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| Agenda Item | A6 |
| Application Number | 25/01181/LB |
| Proposal | Listed building application for a replacement platform lift and replacement of lift railing with glazed balustrade |
| Application site | Ashton Memorial Williamson Park Quernmore Road Lancaster |
| Applicant | Stuart McMinn |
| Agent | HPA Architects |
| Case Officer | Mr Patrick Hopwood |
| Departure | No |
| Summary of Recommendation | Approve, subject to conditions. |

(i) Procedural Matters

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

1.0 Application Site and Setting

- 1.1 The Ashton Memorial is a Grade I listed structure (List Entry Number: 1288429) of square plan, 150 feet tall, and built in an elevated position in an Edwardian Baroque style. It was built between 1906 and 1909 in memory of Lord Ashton's late wife and it was designed to showcase Lord Ashton's wealth and prominence at the time. The memorial features Portland stone over brick, with balustrades of Cornish granite, steps of Hopton Wood limestone, and dome roof clad with copper. A long flight of steps leads down the slope to the west and divides near the bottom to sweep around a fountain set in front of a screen wall with two Tuscan columns. Internally, the lower chamber has a floor of white marble inlaid with black. 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. Grade I listing is reserved for buildings of exceptional interest, making up only 2.5% of all listed buildings.
- 1.2 The site is within Williamson Park, 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.

- 1.3 The site is also 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.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 This application seeks Listed Building consent for a replacement platform lift and replacement of lift railing with glazed balustrade. The existing platform lift is a “full height” structure, with glazed door and in a white colour. The existing lift is beyond its working life and is now prone to breaking down with risks of users getting stuck.
- 2.2 The proposed replacement platform lift will be an “open top” design of a reduced height, with the enclosure measuring 1.3m above floor level. The proposal, as amended, seeks to use a “grey black” finish. The adjoining balustrade railings will also be replaced with glazing.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 The Memorial and Williamson Park have an extensive planning history. The most relevant and recent applications include:

| Application Number | Proposal | Decision |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 97/01176/LB | Listed Building Application for alterations for provision of a new access for the disabled and provision of a platform lift at ground floor level at Ashton Memorial | Approved |
| 25/01140/FUL | 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 and upgrades to the Building Energy Management Systems and associated development. | Resolved to be Approved at Planning Regulatory Committee 15.12.2025 |
| 25/01141/LB | 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 | Resolved to be Approved at Planning Regulatory Committee 15.12.2025 |

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

| Consultee | Response |
|-------------------|---|
| Historic England | No comment. |
| Conservation Team | No objection. Minor amendments to design recommended. |

- 4.2 At the time of writing this report, no responses have been received from members of the public.

5.0 Analysis

- 5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:
- Heritage
- 5.2 Heritage (NPPF Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)); Policies SP7 (Maintaining Lancaster District's Unique Heritage) and DM37 (Development Affecting Listed Buildings)

- 5.2.1 In accordance with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when considering any application that affects a Listed Building, Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of persevering or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by the heritage policies of the Local Plan.
- 5.2.2 The existing lift is, though necessary, a harmful intrusive element in the lower interior space of the Listed Building, which disrupts its design symmetry, impedes visibility of the tall arched window behind it, and dilutes the designed aesthetic value of the space via its utilitarian appearance. Its replacement with an open top half-height lift would see a minor reduction in the level of harm which has already been caused by this intervention by reinstating some visibility of the niche and window.
- 5.2.3 Notwithstanding, the original scheme included some details which could be amended in order to mitigate the harm further to this Grade I Listed Building. The originally proposed Anthracite Grey finish was considered by the Conservation Team to be too blue toned to properly complement the surrounding marble flooring.
- 5.2.4 Following negotiations between the Conservation Team and the Applicant, a darker shade “Black Grey” has been selected, which is considered to avoid the blueness of Anthracite, and better complements the colours of the existing marble floor. The proposed plans have been amended accordingly.
- 5.2.5 Overall, the proposed works, as amended, would result in a minor enhancement of the significance of the Listed Building.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 Disability is a protected characteristic under s4 of the Equality Act 2010 and Officers have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained under s149 of the Act, which sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Committee Members must also have due regard to the PSED in reaching a decision. Improving the accessibility of the Ashton Memorial through provision of a safer, modern platform lift would be consistent with the aims of the PSED and is given positive weight as a public benefit.
- 6.2 The proposed works, as amended, would result in a minor enhancement of the significance of the Listed Building, and any harm is outweighed by the public benefits, and is also clearly and convincingly justified. As a result, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact on the Listed Building, complying with the relevant local and national policies and as such is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

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

| Condition no. | Description | Type |
|---------------|--|---------|
| 1 | Standard Listed Building Consent Timescale | Control |
| 2 | Works in Accordance with Amended Plans and Details | Control |

Background Papers

None