

Agenda Item	A10
Application Number	25/01005/LB
Proposal	Listed building application for air source heat pumps with plant enclosure, canopy, internal works including replacement radiators and secondary window glazing.
Application site	The Storey Meeting House Lane Lancaster Lancashire
Applicant	Lancaster City Council (Property)
Agent	Mrs Emma Wilsdon
Case Officer	Mrs Petra Williams
Departure	No
Summary of Recommendation	Refusal

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. However, the site is under the ownership of Lancaster City Council, and therefore, the application is referred to the Planning Regulatory Committee for determination.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

1.1 The site which forms the subject of this planning application is The Storey (Storey Institute) and associated Storey Gardens located to the west of the main building. The Storey was developed as school of art, technical school, library and art gallery in the 1887-91 with funding from Sir Thomas Storey. Designed by Sharpe, Paley and Austin, and later extended. The building which is of significant architectural and historic merit is Grade II listed and occupies a prominent position at the junction of Castle Hill and Meeting House Lane. The building dominates the approach to the Castle Hill Precinct and contributes significantly to the city's townscape. The building is constructed in sandstone ashlar with a slate roof and is in Jacobean Revival style. It has façades on two fronts, with a turret on the corner, with a lead dome surmounted by a spirelet. The Storey contains many fine rooms and within the first-floor corridor there is a curved bay window which is one of the finest architectural features of the building. The southern boundary wall and steps up from Meeting House Lane are also Grade II listed in addition to the wall which runs perpendicular with the boundary wall and dissects the Storey Gardens into two parts. The site is also located within the Lancaster Conservation Area.

1.2 The Storey Gardens were historically associated with Nos. 18-22 Castle Park which are Grade II* listed buildings. The historic gardens, which can be seen on the 1849 OS maps, extended the full width of these buildings and used to step down from north to south towards Meeting House Lane, with short staircases between each level, culminating in the staircase which drops down to Meeting House Lane where there is a gated access. All the other properties to the north of the gardens on

Castle Park are Grade II listed, forming part of the Castle precinct and are also of high architectural significance. To the west of the site is the Friends Meeting House which dates from 1708 and is a Grade II* listed building. Properties to the south of the site along Meeting House Lane are Non-Designated Heritage Assets and are predominantly commercial units at ground floor.

1.3 The Storey is a centre for creative industries and also contains a café. The building is used by a number of businesses and hosts a variety of events including business conferences, seminars and networking, film, music and theatrical recitals, literacy performances, workshops, art exhibitions and weddings.

1.4 The gardens are designated as Open Space within the local plan. There are a number of trees sited close to the southern boundary wall of the garden and these trees are afforded protection due to their siting within a Conservation Area.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 This application is for Listed Building Consent for the installation of 13 Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) to service The Storey. The proposed ASHPs would be installed on the southern boundary of the Storey Gardens, approximately 8 metres from the listed wall fronting Meeting House Lane and just above the second tier of listed steps. The ASHPs would be 1.7m high and housed within two 2.1m high hit-and-miss timber compounds which, together, would span the full width of garden, with a gap for the stairs in between. The footprint of the ASHPs and enclosures would be 3.2 metres by 13.1 metres (western bank) and 15.3 metres (eastern bank).

2.2 A canopy for housing cabling and pipework connecting to the ASHPs is proposed along the west elevation of The Storey. The structure is to be clad with a lead mono-pitched roof and painted timber cladding, to replicate the existing roof materiality found elsewhere on the site. The rainwater drainage will connect into the existing network. Secondary window glazing, new radiators and associated pipework is proposed within The Storey building.

2.3 The submission sets out that the council secured £1.89M from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) following a successful bid in 2024. The submission states that this funding will contribute towards the costs of decarbonising the heating systems at The Storey and two other sites (City Lab and Williamson Park), with completion required by March 2026. The gas boilers at The Storey have reached end of life.

