

Officer's Report

Application Number	HGY/2022/3920
Type	Full planning permission
Location	Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green, London, N22 7AY
Proposal	Installation of variable message signs, parking tariff information signs, automatic number plate recognition cameras, bollards and pay terminals at Alexandra Park & Palace, as part of the introduction of a new parking management system.
Case Officer	James Mead
Valid Date	31/10/2022
Applicant Agent	Ms Louise Johnson

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, subject to conditions.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

2.1 This is an application for the installation of signage, cameras, bollards and pay terminals in different parts of Alexandra Park. These proposals would facilitate the introduction of a parking management system within the park.

Site and Surroundings

2.2 The application site encompasses all of the land at Alexandra Park, which includes extensive parkland, recreational facilities, car parks and several buildings. Alexandra Park is open to the public and is used for recreational, cultural and entertainment purposes. The park itself is a grade II listed Historic Park & Garden, which was originally opened in 1863. Alexandra Palace sits on the northern side of the park and is a grade II listed building of substantial cultural and historic significance. The palace is currently used as an entertainment venue that hosts: concerts, exhibitions, sporting events, banquets and conferences. In addition, the palace contains an ice rink and a public house/bistro. The full extent of the park, including the palace, is designated as the Alexandra Park & Palace Conservation Area (CA). The park is identified as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (grade I). Furthermore, the land is also designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).

2.3 Alexandra Park & Palace form site allocation SA52, which is identified in the Site Allocations DPD. This site allocation aims to conserve the original facades of the palace, while enabling a range of uses. In addition, the site allocation notes that the Council is seeking to ensure viable ongoing uses for Alexandra Palace, whilst also supporting continued enhancements to the palace and the surrounding parkland.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

2.4 The extensive planning history within the park and palace has been taken into account by officers.

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

3.1 The responses below were received following consultation on the application:

1) *LBH Conservation Officer*: Insufficient information has been provided regarding the contribution the site makes to the CA and the setting of the identified heritage assets. No existing plan has been provided showing what, if any, signage exists on site. As such, it is not possible to fully assess the impact of the proposals on designated heritage assets or assess any potential cumulative impacts. Furthermore, no information regarding the posts and bollards have been provided. Should signs be fixed to existing infrastructure, details of this should be provided. Additionally, details of the height of the signs are required to assess the impact on the views to and from the designated heritage assets. Notwithstanding the above, and taking into account the requirement for managed car parking, the quantity of signs appears excessive. This would result in visual clutter that would detract from the listed building and would have an adverse visual impact on the designated heritage assets. As such, the proposals are considered to constitute a scheme that would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building. The proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.

2) *London Historic Parks & Gardens Trust*: No comments on these proposals.

3) *Alexandra Park & Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee*: No objections. It is regretful that such notices and infrastructure are to be installed, which will inevitably have a negative visual impact on the park and the setting of the palace. However, the need for these is recognised as a consequence of the decision to charge for car parking and it is further recognised that the proposal commendably attempts to strike a balance between prominence and over-proliferation.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 The application has been publicised by way of 7 site notices displayed in the vicinity of the site. The number of representations received from neighbours and residents, etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 1

Objecting: 0

Supporting: 1

5. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of Development;
2. Design, Appearance & Heritage;
3. Neighbour Amenity;
4. Transport;
5. Ecology; and
6. Other Considerations & Planning Balance.

Principle of Development

Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)

5.2 London Plan Policy G3 outlines that MOL is afforded the same status and level of protection as Green Belt. MOL should be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with the national planning policy tests that apply to the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 149 explains that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, paragraphs 149 & 150 of the NPPF identify some exceptions to this, including at paragraph 150(c) 'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'.

5.3 This scheme proposes the addition of signage, cameras, bollards and pay terminals onto land designated as MOL. These proposed infrastructure items form part of a new parking management system within the park. The new cameras would assist in enforcing the parking system and the terminals would be the structures used for payment of parking fees. Different types of signage would be installed, with several signs informing visitors of the parking fees/restrictions/allocations and other signage providing directional advice. The bollards would assist with the movement of vehicles within car parks, whilst preventing parking in inappropriate locations and restricting use of car parks at certain times. Given that the proposals would clearly be associated with car parking and the movement of vehicles around the park, it is considered that the new items would equate to 'local transport infrastructure'.

