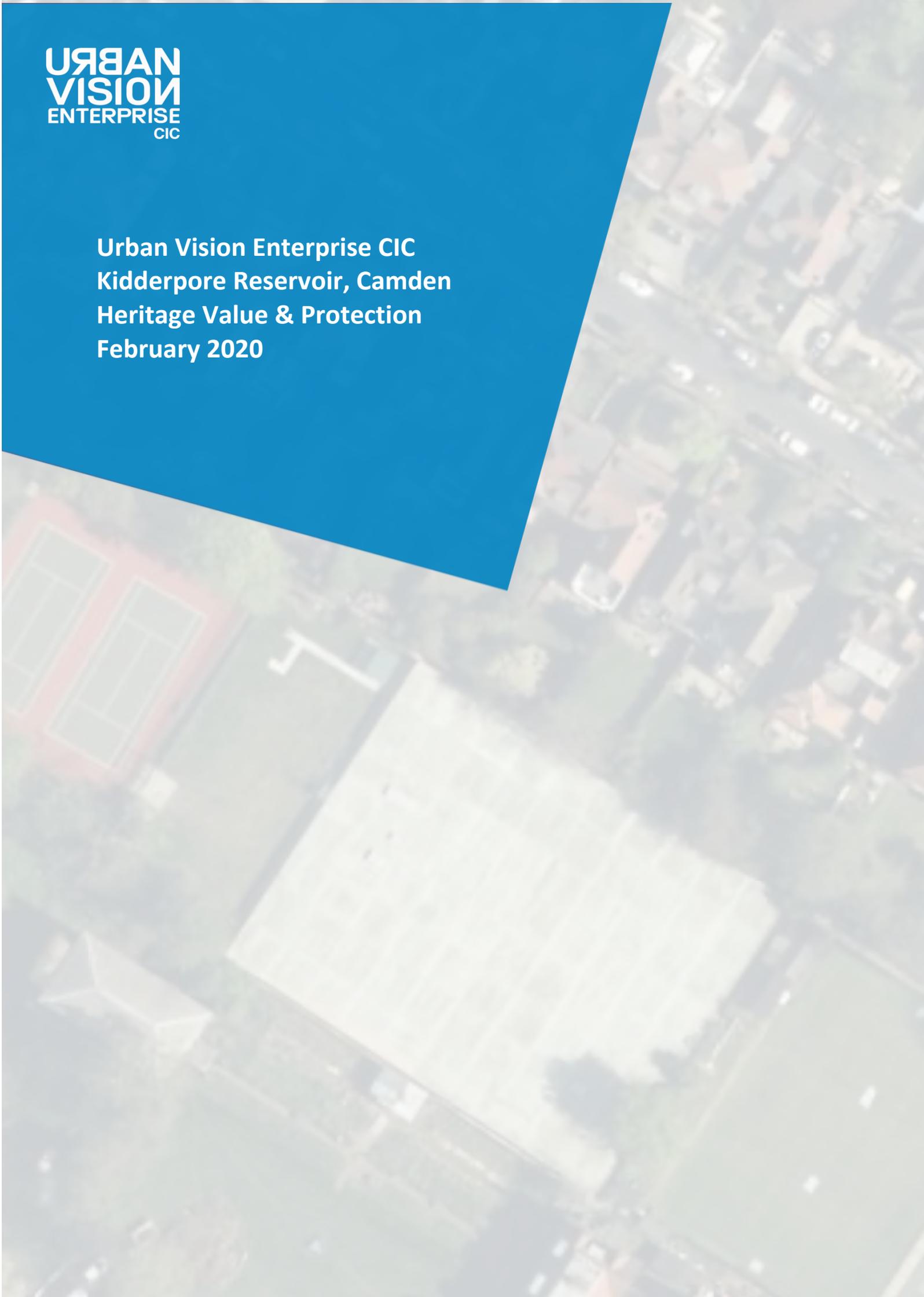


**Urban Vision Enterprise CIC
Kidderpore Reservoir, Camden
Heritage Value & Protection
February 2020**



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report considers the heritage value of Kidderpore Reservoir, Kidderpore Avenue, Camden. The report also makes recommendations for the future protection of the structure.

