

Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/1020
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green, London, N22 7AY
Proposal:	Installation of infrastructure to create a new aerial visitor experience called Skywalk Adventure at Alexandra Palace including alterations to non-original concrete stairs with scaffold pole railings for building regulation compliance, addition of metal walkways below the rose window and at roof level, WC facilities and associated works.
Case Officer:	Gareth Prosser
Valid Date:	13/04/2023
Applicant:	Louise Johnson
Agent:	Faye Davies

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Site and Surroundings

Alexandra Palace is a 33,940 square metre building sitting within extensive parkland's. The site and surroundings are Grade II listed and falls within the Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area. The surrounding area is predominately residential and suburban in character with a range of mainly residential properties located to the north and Alexandra Park located to the south.

The site is within Metropolitan Open Lane.

Proposed development

The subject site comprises Installation of infrastructure to create a new aerial visitor experience called Skywalk Adventure at Alexandra Palace including alterations to non-original concrete stairs with scaffold pole railings for building regulation compliance, addition of metal walkways below the rose window and at roof level, WC facilities and associated works.

The planning history of the site has been considered when assessing this application for planning permission.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The following responses were received.

Internal

- LBH Conservation Officer: No objections. Proposal will provide the public with greater legibility of the historic development of Alexandra palace and an enhanced experience of its heritage character.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of a site notice displayed in the vicinity of the site. The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups, etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses (2):

- Alexandra Park and Palace CAAC
- The Gardens Trust

Summary of comments (which are relevant to this application):

- The CAAC was consulted over this proposal last year and agreed to the idea in principle. We have reviewed the detailed proposal and give it our support. The scheme does not damage or impair the historic fabric of the building and on the positive side, it should enhance experiences of the Palace and the Park for more adventurous visitors.
- The Garden Trust has no comments on this proposal

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

- Heritage Impact, Design Quality and Impact on Metropolitan Open Land; and
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity.

Heritage Impact, Design Quality and Impact on Metropolitan Open Land

Paragraph 197 of that document states that in determining applications Council's should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The NPPF continues to state that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the

significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

London Plan Policy HC1 states that development affecting heritage assets and their setting should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to the asset's significance and appreciation within their surroundings. Haringey Local Plan Policy SP12 requires the conservation of the historic significance of Haringey's heritage assets. Policy DM9 of the Development Management DPD continues this approach.

The subject property is a Grade II listed building within the Alexandra Park and Palace Conservation Area, and is also within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

Local Plan Policy SP11 states that all new development should enhance and enrich Haringey's built environment. Policy DM1 of the Council's Development Management DPD continues this approach and requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality.

London Plan Policy 7.17 states that the strongest protection should be given to London's Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and inappropriate development should be refused, whilst Local Plan Policy SP13 states that all new development shall protect and enhance the Borough's Green Belt and designated Metropolitan Open Land from inappropriate development.

The proposed Skywalk Adventure experience, will be accessible via the South Portico beneath the rose window, either side of the external lobby entrance to the Great Hall. In this area, both identical entrances to the east and west are currently inaccessible to the public, and used as storage and maintenance. Whilst the shell of these areas are 1875 historic fabric, the internal spaces and fabric consist of non-original concrete stairs with scaffold pole railings currently used as maintenance access to the roof gantry.

The proposal will unlock these currently deteriorating spaces for public admission, upgrading the non-compliant staircase and balustrade for safe public access whilst supplying the necessary WC and staff facilities. APPCT will offer guided and harnessed tours up to the rose window balcony, continuing up the staircase and over the roof to a newly positioned platform set discreetly behind the Angel of Plenty Statue, showcasing views over Alexandra Palace Park grounds and beyond. Visitors will then continue the circular route back down to the adjacent stair core.

The current Great Hall External lobby contains arched entrances to the South West and South East of the South portico leading to store rooms. The SW and SE staircases are accessed internally via the Great Hall. The proposed layout will rip out modern internal partitions (deemed to be of neutral/ detrimental significance) to reconfigure the internal staircase providing access to WC facilities and roof via the Great Hall External lobby off the South Terrace. The existing baby change facility and WC in the west lobby will be reconfigured, maintaining access from the Great hall lobby, with an additional WC fitted and accessible from the new stair lobby.

The most prominent aspect of the proposal is the addition of a new viewing platform at roof level, behind the existing 'Angel of Plenty' statue, which tops the central pediment of the palace. At 1540mm wide, the platform will be largely concealed by the statue from the South Terrace. Both the platform walkway on the rose window balcony, and the main flat roof section are set back from the existing parapets, limiting their visual impact to the south elevation. The main stair route to the roof platform is a retrofit of the existing maintenance stair, fitting balustrades, set further back from the South Portico gable end.

The small-scale size and scale of the proposed additions are considered sensitive to the character of the Palace and the wider park. The Council's Conservation Officer has not raised any objections to any of the features described above, stating that from the heritage conservation perspective, the

proposed works will unlock public access to currently deteriorating spaces and will provide the public with greater legibility of the historic development of Alexandra palace and an enhanced experience of its heritage character. Historic England were also consulted. No objections to the proposed works have been received.

As such, it is considered that the proposed skywalk and associated works would not harm the significance of the heritage assets and their respective settings and would lead to positive impacts including the ongoing viability of the Palace and Park. The proposal would also not have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Palace, Park or the distinctive surrounding area, nor would the development be inappropriate development that would adversely affect the openness of the MOL.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DM1 states that proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for neighbours.

This application includes several small-scale elements that would not be readily visible from, or of any significant detriment to, the residential properties close to the Palace and Park. Patrons of the proposed skywalk would look out onto the surrounding parkland only. As such, it is considered that there would be no impact on the residential amenity resulting from this proposal.

Conclusions

All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account.

Planning permission should be granted subject to conditions for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to condition(s):

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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:**INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work**

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours:

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday

and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.