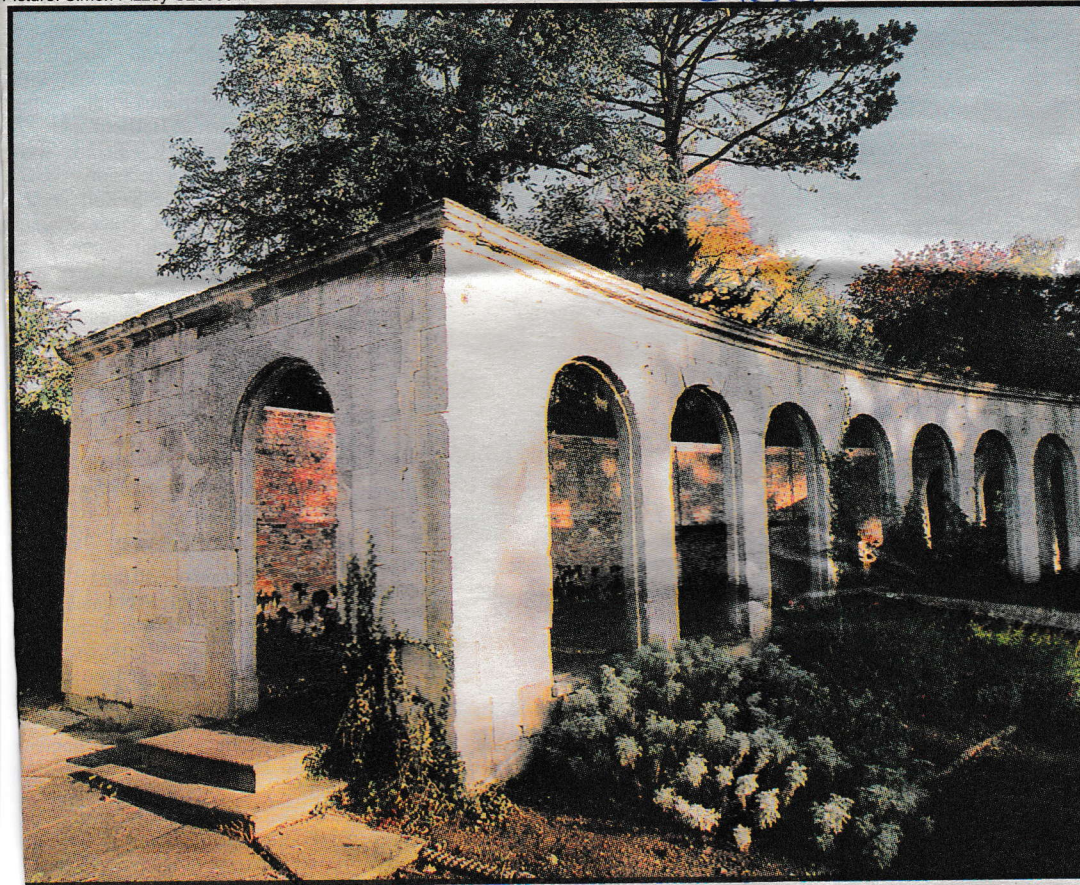


'We must save historic building'

Picture: Simon Pizzey C200081A

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The historic orangery in Stroud's Stratford Park. The call has gone out for it to be restored – 'before it is too late'.

by Jo Barber

AN 18th-century orangery owned by Stroud District Council, should be restored to its former glory – before it is too late to save it, a councillor has urged.

Stratford Park's neglected, grade-II listed orangery – a 18 metre-long lean-to greenhouse for fruit trees believed to have been built in the 1780s – was an important part of the town's heritage, said Coun Sheffie Mohammed.

"This should be safeguarded, but if it is left in abeyance much longer there will be nothing left to preserve," he warned.

But the orangery, built against a wall next to the Stratford Park mansion house, home to Stroud's new Museum-in-the-Park, might cost £30,000 to £40,000 to renovate, the council's planning director David Buckle pointed out yesterday).

"If the roof and glass were put back that still leaves the problem of what to do with it," Mr Buckle added.

Arched

"The most obvious thing is to use it as an orangery, but then there would be the issue of running costs like heating during the winter which might be another £5,000 to £10,000 a year, and concerns about vandalism of the building."

Coun Mohammed said the orangery was a late 18th century, grade-II listed property with eight semi-circular arched windows down the side and three across the end.

"It is in the council's ownership and as such we have a statutory duty to keep it in good repair," he claimed.

"But, sad to say, it has been badly neglected in spite of my representations over many years."

The orangery has a separately-listed and architecturally-valuable urn in the middle.

Coun Mohammed also told the council he was concerned that an ornamental water fountain had disappeared from Stratford Park and asked for its reinstatement.

Both matters will now go to a future Stroud council cabinet meeting, possibly in January, for the administration to decide in principle whether or not to support Coun Mohammed's requests.