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
25/01004/FUL	Installation of air source heat pumps with plant enclosure and construction of canopy	Pending consideration
24/01076/PRENG2	Pre application advice on decarbonisation works to include removal of boilers, installation of air source heat pumps, insulation and secondary glazing	Advice issued
24/00831/FUL	Creation of path, hardstanding and shelter and installation of gate and freestanding sign	Permitted
17/01151/FUL	Replacement of a timber door with a powder coated automated aluminium door to the rear elevation	Permitted
17/01207/LB	Listed Building application for the replacement of a timber door with a powder coated automated aluminium door to the rear elevation	Permitted
15/01168/FUL	Installation of 3 replacement gates	Permitted

15/01169/LB	Listed building application for the fitting of 3 replacement gates	Permitted
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4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
Conservation	Objection The installation of ASHPs would result in a high level of harm to the significance of the Storey Gardens and their association with the grade II* listed 18-22 Castle Park, to the grade II listed walls, steps and gates within the gardens and to the grade II listed Storey Institute through its intrusive effect on the setting and understanding of these heritage assets. It would cause harm to the significance, character and appearance of the Lancaster Conservation Area and the significance of nearby NDHAs through its impact on setting. We fully support the need to de-carbonise buildings throughout the city and this needs to be carried out without causing unjustified harm to heritage assets, as required by the 1990 Act and national and local policies. Although there is no objection to the majority of proposed secondary glazing, the proposed secondary glazing to the stained glass, curved bay corridor window would cause a high level of harm.
Historic England	Concerns regarding the location chosen for the proposed ASHPs in the gardens and their impacts on the setting of the nearby listed assets. They would form an inappropriate addition to the gardens that is at odds with the informal nature of the space, and a distraction from the highly graded listed assets nearby. At the time of compiling this report, HE has raised no concerns regarding the impacts of the internal works to The Storey.
Property Services	No comments received
County Archaeology	Comments - The probability of the works encountering significant early remains is quite low and as such a scheme of formal archaeological monitoring is not justified.

4.2 No comments have been received from members of the public.

5.0 Analysis

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

- Design and impact on designated heritage assets

5.2 **Design and impact on designated heritage assets** National Planning Policy Framework section 2 (Achieving sustainable development), Section 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), DM42 (Archaeology), DMCCCH1 (Retrofit of buildings of traditional construction for energy efficiency), DMCCCH2 (Micro-renewables in the setting of heritage assets) and DM53 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation).

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. Section 16 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment; with Paragraph 212 affording 'great weight' to a designated heritage asset's conservation; Paragraph 213 requiring clear and convincing justification for any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting); and Paragraph 215 requiring decision makers to weigh 'less than substantial' harm against the public benefits of the proposal.