The report has been commissioned by the Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Forum and is intended to form part of the evidence base for the Redington and Frognal Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 Authorship

The report has been prepared by:
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Kidderpore Reservoir



Kidderpore Reservoir, Extract from Google Maps, February 2020.

2. The Structure

2.1 Description

Kidderpore Reservoir is a Victorian covered reservoir, dating from 1867. It precedes much of the surrounding development.

Brick structured, covered reservoirs are to be found in other parts of London, each differently designed. Kidderpore Reservoir has a capacity of 12 million litres of water.

Reservoirs were required to be covered or roofed to meet legal requirements, resulting from the 1846 Cholera epidemic. This reservoir was recovered in 1963 with an aluminium barrel-vaulted roof, then again in 2013-15 with a structure of pre-stressed hollowcore concrete slabs.

The underlying structure is of yellow hard engineering brick. The brick container has a flat brick base, curving upwards to the vertical at the sides, with brick ends.

The roof supports comprise nine parallel rows of brick piers with stepped bases, on a 5.8 metre grid. These are spanned by parallel rows of shallow cambered arches.

The brickwork had proved to be very resistant to erosion when the structure was exposed and inspected, as part of the 2013-15 works.

2.2 Publications

Kidderpore Reservoir was featured in *Unseen London*, written by Peter Dazely and Mark Daly (Frances Lincoln, 2017 revised edition, pages 46-47). This described the structure as '*a Victorian architectural gem*'. It also states:

'Victorian engineers building Kidderpore Service Reservoir exploited the latest developments in building materials, rather than just depending on robust heavyweight construction. These included the use of modern Portland cement for making mortar, and particular types of hard engineering bricks.'

The replacement of the covering structure received some press coverage in 2013, including by the *Evening Standard*, *ITV News* and various local web sites.

Kidderpore Reservoir



Source: London Metropolitan Archive



Source: Evening Standard

3. Heritage Value

3.1 Listing Criteria and Guidance

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has published Principles for Selection of Listed Buildings (2010).

On architectural interest, Paragraph 16 states:

'Engineering and technological interest can be an important consideration for some buildings'.

Paragraph 17 sets out things that the Secretary of State will take into account in listing decisions and includes:

'The character or appearance of conservation areas: In accordance with the terms of section 72 of the 1990 Act, when making listing decisions in respect of a building in a conservation area, the Secretary of State will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

On age and rarity, Paragraph 18 states:

'Age and rarity: the older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest ...

- *from 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary;*
- *from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary'*

Historic England has a series of subject specific listing guides. This includes **Infrastructure: Utilities and Communication Listing Selection Guide**, re-issued 2017.

On reservoirs, this includes at Page 3:

From the mid-nineteenth century a number of Acts authorised water authorities to extract water from rivers or construct reservoirs. Others were built as a result of private agreements, as ... Covered reservoirs ... survive from the early Victorian period onwards, and required elaborate brick sub structures to create large storage chambers.

Page 9 includes advice on listing:

As with all building types, those relating to communications and the utilities have to be assessed in terms of any special architectural or historic interest; here these things may relate variously to their architectural, planning,

engineering and technological interest. As with industrial buildings more generally, completeness can be of overriding importance especially where important processes can be illustrated on a single site ... Relative date may be significant, as will rarity. Alteration and upgrading is likely to have taken place, and assessment of the authenticity of the structures from a historical point of view will sometimes be necessary. The designation of buildings and structures concentrates on the above-ground evidence of the systems. Below-ground remains and infrastructure, important to the overall understanding as they are, will generally not be designated; exceptionally, there may be grounds for scheduling, however.

3.2 Listing Decision

The reservoir was submitted for listing and a letter from Historic England of 5th February 2018 stated that it was unable to take the application forward due to it not falling in any of the three categories used by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to prioritise designation resources.

These categories are:

Threat: any candidate for designation demonstrably under serious threat of demolition or major alteration

Strategic Priority: any candidate for designation of a type that is a strategic designation priority under the Historic England Action Plan, Historic England's programme of strategic work. You can find a list of this year's projects on our website

Evident Significance: any building or site that possesses evident significance that makes it obviously worthy of inclusion on the National Heritage List for England

The letter also stated:

'We should also point out that on the information provided with your application, it appears that the Kidderpore Reservoir is unlikely to meet the statutory criteria for listing - special architectural or historic interest - in any event'.

