

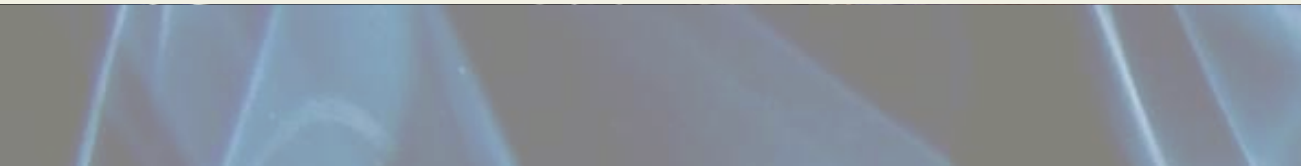
A STATUE TO
HONOUR THE
MATCHGIRLS

SCULPTOR'S
BRIEF



VISION

The vision of The Matchgirls Memorial is to establish and maintain a public statue, and other works of art, in the East End of London to celebrate the achievement of the Matchgirls. Also, the charity seeks to provide information and raise awareness, through education programmes, in the local community and across the UK, about the Matchgirls' contribution to the advancement of human rights, equality and workers' rights.



PROJECT DELIVERY CONTEXT

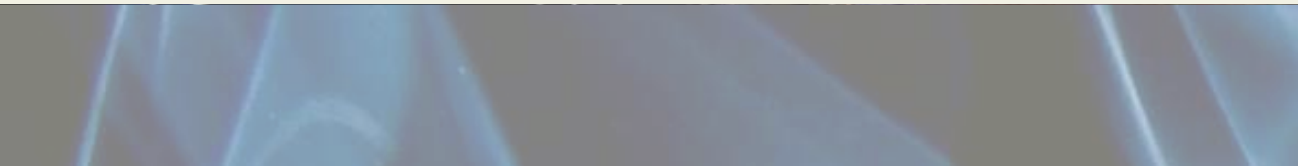
The Matchgirls Memorial is delivering this project through a staged planning and funding process appropriate to a permanent public monument. Planning approval is being prioritised at an early stage and will inform final design development.

The sculptor will work collaboratively with The Matchgirls Memorial, planning officers, engineers and fabrication specialists to ensure the final work is deliverable, durable and appropriate for a public park setting.

Formal commission of the selected sculptor will be subject to planning progress and funding milestones.

A planning application will be submitted during the concept stage, and design development will respond to planning requirements.

The sculptor will also be expected to engage with the local community and schools as part of the design development process.



THE MATCHGIRLS MEMORIAL



The Matchgirls Memorial (TMM) is a charitable organisation, founded in March 2019, set up specifically to commemorate the role and legacy of the Matchgirls and their involvement in the London Bryant and May Matchgirls Strike of 1888.

TMM is raising funds for a statue as part of its overarching heritage project focused on celebrating the legacy of the Matchgirls Strike of 1888. The heritage of the East End is rich and diverse but given the national significance of the Matchgirls Strike, there is little by way of lasting commemoration in the local community where the Strike took place, to inspire current and future generations of young people, to strive for fairness and justice in the workplace.

At present, the archives related to the Matchgirls Strike are mostly stored in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and the TUC but, in reality, their heritage remains invisible to many people.

THE MATCHGIRLS OF 1888

In 1888, the Bryant and May match factory in Bow, East London, employed hundreds of young girls and women, who endured gruelling 6-day weeks, 12-hour days and low pay, reduced further by fines for petty offences. They were also forced to work with white phosphorous that could cause a form of bone cancer, osteonecrosis (known then as phossy jaw).

Moved by the plight of the Matchgirls, in a Fabian Society meeting on 15th June, Henry Hyde Champion stated that Bryant and May took 20% dividends for shareholders but paid workers 'starvation wages'. His motion to boycott the purchase of Bryant and May matches was passed unanimously.

Afterwards, Annie Besant spoke to workers outside the factory to hear first-hand accounts of the conditions, and then published 'White Slavery in London' in her weekly magazine, 'The Link'. Bryant and May demanded their employees sign to say the article was untrue. They refused. There was unrest and a sacking, which led to the 1400 workers walking out on strike on 5th July 1888.