- 5.2.2 At a local level policy SP7 seek to protect and enhance Lancaster's Listed Buildings and historic environment. Policy DM37 sets out that proposals affecting Listed Buildings should conserve and, where appropriate, enhance those elements which contribute to its significance. Policy DM37 also advises 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. Policy DM39 expects new development to preserve or enhance the setting of heritage assets.
- 5.2.3 Policy DMCCH1 refers specifically to the retrofit of buildings of traditional construction for energy efficiency and advises that Responsible Retrofit is a holistic risk- based approach to retrofit endorsed by the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA). In a Responsible Retrofit scheme, all interacting factors across the whole building are considered, and negative impacts, risks and benefits are balanced. In practice, this means considering how fabric measures such as insulation, draught proofing, glazing and rainwater protection; services such as ventilation, heating and renewable energy; and occupant behaviours interact with one another, and what effect they have both individually and cumulatively on the character and appearance of the building. For example, where one change to the building might have benefits in terms of energy usage, this might also be outweighed by risks to significance, building fabric, or environment.
- 5.2.4 Policy DMCCH2 gives consideration to micro-renewables in the setting of heritage assets and offers support where such proposals demonstrate they are consistent with the energy hierarchy by firstly reducing energy demand in the building, secondly increasing energy efficiency, and finally looking to generate renewable energy. Such proposals should avoid harm to the significance of the asset via its setting, through sensitive design including appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 5.2.5 The submitted Heritage Statement states that the gardens "have been assessed to not hold any specific heritage values in itself". However, the local planning authority strongly refutes this view and considers the site to be of considerable architectural interest and evidential value. As set out in paragraph 1.2 of this report, the Storey Gardens, as they are now known, were historically the extensive rear gardens belonging to numbers 18-22 Castle Park; a row of three buildings dating to the early-mid 18th century. The gardens extended from the rear of 18-22 Castle Park southwards to Meeting House Lane, stepping down in terraces with sets of steps. The southern half of the gardens were partitioned off in the 1930s and sold to the council and now form part of the publicly accessible Storey Gardens. Although the gardens are now associated with the Grade II listed The Storey to the east, they remain part of the setting of the Grade II* 18-22 Castle Park. The gardens have high heritage significance in themselves, and they contribute to the significance and understanding of the Grade II* listed buildings. The spaces and features around these Grade II* listed buildings is consistently of high quality; demonstrated by the Grade II listed pebble pavement forecourt to the north, Grade II listed garden boundary walls, and Grade II listed 18th century steps and gate piers at the southern end of the gardens.
- 5.2.6 Contrary to the assertion made within the submitted Heritage Statement the ASHPs and plant enclosure would be clearly visible from Meeting House Lane and viewed in the context of the listed wall and stepped entrance. The existing hedge is currently visible, particularly from Dallas Road, and the proposed hit and miss fenced compounds are proposed to be at least 600mm higher. The ASHPs and compounds would also be visible from all locations within the garden, particularly the northern side where land levels are higher. The visible connection to Meeting House Lane, the gateway and stepped entrance would be harmed, with the attractive, elegant entrance being framed by the dominant compounds. The industrial nature of the installation would be highly intrusive and incongruous in the setting of the listed building, wall and steps. Although the steps from Meeting House Lane have, unfortunately, been closed for some years (presumably because of their steepness) they still contribute greatly to the historic understanding of the former gardens and the character of the former entrance. The Heritage Statement fails to consider this impact. The proposed mitigation of screening, consisting of hedgerows, would take many years to grow to the necessary height and require considerable maintenance. Furthermore, a high formal hedge would be an intrusive landscape feature within this informal landscape garden setting.
- 5.2.7 In heritage terms the impact of the proposed ASHP installation would cause a high level of less than substantial harm to the significance of setting of the Grade II listed walls, steps and gates within the

gardens and to the Grade II listed Storey building through its intrusive effect on the setting and understanding of these heritage assets.