5.4 The full extent of the park is designated as MOL, and therefore there is no option to add the infrastructure in a location outside of MOL. As such, it is considered that there is a requirement for this local transport infrastructure to be installed on land designated as MOL. Overall, the new items would constitute local transport infrastructure and there is a requirement for this to be sited in a MOL location. Consequently, the proposals align with the exception at paragraph 150(c) of the NPPF.

5.5 While this is acknowledged, paragraph 150 of the NPPF is clear in that proposals for local transport infrastructure should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and should not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. Openness is generally understood to mean an absence of built form and the purposes of the Green Belt are listed at paragraph 138 of the NPPF.

5.6 The scheme involves the addition of pay terminals, cameras on posts, bollards and signage onto land currently unoccupied by structures. The addition of new items onto unoccupied land means that the development would, by definition, impact the openness of the MOL. Whilst this is noted, none of the proposed structures would be unduly bulky or of excessive height. Furthermore, the majority of the new items would be installed on existing hardstanding areas or close to hardstanding surfaces. The minimal scale, together with the siting, of the new items means that the impacts on openness of the MOL would be very minor. The proposals would also not conflict with any of the purposes of the Green Belt identified at paragraph 138 of the NPPF. While the only limited impact on the openness of the MOL is acknowledged, the scheme would nonetheless result in some minor intrusion into the openness of the MOL. Therefore, the proposals would represent inappropriate development in MOL, contrary to Section 13 of the NPPF, London Plan Policy G3 and Local Plan Policy SP13.

Site Allocation

5.7 As already noted, the land forms part of Site Allocation SA52. DM DPD Policy DM55 outlines that proposals must demonstrate that they will not compromise the delivery outcomes sought by site allocations.

5.8 The overarching aims of Site Allocation SA52 are to conserve the original facades of Alexandra Palace, while also seeking to ensure ongoing viable uses for the building. The site allocation also gives support to enhancing the surrounding parkland. The proposals would not impact the fabric of Alexandra Palace. Instead, the parking management scheme itself would generate funds that

would be utilised for the charitable purposes of the Alexandra Palace & Park Charitable Trust, which include maintenance of both the palace and the park. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed infrastructure and the wider scheme would align with the overall objectives of Site Allocation SA52, as the proposals would support the preservation of the park and the palace going forward.

Design, Appearance & Heritage

5.9 London Plan Policy D3 notes the proposals should enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions. Local Plan Policy SP11 requires developments to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context, character and historic significance, so to contribute to Haringey's sense of place and identity. Proposals should achieve a high standard of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area, in line with DM DPD Policy DM1. In terms of advertisements, DM DPD Policy DM3 requires new adverts to be high quality and sensitive to the visual appearance of the surrounding street scene, especially in the case of listed buildings and conservation areas. This policy also notes that unsightly proliferation or clutter of signage in a vicinity should be avoided.

5.10 In regard to heritage assets (Historic Park & Garden, CA and listed building) London Plan Policy HC1, Local Plan Policy SP12 and DM DPD Policy DM9 require proposals to conserve and enhance the significance and settings of heritage assets. The Council should have regard to the preservation of original or historic form, function and character of an asset, in accordance with DM DPD Policy DM9.

5.11 There are three main areas where the new parking infrastructure would be installed. Firstly, there is a car park and a lay-by to the south-west of Alexandra Palace (Car Park 1). Some distance to the south of Alexandra Palace, close to the Alexandra Palace Garden Centre, there is a further car park (Car Park 2). Lastly, directly to the north-east of Alexandra Palace are the main car parking areas within the park (Car Park 3).

5.12 It is proposed to install new bollards, pay terminals, a camera and signage within Car Park 1 and its surroundings. The quantity of new infrastructure would be limited. Noting this, and given the minor scale of the new items, it is considered that the proposed infrastructure would not appear as overly bulky or intrusive additions to the surrounding area, the CA or the wider Historic Park & Garden. Car Park 1 and the lay-by are only a short distance to the south-west of Alexandra Palace, and therefore are within the setting of this heritage asset. While this is noted, the modest number of new items installed would ensure that the proposed structures would not appear as dominant features within the setting of the listed building. The proposals for Car Park 1 and the surrounding spaces would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the CA. The new infrastructure would not detract from the character or setting of either the listed building or the wider Historic Park & Garden. The historic significance and special interest of the identified heritage assets would be preserved. As such, the proposals for Car Park 1 accord with the relevant policies.

