

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
**DEPARTMENT:** Planning Service  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2019/1270

**LOCATION:** Abington Museum Manor House Abington Park,  
Wellingborough Road

**DESCRIPTION:** Listed Building Consent Application for the installation of Wi-Fi around the building, to include all equipment and cabling locations

**WARD:** Abington Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Borough Council  
**AGENT:** Miss Emma Tate

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Council owned land and is the Applicant

**DEPARTURE:** No

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**APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The development, subject to conditions, would improve facilities in the museum and have less than substantial harm to the Grade I Listed Building and with no adverse impact on the Abington Park Conservation Area. The development is therefore in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies BN5 and E7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Saved Policy E26 of the Northampton Local Plan.

**2 THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposed development comprises the installation of 20 Wi-Fi units and associated cabling throughout the museum's ground floor and first floor. The proposed Wi-Fi Units would be 165mm x 165mm x 38mm in line with the specification for the Aruba 300 series. Associated cabling would also be installed, including cable runs running along the outside of the building within the museum courtyard.

**3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The site comprises the Grade I listed Abington Park Museum, located within Abington Park and the Abington Park Conservation Area off Wellingborough Road. The museum is accessed from Park Avenue South and pedestrian accesses from A4500 Wellingborough Road.

#### **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Listed Building Consent granted for new CCTV camera fitted throughout the museum (N/2019/0637).

#### **5 PLANNING POLICY**

##### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

#### **6 National Policies**

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following section is of particular relevance to this application:

- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

##### **6.2 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)**

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

- Policy BN5: Designated and non-designated heritage assets
- Policy E7: Tourism, Visitor and Cultural Industries

##### **Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

- 6.3 Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policy is material to this application:

- Policy E26 – Conservation Areas

##### **6.4 Other Material Considerations**

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 6.5 The Abington Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

## **7 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comment received are summarised as follows:

- 7.1 **Conservation (NBC)** – No objections. The size of the proposed Wi-Fi units must be located sympathetically and discreetly, with cable runs kept to a minimum and shadow lines followed to minimise impact. This is particularly important where there is a decorative cornice or ceiling moulding which should be left undisturbed. Cable routes should follow existing routes and apertures to minimise the need for further holes in the fabric of the building and they should be surface mounted rather than chased into the fabric of the building. Where floorboards are lifted, these should be firstly numbered to enable them to be re-laid in the same order and boards should not be cut to enable lifting.
- 7.2 **Historic England** – no objection or comments to make.

## **8 APPRAISAL**

- 8.1 The proposal has been submitted further to pre-application advice provided by NBC Conservation. Alterations to the Grade I Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. Great weight is required to be given to the conservation of the heritage asset and the more significant the asset, the greater the weight attributed to it. Therefore, the key issues are the potential damage through alterations to the listed building and whether this would result in unacceptable harm.

### **Heritage Impact**

- 8.2 The WNJCS Policy BN5 states that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance and contribution to West Northamptonshire's local distinctiveness and sense of place. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should consider the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses; and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities.
- 8.3 In terms of conserving and enhancing the asset, the proposal would require disturbance to the existing fabric of the building to accommodate new Wi-Fi units and associated cabling. Cable runs are to be the minimum necessary and follow existing routes where possible. NBC Conservation have identified this level of harm to be less than substantial.
- 8.4 The museum have outlined that Wi-Fi for the museum is required to improve services and facilities for visitors to the museum. Therefore, it is considered that whilst having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, the community benefits of keeping the museum in use and improving its offer to the public would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the building through alterations to accommodate the Wi-Fi. However, planning conditions would be imposed requiring that disturbance to the fabric of the building to be kept to a minimum.
- 8.5 In addition, much of the installation would be removeable and therefore would be reversible. To ensure this is possible, disturbance such as holes in the building should be kept to a minimum. It is not considered to have an objectionable impact.
- 8.6 The proposed alterations would not impact on the conservation area.

## **9 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The key issue identified is the 'less than substantial' harm to the Listed Building due to damage from alterations to the building to accommodate 20 small Wi-Fi units. In conclusion, this would not result in unacceptable harm in line with the NPPF.

## **10 CONDITIONS**

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PROPOSED GF PLAN 001, PROPOSED 1F PLAN 002, ARUBA 300 Series Specification.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the listed building consent application.

3. Prior to the commencement of works, detailed layout plans showing the precise location of each unit alongside the cable runs for these shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the protection of the integrity of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy . This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that details are submitted in a timely manner.