"Well, it just went like tinder, one girl began, and the rest said 'yes', so out we all went"

Toilers In London, British Weekly Commissioners, 1889

The Matchgirls gained support from MPs, Toynbee Hall, The London Trades Council, the Press and the general public until, eventually, they secured a meeting with the factory Directors. All Strike demands were met on 17th July and a new Union was formed. Ultimately, this Strike led to the formation and growth of the labour movement and New Unionism.

The proposed statue will serve as a permanent public commemoration of the collective courage and historic significance of the Matchgirls and their role in shaping labour and social justice history.



SPIRIT OF THE MATCHGIRLS

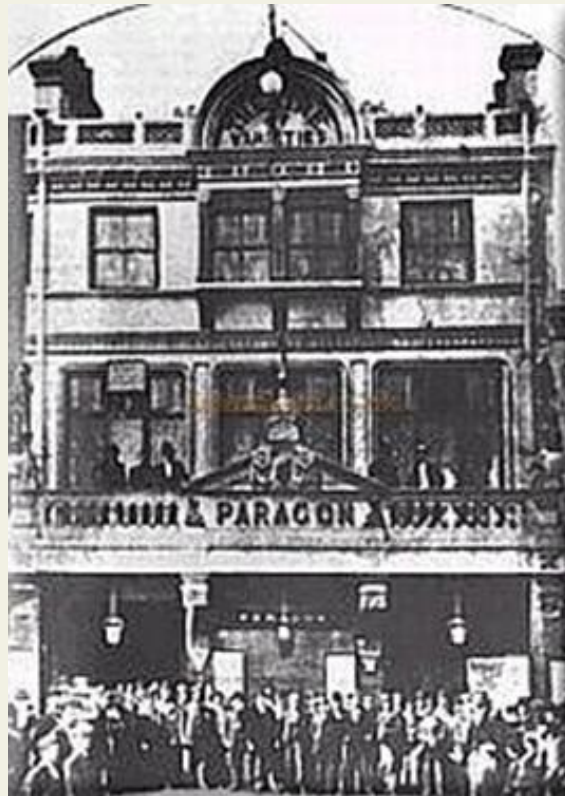
"Bryant and May have a rough set of girls. There are 2000 of them when they are busy. Rough and rowdy, but not bad morally. They fight with their fists to settle their differences, not in the factory for that is forbidden, but in the streets when they leave work in the evening. A ring is formed, they fight like men and are not interfered with by the police."

George Duckworth 1897



They buy their clothes and feathers (specially the latter) by forming clubs; seven or eight of them will join together paying a shilling a week each, and drawing lots to decide who shall have the money each week."

Clara Collet 1886



Thanks to Arthur Lloyd

"Most of them have an exuberancy of spirits truly astonishing . . . Match girls come out very strong on a Saturday night, when any number of them may be found at the Paragon Music Hall in the Mile End Road, the Foresters' Music Hall in Cambridge Road, and the Sebright at Hackney"

Montagu Williams 1894

"... the light jostle needed for the entire avalanche to move"

Friedrich Engels

"The Matchgirls victory turned a new leaf in Trade Union annals"

Sidney Webb, 1919

"The beginning of the social convulsion which produced the New Unionism"

Ben Tillett, 1931

"The Matchgirls Strike had an influence ... which entitles it to be regarded as one of the most important events in the history of labour organisation in any country"

Henry Snell, 1936



DESIGN PROPOSAL

TMM Trustees are inviting expressions of interest from sculptors for a statue to represent and celebrate the achievement of the Matchgirls employed at the Bryant and May match factory in 1888 in winning the strike that changed attitudes to workers' rights everywhere.

At this stage we are inviting expressions of interest only. There is no expectation for detailed design proposals or costings.

