Halswell quarry basalt, will be located near the wheel, together with an interpretation sign board. Subject to adequate funding, the water wheel would be restored to working order and lighting would be provided.

FUNDING

The generosity of Cath and Lindsay Stoles, the owners of Heathbrae House, is exceptional. Not only are they willing to allow an easement to be created for public access to the frontage of their property, but they are also willing to contribute \$5,000 towards the enhancement project. Mr and Mrs Waring, the owners of the neighbouring property (27 Aynsley Terrace), have also agreed to an easement across their property frontage.

The Parks and Waterways Unit and the City Streets Unit will be funding all legal costs associated with the creation of the easements and will also be funding the general enhancement of the frontage area through tidying, landscape planting, removal of the fence, construction of new chain fence, seating and sign board.

Funding for the restoration of the water wheel, lighting and a recirculating pump mechanism or similar system for sustainable operation of the wheel, is required.

COMMENT

The budget for the Aynsley Terrace – Living Streets project is stretched. Parks and Waterways have contributed significantly given the enhancement proposed to the entire river and road corridor. City Streets have increased their contribution significantly from the sums first budgeted. Unfortunately, additional funding to complete the waterwheel restoration and ancillary works cannot come from within current budgets. Given that this is a unique opportunity that will be a "showpiece" for the community in many ways, it is important to see it come to fruition. In the essence of a true "partnership" it would be desirable if the Board were able to contribute to the project to ensure completion.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development on the frontage of Heathbrae House in association with the Living Streets project will create a noteworthy enhancement, significant public interest and an excellent example of what can be achieved through partnership. The generosity of the private property owners is exceptional and reflects a positive desire to share an interesting piece of history with the community. With assistance from the Board the project can include the waterwheel restoration and ancillary works.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Board allocate \$5,000 from its 2002/2003 Discretionary Fund towards restoration of the historic wheel and ancillary works associated with the Heathbrae House project partnership.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the staff recommendation be supported.