5.13 In Car Park 2 and in the immediate vicinity, it is proposed to add bollards, pay terminals, cameras, a variable message sign and parking signage. There would only be a limited number of bollards, pay terminals and cameras installed, with only one variable message sign erected. Given the modest quantity of these new items, it is considered that this infrastructure would not appear as intrusive additions to the CA or this part of the Historic Park & Garden. A number of signs would be erected in Car Park 2. However, these signs would be of minimal scale, and as such would not appear as unduly large additions to the setting. Furthermore, Car Park 2 is currently enclosed by dense vegetation and trees. This limits views into the car park from other areas within the Historic

Park & Garden and the CA. The lack of visibility into the car park means that there would not be a material visual impact on the surrounding area, the CA or the wider Historic Park & Garden, resulting from the new signage. The new infrastructure in Car Park 2 would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the CA. The setting and character of the Historic Park & Garden would not be adversely impacted. The proposals in Car Park 2 would be a considerable distance from Alexandra Palace, and therefore there would be a neutral impact on the setting of this listed building. The special interest and historical significance of the heritage assets would be preserved. Consequently, the proposals for Car Park 2 comply with the relevant policies.

5.14 New pay terminals, cameras and parking signage are proposed to be installed in Car Park 3, which is the main car park directly to the north-east of Alexandra Palace. A limited number of pay terminals and cameras would be added in this area, and therefore these items would not appear as overly dominant additions to the surrounding area, the CA, the setting of Alexandra Palace or the wider setting of the Historic Park & Garden. A considerable number of parking signs are proposed to be erected in Car Park 3. The Conservation Officer has provided comments on the application and they consider that the quantity of signage would visually clutter the setting of the listed building and designated heritage assets. There is currently a minimal amount of signage in this car park. Noting this, and given the high visibility of Car Park 3 within the Historic Park & Garden, as well as the proximity to the listed building, it is considered that these proposals would visually clutter the setting of the heritage assets. Whilst this is noted, the minimal size of the new signage means that the visual impact on the setting would be limited. Nonetheless, the cluttering impact would equate to less than substantial harm to the setting and special interest of the listed building, the Historic Park & Garden and the CA. Therefore, the proposals in Car Park 3 would be contrary to London Plan Policy HC1, Local Plan Policy SP12 and DM DPD Policies DM3 & DM9.

5.15 A new variable message sign is intended to be erected on the South Terrace, which is the road that runs up to Alexandra Palace from the north-east. There are similar signs along this stretch of the South Terrace. The proposed variable message sign would be of comparable size and design to these existing signs. As such, it is considered that the variable message sign would not appear as an incongruous or out of keeping addition to the surrounding area, the CA, the Historic Park & Garden or the setting of the listed building. Consequently, this variable message sign is acceptable and accords with the relevant policies.

5.16 The Conservation Officer has outlined that there is insufficient information regarding the existing contribution the site makes to the CA and the setting of other heritage assets. These comments are noted, however a Heritage Statement and a Design & Access Statement have been provided in support of this application. Officers consider that these documents are sufficient to inform these proposals, particularly as the scheme does not physically impact the fabric of Alexandra Palace. The Conservation Officer has also queried the height and siting of new signage. Further information has been provided by the applicant and officers are content with the height/siting specified. However, a condition is attached to this consent restricting the height of any new posts, so to limit the visual impact of the proposals.

Neighbour Amenities

5.17 London Plan Policy D6 outlines that the design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing, in specific it is stated that proposals should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight that is appropriate for the context, while also minimising overshadowing. Furthermore, DM DPD Policy DM1 states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. Specifically, proposals are required to provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and open aspects to adjacent buildings and land. Schemes should also avoid overlooking and loss of privacy that would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents. Proposals should address issues of light pollution, in line with DM DPD Policy DM1.

5.18 The proposals would not be in such proximity to nearby residential properties to cause undue: overbearing impacts, loss of light, overshadowing or restriction of outlook. Furthermore, the Heritage Statement notes that no illumination would be incorporated into new signage. Therefore, concerns regarding light pollution would not arise. The amenity and living conditions of nearby residential properties would be protected, in accordance with the relevant policies.

