

Agenda Item	A8
Application Number	25/01141/LB
Proposal	Installation of Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosure, removal of redundant plant, construction of new enclosure to house packaged plant and new air handling unit, installation of a new heat pump gantry enclosure, installation of new radiators, emitters, replacement of the existing pipework distributions, upgrades to the Building Energy Management Systems and associated development
Application site	Ashton Memorial And Butterfly House Williamson Park Quernmore Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 1UX
Applicant	Lancaster City Council (Property)
Agent	Cleo Jefferies
Case Officer	Mr Anthony Foster
Departure	No
Summary of Recommendation	Approve with conditions

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, the application site is owned by Lancaster City Council, and as such the application must be determined by the Planning Committee.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

- 1.1 Williamson Park is a Grade II listed park and garden (List Entry Number: 1000942) located to the east of Lancaster city centre on steeply sloping landscape, overlooking Lancaster and Morecambe Bay. It is a formal park established in the late 19th century, which originated from a sandstone quarry. Today, the Park is one of the top attractions in Lancaster and stretches across 54 acres of parkland with woodland walks, play areas and views to the Fylde Coast, Morecambe Bay and the Lake District fells and mountains.
- 1.2 The Ashton Memorial is a Grade I listed structure (List Entry Number: 1288429), built between 1906 and 1909 in memory of Lord Ashton's late wife. It was designed to showcase Lord Ashton's wealth and prominence at the time. Today, the Memorial is a popular visitor attraction and event venue, hosting community events, concerts, educational programmes, weddings, and private functions, while offering extensive views of the surrounding area.
- 1.3 The Butterfly House (former Palm House), which is adjacent to the Memorial, is a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number: 1195061) built in the early 20th century as part of further improvement

works in the park funded by Lord Ashton. Over the years, it has served as an educational facility, helping to engage visitors with the natural world. The building currently serves as an indoor exhibit featuring a variety of butterfly species, Koi carp, tortoises etc in a tropical environment and is a popular attraction for family visits, school trips, and events.

1.4 The site is located within the Williamson Park Conservation Area. The site is designated (by the Local Plan) under the Williamson Park Local Landscape Designation and an area of designated Open Space, Recreation and Leisure.

1.5 The site is located within the defined Urban Area boundary.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The application is for the construction of a compound housing seven air source heat pumps (ASHPs). The installation would be sited in an area with existing heavy planting and adjacent hedgerow on land which is slightly lower than an existing nearby footpath. A trench linking pipework would be dug to a new Air Handling Unit (AHU) enclosure above an existing stone wall and faced in fretted Corten steel constructed on the east side of the Butterfly House. This would replace existing poor quality annexes structures used for staff and plant. The installation would link to the Ashton Memorial using existing pipework, where proposed new radiators are replacing existing. The slab floor of the Butterfly House would be lifted and re-laid following repair of replacement of ducting for the hot-air blowers which heat the building.

2.2 The proposed works are as follows:

- Removal of an existing small lean to extension and redundant plant on the rear of the Butterfly House.
- A new enclosure to the rear of the Butterfly House to host a packaged plant system and new air handling unit.
- A new heat pump gantry enclosure positioned behind the existing hedge opposite the Butterfly House.
- Replacement of the below ground pipework connecting the two buildings.

3.0 Site History

3.1 A number of relevant applications relating to this site have previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. These include:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
25/01440/FUL	Listed building application for the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosure, removal of redundant plant, construction of new enclosure to house packaged plant and new air handling unit, installation of a new heat pump gantry enclosure, installation of new radiators, emitters, replacement of the existing pipework distributions, upgrades to the Building Energy Management Systems.	Pending consideration
25/01181/LB	Listed building application for a replacement platform lift and replacement of lift railing with glazed balustrade.	Pending consideration
24/01046/PRENG2	Pre application advice on decarbonisation works to include removal of boilers, installation of air source heat pumps.	Advice Given

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
Conservation Team	No objection - Conclude that there would be minor harm to the setting of the listed buildings and to the Registered Park and Garden caused by the new enclosure. This harm would be mitigated by the location within existing planting and behind a mature hedge. The new AHU enclosure is more impactful and would cause minor harm to the Grade II Butterfly House, but this is lessened as it is sensitively designed and replaces poor quality existing buildings. The new radiators are considered to be appropriate and would cause no harm to the Grade I Ashton Memorial. This harm is likely to be justified by the public benefits of providing a more sustainable, low energy heating system for these listed buildings, which are for the use and enjoyment of the wider community.
Environmental Health	No response at the time of compiling this report.
Property Services	No response at the time of compiling this report.
Climate Change Team	No response at the time of compiling this report.
The Gardens Trust	Objection - We have concerns about the siting and buildability of the Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) gantry and enclosure in the proposed position near the summit and in the setting of the Ashton Memorial and Butterfly House. However, the Garden Trust support the Council's overall objective in securing more sustainable energy solutions.
Historic England	No objection
County Archaeology	No objection - Recommend a planning condition requiring all ground disturbance works be accompanied by an appropriate scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording, with a contingency plan in place in case of the unexpected discovery of significant remains.
Tree Protection Officer	No objection - if the trees are to be felled there would be a duty to replant. If works are to take place within the root protection areas, this must be carried out in line with the latest NJUG guidelines.