Listing is based on assessment of whether a building or structure is of special architectural or historic interest against a national context.

The age of the structure falls within the 1850-1945 category, so 'progressively greater selection is required'. However, it falls to the early part of this category. The Historic England guidance is a little vague on listing of reservoirs. However, Kidderpore does fit the description in the guidance of 'elaborate brick sub structures to create large storage chambers'.

The Historic England letter would indicate that the structure is not of sufficient merit to be listed. However, this was based on information provided. This does raise the possibility of a further application, if a stronger case could be made and the structure became under threat.

Whilst listing is considered against a national context. It is also necessary to consider architectural or historic interest at local level. There are other forms of protection, outside of the listing process.

3.3 Importance to the Conservation Area

The structure is within the Redington and Froggnal Conservation Area. The definition of a conservation area is in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as follows 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

The structure is a good example of Victorian engineering, with the original underlying structure intact. Clearly the roof structure is non-original. But the brick container and roof support structures, based on piers and shallow arches, are original.

By its very nature, there is a degree of rarity or scarcity to this kind of structure. The reservoir structure undoubtedly contributes to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. It is older than much of the surrounding development.

The structure is covered, so the contribution to the **character or appearance** of the Conservation Area is mainly through the visibility of the new cover and as a gap in the built form. One of the characteristics of the area is the open spaces created by the amalgam of large rear gardens. In this part of the Conservation Area, sports pitches also contribute to this open character. Any built development on the reservoir footprint would therefore create an urban grain at odds the garden suburb character of the Conservation Area.

The structure is undoubtedly part of the **special architectural or historic interest** of the Conservation Area, including engineering and technological interest. Destruction of the structure would cause substantial harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

3.4 Local List

Camden Council’s local list (2015) makes mention of the site of the reservoir, though as part of the entry for West Heath Lawn Tennis Club. Also, the reference to the ‘former West Middlesex water works covered reservoir’ raises the question of whether it was known that the reservoir was still there. At best, this is confused wording.

The written description is as follows:

<p>Ref235:</p>  <p>(Click here to return to the ward map)</p>	<p>Address: West Heath Lawn Tennis Club, Croftway</p> <p>Significance: Historical and Social Significance</p> <p>Asset Type: Natural Features or Landscape</p> <p>Ward: Frognaal and Fitzjohns</p>	<p>West Heath Lawn Tennis Club. On the site of the former West Middlesex Water works covered reservoir. Opened in 1902. It offers low-cost memberships and provides the opportunity for outdoors exercise for residents in the area and from elsewhere. It also provides a social meeting place, with club tournaments, suppers, picnics etc.</p>
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Source:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/8118440/Local+List.pdf/674e9b7b-6fed-d44c-9593-096a22bb271d>. Accessed 20/02/2020

There is no reference to the actual structure of the reservoir. So, although indirectly mentioned, this is more a recognition that the reservoir site is within the wider site of the West Heath Lawn Tennis Club, rather than recognition of the architectural or historic interest of the reservoir structure itself.

The map extract from Camden Council Local List shows the reservoir as a ‘Natural Feature or Landscape’ despite it being a covered, man-made structure.



(Source:

<https://ssa.camden.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=CamdenConservation&lang=en-gb>). Accessed 20/02/2020

Kidderpore Reservoir

There are clearly discrepancies, both in the written description and the plan. Some revision of the local list would be useful, to provide explicit recognition of the reservoir structure.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Protection

Recommendation 1: Whilst Historic England declined to list the structure, this was based on the information provided. Also, listing is considered against a constantly changing context, as more structures from earlier periods are demolished. It may be worth re-submitting the structure for listing, if it falls into disuse or comes under threat.

Recommendation 2: The next time the structure is emptied for maintenance works, the opportunity should be taken to record the brick structure. This may be useful in any future attempt to gain listed building status.

Recommendations 3: The current review of the character appraisal for the Redington Frogna Conservation Area provides an opportunity to recognise the engineering and technological interest of the reservoir and its contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

Recommendations 4: The local list should be updated to recognise the architectural or historic (engineering and technological) interest of the reservoir structure, perhaps as a separate entry.

4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan

Recommendation 5: The neighbourhood plan provides an opportunity to recognise the value of the structure, in particular to the special architectural or historic (engineering and technological) interest of the Conservation Area.

5. Sources

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