

Rye House Gatehouse and Quay

This is a summary of the five year management plan of the Lee Valley Regional Park site known as Rye House Gatehouse.

The Site Descriptions

Location: Rye House Gatehouse and Quay are located in East Herts District Councils administrative area
Grid Ref - TL 386 098

Ownership: The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority owns the whole site.

Area: Size: Approximately 1.58Hectares (3.91acres)

Statutory Designations: Grade 1 listed status applies to the remains of the fortified manor house that once occupied extending to the moat and grassed areas to both the front and rear of the building.

Historical land use: Site of one of the finest and first brick buildings in the country a fortified manor house, built by Sir Andrew Ogard in 1443. Only the Gatehouse now survives. The original site covered an area equivalent to the size of two football pitches.

In 1683, "The Rye house Plot". Rumbold a republican together with a number of notable people of the time hatched a plot to kill King Charles II and his brother on their journey from Newmarket Races to London. The ultimate aims of the plot still remain a little unclear.

The Gatehouse has been used as a poor house, "a place of Victorian Entertainment" (a forerunner of a modern theme park). Henry Thele purchased the house and grounds in 1857 seeing the potential of turning it into a place of entertainment for the people of London. Special excursion trains would bring people out of London to enjoy the entertainment that Rye House had to offer.

In 1904 the Hoddesdon brewers Christie and Company bought it and ran it until the 1930's Shortly after the Second World War fire destroyed a large part of the Gatehouse, after this event the Gatehouse fell into disrepair and deteriorated from neglect. In the 1970's the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority bought the property and re-furbished the Gatehouse with guidance from English Heritage.

Rye House Quay: Has been a Park Ranger base, a mooring / repair facility under the control of Lee Valley Park and a private chandler's yard offering repair, mooring and rowing boat hire facilities.

Current land use: The Gatehouse to-day is now managed as a mini museum detailing the past history of the house. The re developed Quayside is used as an area of Informal Recreation.

Flora & Fauna: The site is likely to be colonised by some of the flora and Fauna from the surrounding areas particularly the two nature reserves close to the site – Royal Society for the Protection of birds and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust at Rye Meads.

The site is likely to be visited by species coming to the site via The River Lee Navigation Corridor

Site Evaluation

Ecological Evaluation: None, Ecologically however it falls just outside a special protection area, which including The R.S.P.B and H.M.W.L.T Nature Reserves at Rye Meads.

Cultural/heritage value: High: The Gatehouse is considered one of the finest early examples of brick building in the country. It has been the setting for "The Rye House Plot" an assassination attempt on King Charles II (1630 –1685) and his brother. It has been a workhouse and a "place of Victorian Entertainment

Visitor evaluation:

Strengths - V. Important Brick Building (One of the earliest built in the country. Rye House Plot, planned assassination of King Charles II the duke of York in 1683. Close to public transport links. Near to Lee Navigation Towpath/ River Lee Walk/New River Walk. Good walking/cycling links to site. Boat Mooring

at Rye House Quay Overnight. Site an attractive area for informal recreation. Sites history local schools use it for National Curriculum studies in local history. Circular walks from site available. Public House nearby.” Other Recreational opportunities nearby –R.S.P.B. & H.M.WL.T Rye Meads reserves, Rye House Speedway/Greyhound/Karting Tracks. Close to a large local population offering the opportunity to get volunteers to help look after the Gatehouse area

Weaknesses - Limited opening times of the Gatehouse and charging an entry fee to it. Visitors comment how difficult the place is to find despite brown tourist signage in place. R.S.P.B. Reserve entrance and visitor centre moved ~400 yards up the road people drive by the site rather than stop. Circular walks from site available. However information is only available for one of them via the parks website and in a copy of the parks forty walks leaflet (a collection of forty walks to throughout the park put together to celebrate the parks fortieth anniversary).this walk is not way marked on the ground. Other potential circular walks have neither formal information nor way marking on the ground making them difficult to for visitors to follow. Site car park can become used as an overflow car park for Rye House Stadium. 1ST floor and top viewing area are not easily accessible to people with disabilities. Immediate surrounding area – Run down Tarmac Plant /Plumpton Road Industrial Area (poor visual appearance from Rye House Quay. Moat silted up edges allowed to grow up with wild flowers, makes site look a bit uncared for. Over mature trees showing fungal infection, too many different sign styles on site. Rye Road a toll road which may discourage visitors coming to the site

Opportunities - Develop further Circular Walks using Rye House Gatehouse as a start /finish. Update site interpretation to provide high quality modern interpretation of for all to use. Development of closer links with all the sites neighbours -

Threats - Building fabric has come under attack from vandals which could lead to irreparable damage if not kept in check. This could increase as the areas population increases. Site becoming over used for informal recreation causing damage to the building and the external areas. Site visits fall away as potential customers find it difficult to find due to poor signage. Site visits to Gatehouse are reduced to School and Requested openings if no information staff is found to run it for general public to view it. Entry charge becomes too high and visitors stop coming as the Gatehouse is considered poor value for money.

Community Involvement: Consult with users, partners, regional and national bodies and the local communities in the development of services to achieve a better match between their needs and aspirations and the services provided.

Vision and objectives

Authority Vision statement: “A Regional park with a regional status and a national profile”

Ten year vision: -Liaise with Biodiversity Manager with regards to funding biodiversity projects. Manage site to attract or increase BAP species. Improve signage to site from main road. Promote sustainability in management procedures, Establish ‘Friends of group. Increase use of Volunteers. Promote open days.

Site Objectives:

Objective 1: Maintain and enhance the sites heritage and biodiversity

(contributes to LVRPA Strategic Objective - a champion for open space and biodiversity)

- P1.1** manage and improve habitats for flora and fauna in conjunction with BAP
- P1.2** record and monitor flora and fauna
- P1.3** restore and maintain industrial and heritage features
- P1.4** maintain tools and equipment in accordance with H&S guidelines
- P1.5** work with partner organisations and agencies

Objective 2: Encourage use and enable community involvement in the site

(contributes to LVRPA Strategic Objective - An accessible resource for all)

- P2.1** Establish user forums/ friends of groups
- P2.2** Encourage use of site by community groups

- P2.3** Support local issues and community forums/networks
- P2.4** Provide voluntary opportunities for all communities
- P2.5** Monitor visitor use of the site

Objective 3: Increasing public understanding and awareness of LVRP:
(contributes to LVRPA Strategic Objective - An accessible resource for all)

- P3.1** Provide interpretation of the site's wildlife, landscape and historical features.
- P3.2** Provide a programme of events and activities.
- P3.3** Promote the park through a range of media applications
- P3.4** Deliver a programme of environmental education
- P3.5** Manage the site to a nationally recognised standard (e.g. Green flag, quest)

Objective 4: Encourage appropriate public access
(contributes to LVRPA Strategic Objective - An accessible resource for all)

- P4.1** Maintain site in accordance with Grounds Maintenance schedule
- P4.2** Maintain site furniture in accordance with H&S standards
- P4.3** Ensure regular site patrols and enforcement of byelaws
- P4.4** Ensure site access improvements comply with DDA regulations
- P4.5** Work with partners to encourage access

Monitoring the plan

The plan is monitored and organised in house against the objective and the work programme set for the site on an annual basis. The outcome of this process will be fed into the future work plans for this management plan.