Transport

5.19 The cumulative impacts of development on public transport and the road network capacity, including walking and cycling, should be taken into account, in compliance with London Plan Policy T4. Proposals should reduce the dominance of vehicles on London's streets, in accordance with London Plan Policy T2. Local Plan Policy SP7 outlines that the Council will tackle climate change, improve local place shaping, enhance public realm, improve environmental quality and enhance transport quality by: minimising congestion, promoting public transport, promoting walking and cycling, promoting road safety and seeking to locate major trip generating development in locations with good access to public transport.

5.20 The development does not intend to increase the size of any buildings currently on site, nor does it seek to provide new recreational facilities within the park or enlarge car parks. As such, the proposals would not increase the number of trips to the site. Therefore, there would not be an adverse impact on the capacity of the local highway network or public transport. The scheme would facilitate the introduction of the parking management system and this would result in visitors being charged for utilising existing car parks. The incorporation of parking tariffs is likely to reduce the attractiveness of visitors travelling to Alexandra Park by the private vehicle. Instead, such visitors would be more likely to use public transport or walking/cycling to access the park. As such, the wider scheme supports more sustainable travel patterns, in accordance with the relevant policies.

Ecology

5.21 SINCs and LNRs should be protected and enhanced, in accordance with London Plan Policy G6, Local Plan Policy SP13 and DPD Policy DM19. The proposals would not be of such scale or nature to harm the SINC or LNR at Alexandra Park. Therefore, the development is considered acceptable from an ecological perspective.

Other Considerations & Planning Balance

Metropolitan Open Land – Very Special Circumstances

5.22 The principle of development section of this report concluded that the scheme would represent inappropriate development in MOL. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF notes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5.23 In this instance, the scheme would provide local transport infrastructure that is required to be installed in a MOL location, in line with paragraph 150(c) of the NPPF. However, the introduction of new structures onto unoccupied land would result in some loss of openness, and as such the proposals constitute inappropriate development on MOL. While this is noted, the harm to the openness of the MOL would be very minor, as the new structures would be of limited scale and would be sited close to hardstanding areas.

5.24 On the other hand, the scheme would give rise to a number of material considerations of positive weight. Firstly, the proposals would facilitate the introduction of a parking management

system, which would result in visitors paying a fee to use existing car parks. The Heritage Statement explains that the funds generated would go towards the charitable purposes of the Alexandra Palace & Park Charitable Trust. This includes maintaining, preserving and improving the grade II listed Alexandra Palace, as well as the grade II listed Historic Park & Garden. Therefore, the scheme would contribute to the preservation of the quality and significance of these heritage assets in the long-term. This is a material consideration of significant positive weight. In addition, the parking tariffs proposed would be likely to reduce car travel to the park and palace, with visitors instead more likely to use sustainable modes of transport. As such, the scheme would assist in addressing climate change. This is also a material consideration of positive weight. The Design & Access Statement refers to issues of anti-social behaviour in existing car parks. The introduction of parking tariffs for use of car parks may assist in reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. However, little information has been provided to explain the existing issues and how the parking management system would address current concerns. Consequently, this is a material consideration of minor positive weight.

5.25 Overall, the scheme would only have a minimal impact on the openness of the MOL. Whereas, there are other material considerations, which when taken together, are of notable positive weight (long-term preservation of heritage assets, promotion of sustainable transport and reduced likelihood of anti-social behaviour). Consequently, these positive material considerations would outweigh the harm to the MOL, by reason of inappropriateness. Very special circumstances do exist to approve this development in MOL.

Heritage Balance

5.26 A previous part of this report noted that the addition of signage to Car Park 3 would visually clutter this part of the park, resulting in an adverse impact on the character and setting of the CA, the Historic Park & Garden and the listed building. While this is noted, the minimal size of the new signage means that the adverse impact would not be substantial. Instead, the harm to the special interest of heritage assets would be 'less than substantial'. In these circumstances, paragraph 202 of the NPPF outlines that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing optimum viable uses.