- 5.2.8 The submission sets out that following an extensive review of the possible locations and considering the heritage significance of the space, the Storey Gardens represents the only viable location for the ASHPs to be located. Although the submission includes alternative options considered for the siting of the ASHPs within the gardens, the application is not supported by appropriate justification assessing the various options of different types of micro-renewables that may have been considered along with an examination of the constraints and the relative impacts of various different proposals. Significant concerns regarding the siting of the ASHPs within the Storey Gardens were raised by the case officer during the pre-application site meeting and consequently the case officer suggested the option of ground source heat pumps. However, there is no evidence that this option has been explored. The current submission provides no changes which would address the significant concerns raised by the local planning authority at the pre-application stage.
- 5.2.9 The proposal includes the installation of a canopy to the western elevation of the building to provide a housing for cabling and pipework connecting to the ASHPs. The structure would be finished with a lead mono-pitched roof and painted timber cladding, to reflect the existing materials which are evident to the rear of the building. Although this element could in itself be acceptable, it is necessary to facilitate the ASHP installation, which as outlined above, would cause a high level of heritage harm. The replacement of radiators and new pipework is considered to have a low level of less than substantial harm. Pipework would enter the building through a hole created in the existing retaining wall into the existing plant room with a canopy. There is a requirement for some penetrations to be made through the existing fabric to allow for flow and return pipework to reach the Plantroom at high level.
- 5.2.10 The majority of windows within the building are traditional timber sashes, many of which are currently in poor condition and require significant external maintenance, particularly repairs to joinery and re-painting. The secondary glazing is proposed to improve energy efficiency and prevent heat loss through the existing single glazed windows. The submission sets out that number of ground floor windows already have secondary glazing installed but as the performance of these units is unknown, it is proposed that they are removed and replaced with new secondary glazing as part of the proposed scheme. It is proposed that new aluminium framed secondary glazing is installed to each opening. The frames are to be installed onto a timber sub frame as per the manufacturer's details. It is considered that the majority of the proposed secondary glazing is sensitively detailed and will have minimal impact on the character of the building. However, of significant concern is the proposed installation of secondary glazing to one of the first floor windows (WF – 61 to WF – 66) which would result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the listed building as it would diminish its aesthetic and illustrative historical value. This window is a highly decorative curved bay and is one of the finest architectural features of the listed building, showing allegories of the Arts in stained glass carried out by Jewitt of Shrigley and Hunt. Secondary glazing to this window would diminish the appreciation of this highly significant feature by forming faceted frames, which would partly conceal the stained glass windows and would diminish the appearance of the beautiful, curved bay. This element of the proposal is unacceptable and would conflict with policy.
- 5.2.11 The local planning authority (LPA) is fully supportive of the need to de-carbonise historic buildings which is evident by the successful planning applications in respect of City Lab and Palatine Hall. However, such schemes must be undertaken without causing unjustified harm to heritage assets, as required by the 1990 Act and national and local policies. It must be demonstrated that the harm that would be caused is necessary and cannot be avoided in order to deliver other public benefits. Historic England Advice Note 18 "Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency" advocates a whole building approach when considering adapting historic buildings. This explores a building's context to find a range of effective solutions that save energy and carbon, sustain heritage significance, and provide a safe and comfortable indoor environment. The LPA would like to work with the applicants to explore other solutions in this case, such as smaller installations elsewhere within The Storey complex, or less intrusive schemes (e.g. ground source heat pumps), or a mix of different equipment in order to find a less harmful solution. Such a solution which demonstrated good practice in relation to decarbonisation within the historic environment, could create an exemplar precedent for other similar proposals elsewhere in the District. The submission states that the ASHPs could be removed when no longer required as could the secondary glazing. 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 and secondary glazing would be in place for a number of years. As such, the harm that would be caused, even over a temporary period, would still be significant.

- 5.2.12 Overall, it is considered that the proposed ASHPs and installation of secondary glazing to the curved bay corridor window (WF – 61 to WF – 66) would cause a high level of less than substantial harm to the listed building and associated structures (walls and steps). This harm has not been sufficiently justified and is not outweighed by the wider public benefits arising from the decarbonisation project.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 Whilst the Local Planning Authority is supportive of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation in respect of listed buildings, this is subject to compliance with all relevant heritage policies. In this case the site relates to a Grade II listed building, walls and steps. As outlined within this report, the proposal would result in a high level of unjustified less than substantial harm within this historic setting and this harm would not be outweighed by public benefits. As such the proposal conflicts with policies SP7, DM29, DM37, DM39, DMCCH1 and DMCCH2 of the DM DPD and section 16 of the NPPF in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Recommendation

That Listed Building Consent **BE REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. By reason of the inappropriate scale, design, appearance and siting, the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosures would appear as an industrial and utilitarian form of development which would cause a high level of less than substantial harm to the significance and special interest of the Grade II Listed Building and Grade II Listed walls. Furthermore, the proposed secondary glazing to the first floor stained glass window would also cause a high level of less than substantial harm. The identified harm is not outweighed by public benefits nor is it clearly and convincingly justified. Consequently, the proposal would fail to conserve and enhance the historic environment and is contrary to the aims and requirements of Policy SP7 of the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document, Policies DM29, DM37, DM39, DMCCH1 and DMCCH2 of the Development Management Development Plan Document and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Background Papers

None