Stage 0: Expressions of interest to include:

- A short introduction to your practice
- Examples of relevant previous work
- A brief statement outlining your interest in the project

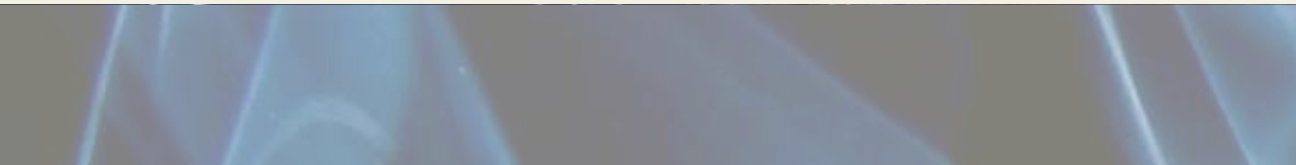
Stage 1: Initial Sculptor Discussions and Outline Proposal – a small number of sculptors will be invited to develop an outline response to the brief. This may include an initial artistic approach, methodology, and indicative cost range. This stage is intended to support discussion and is not expected to involve detailed design work

Stage 2: Concept/Maquette (Paid) – shortlisted sculptors will develop an initial concept and maquette. A fixed fee will be paid for this stage

Stage 3: Planning & Technical Development – the preferred concept will be refined in consultation with planning officers and technical advisors

Stage 4: Full Commission – formal appointment for fabrication and installation will be confirmed subject to planning consent and confirmed funding

❖ We welcome one-to-one discussions with shortlisted artists during Stage 1 to support initial thinking and approach



STATUE REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Capture the character of the Matchgirls and their historic significance
- ❖ Informative/educational and inspiring for the local community and general public
- ❖ High quality, original and distinctive
- ❖ Freestanding, life-size (or larger), figurative sculpture is encouraged, though sculptors may propose alternative approaches where they strengthen interpretation and public engagement
- ❖ Material is expected to be cast in bronze but other sustainable and enduring materials will be considered
- ❖ Safe and accessible to all
- ❖ Durable, weather-resistant and suitable for long-term outdoor installation (minimum 50+ years)
- ❖ Safe for close public interaction in an open public park
- ❖ Designed to minimise maintenance and resist vandalism
- ❖ Structurally sound and compliant with engineering requirements for permanent public installation

ACCESSIBILITY



- ❖ The Matchgirls Memorial is committed to ensuring the statue and its interpretation are accessible and inclusive. Designs should consider:
 - ❖ Step-free and inclusive physical access
 - ❖ Clear and legible interpretation for a broad audience
 - ❖ Opportunities for tactile, digital or audio interpretation where appropriate
 - ❖ Suitability for engagement by schools, families and the wider community

BUDGET

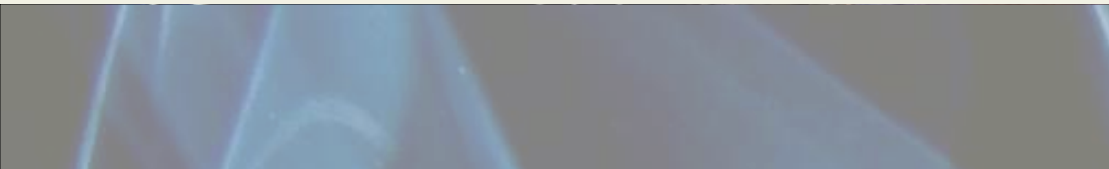
- ❖ Funds for a maquette are already secured. A dedicated statue fundraising campaign will be initiated to secure the necessary financing to support the full statue commission
- ❖ The overall project budget is expected to fall within a range appropriate to a permanent public sculpture of this scale and significance
- ❖ Indicative budget ranges will be discussed with shortlisted sculptors at the next stage. At this stage, we are seeking initial expressions of interest rather than detailed costings
- ❖ The appointed sculptor will be required to provide fully costed proposals inclusive of design, production, installation, expenses and VAT where applicable, at the appropriate stage of the process