5.27 The proposed development would facilitate the introduction of a parking management system within the park. This parking management system would generate funds for the charitable purposes of the Alexandra Palace & Park Charitable Trust. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) notes that the revenue would be used for investment back into the park and palace. Firstly in terms of the park, the revenue would be utilised to maintain, preserve and improve the environment of Alexandra Park in the long-term. Alexandra Park is open for use by members of the public, and as such the preservation and enhancement of the park would directly benefit residents who use the park. This is clearly a public benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal.

5.28 In regard to the palace, the Heritage Statement notes that significant maintenance works are required every year to this listed building. The revenue created from the parking fees could be used for these maintenance works, ensuring that the historic and architectural quality of the listed building is protected in the long-term. These maintenance works would support the operational requirements of Alexandra Palace meaning that it remains useable for existing uses. Therefore, the creation of the funds would assist in protecting viable uses of the building in the long-term. Furthermore, the SCI explains that the money generated would go towards bringing more spaces in the palace back into use. As such, the parking fees would directly support the Alexandra Palace & Park Charitable Trust in securing viable uses for the existing spaces within the palace. The finance created would assist in ensuring that optimum viable uses are secured and obtained for Alexandra Palace in the long-term. This also weighs in favour of the proposal.

5.29 The proposed parking management system and the associated parking tariffs would also be likely to reduce car travel to the park and palace, with visitors instead more likely to use sustainable modes of transport. This would assist in reducing impacts on climate change, and as such is also a public benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal.

5.30 Overall, the adverse impact to the character and setting of the CA, the Historic Park & Garden and the listed building would only be minimal. On the other hand, there are several positive public benefits that weigh in favour of the development. The proposals would enable funds to be generated that would be utilised to preserve the park and the palace in the long-term, ensuring that these heritage assets can continue to be used by members of the public. Furthermore, the revenue created would assist in ensuring viable uses for Alexandra Palace are obtained and secured in the long-term. The scheme would also be likely to reduce car travel to the Alexandra Park, promoting more sustainable modes of travel. In this instance, these benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the minor harm to the setting of heritage assets. As such, the 'less than substantial harm' to designated heritage assets would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals.

Conclusion

5.31 Overall, the proposals are considered acceptable. The scheme represents inappropriate development in MOL, however very special circumstances do exist to allow this development (long-term preservation of heritage assets, promotion of sustainable transport and reduced likelihood of anti-social behaviour). The proposals would result in some minor harm to the setting of heritage assets (CA, Historic Park & Garden and listed building). However, this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals (preservation of the parkland, preservation of heritage assets, support for viable uses for listed building and promotion of sustainable transport). The scheme is considered acceptable in terms of neighbour amenity, transport and ecology.

5.32 All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.

6. CIL APPLICABLE

N/A.

7. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION subject to conditions.

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The approved plans comprise drawing nos: A3 misc (Location Plan), 3201-LOC-04-02 Revision 02, 3201-LOC-04-03 Revision 03, 3201-LOC-05-02 Revision 02, 3201-LOC-05-03 Revision 03, 3201-LOC-06-02 Revision 02, 3201-SIGN-10-01 Revision 01, 3201-

SIGN-11-01 Revision 01, 3201-SIGN-12-01 Revision 01, 3201-SIGN-30-01 Revision 01, JupiterPlus_OutlineDrawing, 3313-DWG-020-01 Revision 1 and 2010-DWG-04-01 Revision 01. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans except where conditions attached to this planning permission indicate otherwise or where alternative details have been subsequently approved following an application for a non-material amendment.

Reason: In order to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and in the interests of amenity.

- 3 None of the new posts required for parking signage (parking charges signs, parking tariff boards, disclaimer signs and blue badge bay signs) hereby approved shall exceed 3 metres in height, measured from the ground level.

Reason: To limit the visual impacts of new signage and to preserve the character of heritage assets, in accordance with Policies D3 & HC1 of the London Plan (2021), Policies SP11 & SP12 of Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies (2017) and Policies DM1, DM3 & DM9 of the Development Management DPD (2017).

Informatives:

- INFORMATIVE: Land Ownership

The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not convey the right to enter onto or build on land not within his ownership.

- In dealing with this application the Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our pre-application advice service and published development plan, comprising the London Plan 2021, the Haringey Local Plan 2017 along with relevant SPD/SPG documents, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.