### **Informatives:**

1. For the avoidance of doubt, with regards to Condition 3, cable routes should follow existing routes and apertures, and should be surfaced mounted rather than chased into the fabric of the building.
2. If the applicant is made aware that if floorboards are to be lifted, these should be firstly numbered to enable them to be re-laid in the same order. No board should be cut to enable lifting.

## **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

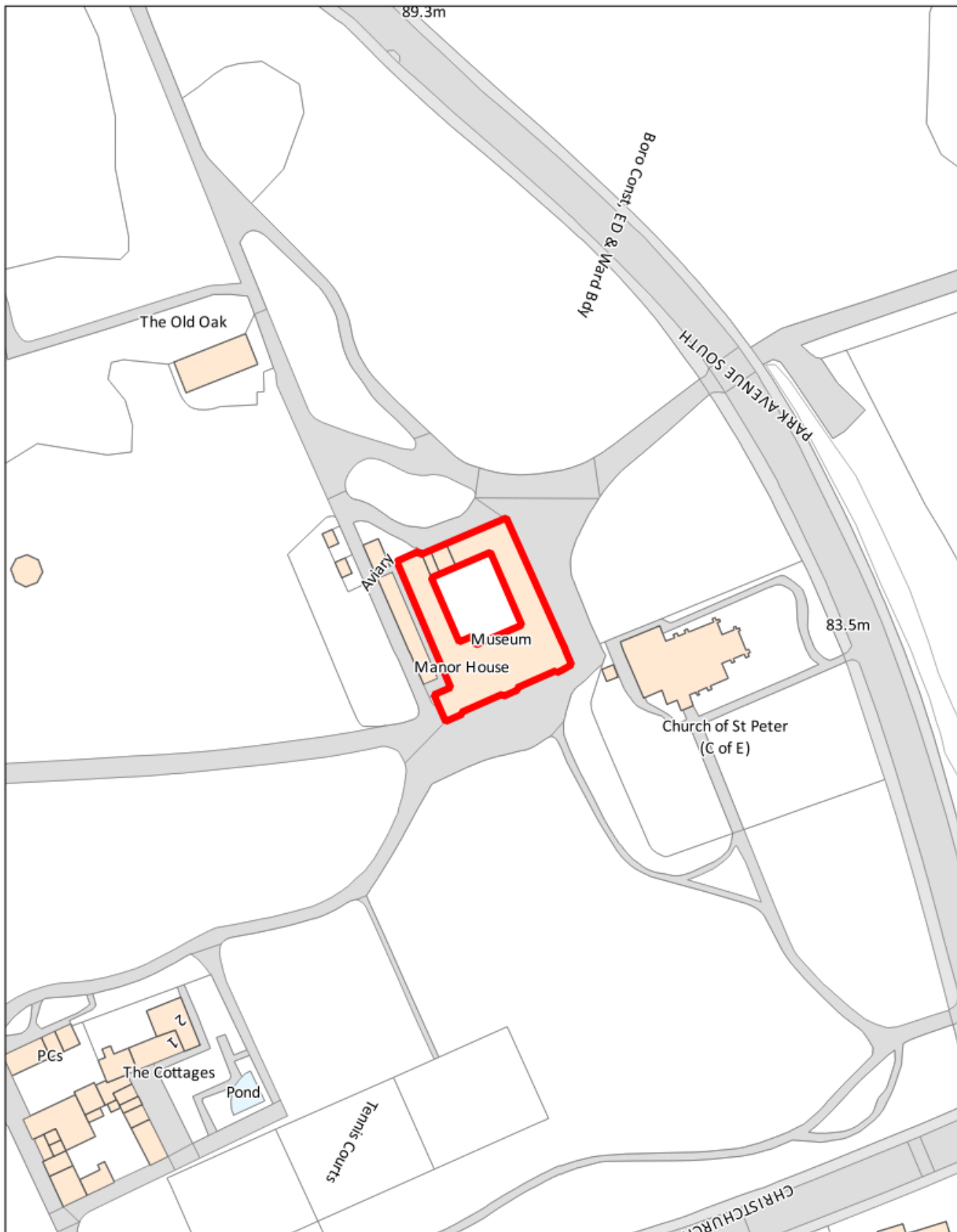
11.1 N/2019/1270.

## **12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 None.

## **13 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 13.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Title: **Abington Museum Manor House**

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Scale: 1:1,250

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