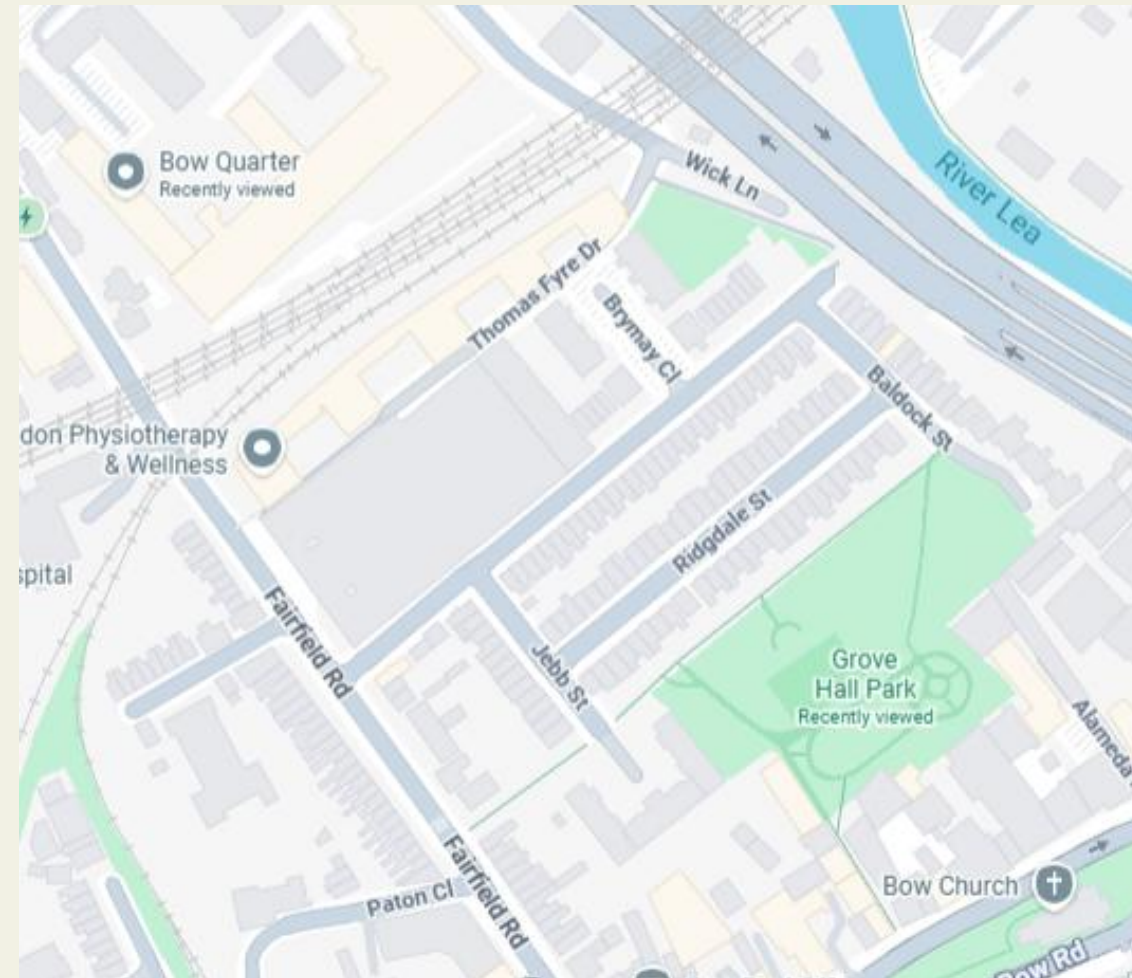
TIMELINE (indicative and subject to planning discussions and approvals)

Date	Event
Months 1 - 3 (in progress)	Pre-application meeting with Tower Hamlets
	Planning pathway confirmed (following council meeting)
	Sculptor's Brief issued
Following brief issue	One-to-one discussions (optional)
Target Month 4	Initial review of expressions of interest
Following submissions	Shortlist confirmed
Following confirmed shortlist	Outline proposals and initial sculptor discussions
Target Month 5	Discussions/interviews with shortlisted sculptors
Target Month 6	Appointment of sculptor for paid maquette stage
Target Month 8	Deadline for delivery of maquette
Target Month 9	Planning application submitted
Months 9–12	Community engagement and display period
Target Month 12	Planning decision expected
Following planning approval	Announcement of selected design
Months 12–15	Grant funding and crowdfunding
Target Month 15	Sculptor contract finalised
Months 15–22	Fabrication period
Target Month 24	Statue installed and unveiled