4.2 The following responses have been received from members of the public:

- No responses received

5.0 Analysis

5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Design and heritage

5.2 **Design and heritage** National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 2 (Achieving sustainable development), Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment); Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD Policy SP7 (Maintaining Lancaster District's Unique Heritage), Development Management DPD Policies DM29 (Key Design Principles), DM30a (Sustainable Design and Construction), DM37 (Development affecting Listed Buildings), DM38 (Development affecting Conservation Areas), DM39 (The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets) DM53 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation), DMCC1 (Retrofit of buildings of traditional construction for energy efficiency) and DMCC2 (Micro-renewables in the setting of heritage assets)

5.2.1 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Listed Building, a Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by the heritage policies of the Local Plan and those set out in the Framework.

5.2.2 Policy DM37 states that the Council will support proposals that seek to reduce the carbon footprint of a Listed Building provided that it does not harm elements that contribute towards the significance of the Listed building. Proposals involving the installation of renewable energy equipment on a Listed Building will be permitted where it conserves those elements which contribute to its significance and that all of the following criteria have been addressed as part of the design and access statement / heritage statement:

- V. The energy efficiency of the Listed Building itself has first been appraised and suitable measures, which will not affect its significance, have already been undertaken;
- VI. Locations other than on a Listed building have been considered and dismissed as being impracticable;
- VII. There is no irreversible damage to the historic fabric;
- VIII. The locations of the equipment on the Listed building would not detract from elements that contribute towards its significance, either when viewed in close proximity or from a distance; and
- IX. The impact is minimised through design, choice of material and colours.

5.2.3 Taking each of the criterion in turn:

V. Both Ashton Memorial and Butterfly House have been appraised as part of the Building Energy Decarbonisation Plan, and a series of measures are recommended for the buildings including variable speed pumps, increasing the size of radiators to accommodate lower flow temperatures and replacing the boiler with either air source heat pumps. Overall, the Building Energy Decarbonisation Plan provides a comprehensive package of measures to reduce energy use at Williamson Park which is in line with the guidance from Historic England.

VI. As the proposed decarbonisation relates directly to Listed Buildings the location of the measures proposed has been carefully considered. The ASHPs will be located away from both the Butterfly House and the Ashton Memorial and screened by hedging in line with pre-application discussions. While the new AHU plant enclosures would be larger than existing structures, the scale is still lower than the listed building's masonry east wall and the fretted Corten panels would provide a simple yet welcome decorative element.

There would be minor harm to the setting of the listed buildings and to the Registered Park and Garden caused by the new enclosure. This harm would be mitigated by the location within existing planting and behind a mature hedge

VII. The external plant room has been designed to use existing openings, where possible. The submission states that the ASHPs could be removed when no longer required. However, whilst they may be time limited by the longevity of their technology, no indication as to the likely lifespan of the units or possible timescale for their removal is given. In practical terms, it is likely that the ASHPs would be in place for a number of years.

A condition is recommended which requires the removal of the ASHPs when they cease to be operational. This helps limit any potential long term harm to the existing historic fabric of the identified heritage assets.

VIII. The siting of the proposed equipment has been carefully considered to ensure that the potential impact upon the more significant elements of the heritage asset are not compromised. For example locating the ASHPs away from the listed structures and the provision of suitable screening to elements which are located directly adjacent to the listed structures.

IX. The application proposes to remove the existing unsympathetic lean-to structures to the Butterfly House and its replacement with a new AHU enclosure all ductwork connecting into the existing openings on the back-of-house elevation of the Butterfly House. The outer skin of the screening enclosure outer is proposed to be made of Corten metal panels with a fretted pattern. The pattern is inspired by the Park's benefactor Lord Ashton's association with linoleum and linoleum patterns and draws inspiration from the Memorial and Butterfly House plan layout.

It is also proposed for the stone wall section to match the height of the adjacent wall, to provide visual consistency. The existing stone coping is to be removed and replaced at the new level. The enclosure height is designed to conceal the existing high level building aperture utilised for Extract. Although the height of the proposed enclosure is greater than the existing lean-to to be replaced, making use of the existing aperture and therefore negating the need for additional penetrations into the historic fabric will overall have a lesser negative impact on the heritage asset.

- 5.2.4 Policy DM38 states that any development proposals and / or alterations to buildings, features and open spaces in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. Strengthening the criteria detailed above in policy DM37.
- 5.2.5 Overall, it is considered that there would be minor harm to the setting of the listed buildings and to the Registered Park and Garden caused by the new enclosure. This harm would be mitigated by the location within existing planting and behind a mature hedge. The new AHU enclosure is more impactful and would cause minor harm to the Grade II Butterfly House, but this is lessened as it is sensitively designed and replaces poor quality existing buildings. The new radiators are considered to be appropriate and would cause no harm to the Grade I Ashton Memorial. This harm is likely to be justified by the public benefits of providing a more sustainable, low energy heating system for these listed buildings, which are for the use and enjoyment of the wider community.
- 5.2.6 Given the above the scheme is considered to be in accordance with the wider aspirations of Policies SP7, DM37, and DM38.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 The proposed development will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the character and significance of Ashton Memorial & The Butterfly House, Williamson Park. However, it is considered subject to conditions as outlined below that this identified harm is outweighed by the public benefits that the scheme entails. On this basis, members are recommended to approved listed building consent for the works proposed by this application.

Recommendation

That Listed Building Consent **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Condition no.	Description	Type
1	Time limit	Control
2	Approved plans	Control
3	Samples of Materials to be submitted	Prior to Installation
4	Details of any new radiator pipe runs within the Ashton Memorial	Prior to Installation

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Lancaster City Council has made the decision in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The decision has been taken having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

Background Papers

None