

# Friends of Wimbledon Park

## Dam Safety Works Report 01

### *FOWP Aim on Dam Safety works*

*The proposed dam works required to make people safe from downstream flooding also offer the opportunity to design this in such a way that it becomes a major feature to be enjoyed by visitors for the next 100 years, this includes:*

- *Celebrating Capability Brown's lakeside carriage drive (now the lakeside path) and the vistas across the lake from there,*
- *Admiring and playing in the cascade,*
- *Appreciating and learning from the meandering Wimbledon Park Brook which allows the glass eels from the Sargasso Sea to enter the lake.*

*Provision for the:*

- ❖ *safe keeping of Ashen Grove Wood (ancient woodland),*
- ❖ *restoring the lost eastern arm of the lake and*
- ❖ *improving biodiversity and habitat for nature.*

#### **Dave Dawson: Options to make the Wimbledon Park dam safe**

*The normal low flows of the brook present a challenge to the re-design of the outfall structure as a "Brownian cascade", proposed in the Masterplan, but something not unlike the present waterfall design should be possible.*

*Merton Council's Wimbledon Park Masterplan suggests replacing the waterfall with a new "Brownian cascade" outfall. By moving the position of the outfall, this proposal would preserve the best part of Ashen Grove Wood from a disruptive new construction and would enable the restoration of part of Brown's lake that was lost when the present outfall was constructed. But this is not considered in the report and the sketch of the replacement outfall in the report (figure 5) would need substantial modification to approximate to a Brownian design.*

#### **From Wimbledon Park and Lake Masterplan December 2018**

4.9.7. The Waterfall garden could be re-landscaped as a natural Brownian cascade (potentially designed to serve as a secondary spillway for the Lake during flood events), and linked with a re-landscaping of the Brook, creating a more natural character with meanders and improved riparian habitat with areas acting as flood storage.

5.10.10. The re-landscaped Waterfall Garden should continue to appear as a natural cascade, ideally increased in scale to make a more meaningful, positive feature, linked with the re-landscaped Brook, which will offer a more natural character with meanders and improved riparian habitat with areas acting as flood storage.

#### **Place Making by John Phibbs**

##### Cascades

Brown's cascades took several forms. The weir built in c 1760 on the River Wellesbourne below Hiron's bridge at Charlecote ('Pray how doth the Cascade look now it is finished?') is the simplest form. Then there were those that fell in vertical sheets, as at Kimberley. These were suited to the melancholic, for whom cascades should 'fall in one regular sheet, instead of being broken by obstructions ... when they are brought over in regular sheets, the continued sameness of the noise, and motion, and look, composes the mind also to an even continued tenor of thought'.

There were buffets, or cascades with steps – Valence had both a sheet, falling 'from a couchant statue of Neptune feet high' and at 'the end of the serpentine river ... five breaks into a bason', and at Longleat the water had a 'fall or two Introduced in it which tho Rather formal is Very Pleasing'. While at Thoresby 'There is likewise a perpetual cascade in the garden tumbling down 7 or 8 steps'; and at Latimer, the steps had a dog's-tooth arrangement, so as to break up the fall of water.

At the naturalistic end, at Blenheim, Bowood and Ugbrooke they ran over rocks – a 'very natural cascade: and the scenery abt it, wh is woody, shews ye water dashing through it to great advantage.'

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### Report.

Details of our Capability Brown design for the dam (plus a summary for a quick read) was sent to Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah on 13<sup>th</sup> May copying many others in. The thread ended with her reply on the 11<sup>th</sup> June. It included the sentence ‘**At that time officers will be in touch for you to present your thinking and answer questions for the technical experts**’.

That time came when I was invited to a Skype meeting on the Wimbledon Park Lake Safety Project on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November. This was the start of our involvement and a further meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December.

I asked for their response to our Capability Brown design. As a result, I have resent this to Tom Sly (Flood Risk Management Engineer) copying others in and await his response.

Key points from the presentation:

- 1) Many of the captions were blurred and unreadable.
- 2) Andy Hughes supervising engineer said that work would start mid-August 2021 and finish January 2022. This complied with LBMs legal deadlines.
- 3) Option 2 brought forward to tender and Brien Curran contracts manager (Ward and Burke) presented their option which was significantly different from Option 2.
  - The lake level will remain the same and not be lowered 350mm.
  - No 1.1m high wall.
  - It is a lighter touch.
  - A bigger outfall in Ashen Grove Wood.

I requested copies of the presentation and Chris Parsloe (Leisure & Culture Development Manager) replied that she is currently doing the rounds of several different meetings with the presentation and we could have these after 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

For information Tom’s reply:

*Hi Nick,*

*Many thanks for sending through these details again and for attending yesterday’s presentation and Q&A, I do hope you found it a useful session.*

*As promised yesterday, our team will review your option and papers and we will come back with comments.*

*Please address future questions to both Christine and me.*

*We look forward to talking about the plans again in more detail at the next meeting.*

*Kind regards, Tom*

*Tom Sly (Flood Risk Management Engineer)*

**Nick Steiner**  
**Chair Friends of Wimbledon Park**  
**22/11/20**