LOCATION

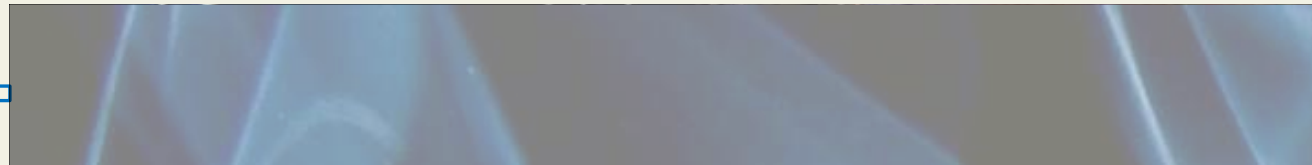


- ❖ Grove Hall Park is a community park located at the end of Fairfield Road, in Bow, the same road as the old factory (now Bow Quarter)
- ❖ Located at 51.52974, -0.01801
- ❖ Near many Matchgirls relevant locations
- ❖ The park is a well used by local families and residents
- ❖ Safe and easy access for all
- ❖ The park already has a Matchgirls Information Panel and a Bryant and May War Memorial
- ❖ Potential locations for the statue within the park will be explored
- ❖ More images and information available on request
- ❖ It is recommended Sculptors acquaint themselves with the site
- ❖ Planning permission will be required, and sculptors should be prepared to work within planning and site constraints identified through the approval process



MAIN RESOURCES (but not limited to)

- ❖ Anna Robinson, *Neither Hidden nor Condescended To: Overlooking Sarah Chapman*, Unpublished (2004)
- ❖ Ann Stafford, *A Match to Fire the Thames*, Hodder & Stoughton (1961)
- ❖ British Weekly Commissioners, *Toilers in London*, Hodder & Stoughton (2017)
- ❖ Daily Mirror, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tuc-150th-anniversary-brave-malnourished-13204096>, (2018)
- ❖ William J Fishman, *East End 1888*, Duckworth (1988)
- ❖ GMB, <https://www.gmb.org.uk/long-read/matchgirls-strike-inspiring-girls-and-women-today> (2021)
- ❖ Hackney Archives
- ❖ John Emsley, *The Shocking History of Phosphorus: A Biography of the Devil's Element*, Macmillan (2000)
- ❖ Louise Raw, *Striking a Light*, Continuum International (2011)
- ❖ Patrick Beaver, *Match Makers: The Story of Bryant and May*, Henry Melland (1985)
- ❖ Reg Beer, *The Match Girls Strike, 1888 The Struggle Against Sweated Labour in London's East End*, The Labour Museum (1983)
- ❖ Stephen Inwood, *City of Cities: The Birth of Modern London*, Pan Macmillan (2011)
- ❖ The Matchgirls Memorial, *Feathers and Pennies: Poems and Stories for the Matchgirls*, Thamesis (2021)
- ❖ The Matchgirls Memorial Website, www.matchgirls1888.org
- ❖ The Matchgirls Memorial video resources, <https://www.matchgirls1888.org/videos>, (4 videos)
- ❖ Tom Ridge, *Central Stepney History Walk*, Central Stepney Regeneration Board (1998)
- ❖ Tower Hamlets Archives
- ❖ TUC History Online: <http://www.unionhistory.info/>
- ❖ UNISON, <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2021/03/remembering-matchgirls-struck-better-pay-conditions/> (2021)



EXISTING MEMORIALS



Despite the huge impact of the Matchgirls Strike, aside from the below, there is little to commemorate their contribution to labour history in Tower Hamlets:

- ❖ The old factory still stands but it is now a gated residential community, Bow Quarter, not open to the general public
- ❖ There is an English Heritage Blue Plaque for the Matchgirls at Bow Quarter
- ❖ Two social housing projects have been named after Matchgirls: Sarah Chapman House and Mary Driscoll House
- ❖ There is an Information Panel at Grove Hall Park

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