

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

The Firs Botanical Gardens, Whitworth Lane, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6WS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement forms part of a planning application for an extension of five years for the temporary siting of four steel containers (stacked two on two) housing atmospheric sampling equipment in the grounds of the botanical gardens. Planning approval was previously granted under application number 120003/FO/2018 for a period of three years, which expires on the 20 July 2021.

1.2 This statement is to be read in conjunction with the drawing numbers 8225_01, 02 & 03, which accompany the application.

Appendix 1 shows photographs of the site and surroundings.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Planning permission is sought for an extension of five years for the temporary siting of four steel containers (stacked two on two) in the botanical gardens, towards the North West corner of the site near the entrance off Whitworth Lane.

2.2 The containers for the past three years have been used to conduct detailed air quality measurements, with state of the art instrumentation, providing much more detail and information than the typical installations at the local authority air quality measurement sites. This site was established with NERC capital funding along with similar sites in Birmingham and London, which now operate as a network, providing data to research projects, local authorities and the general public.

2.3 Funding for the operation of the site is in place for the next 3 years, and proposals are currently being prepared to secure funding to continue these measurements on a longer term basis which are expected to be successful given the initial investment by NERC in establishing these sites. Having planning permission in place for the site to remain longer term will be important for securing additional funding.

3.0 Identifying the Heritage Assets.

3.1 LODGE OF THE FIRS, WITH ATTACHED GATEWAY.

List entry number: 1254834.

SJ89SE WHITWORTH LANE, Rusholme 698-1/9/816 (East side) 03/10/74 Lodge of The Firs, with attached gateway (Formerly Listed as: WHITWORTH LANE, Fallowfield (East side) Lodge of The Firs)

GV II

Gate lodge with attached gateway. 1851, by Edward Walters. Lodge of stucco on brick, with slate roof; stone gate piers with wrought-iron gates and side walls of red brick in Flemish bond. The lodge is square in plan, 2 storeys facing the drive, with a rectangular 2-storey gabled bay to the right and a doorway with shouldered architrave to the left. The bay, which

is flanked by round-headed lancets at ground floor, has wooden mullion-and-transom windows to both floors, and barge-boards pierced by quatrefoils; and to the left at 1st floor is a small oriel window. The left return wall has (inter alia) a wooden canted oriel at 1st floor. The gateway has square gate piers with pyramidal caps and elaborate wrought-iron gates, and is flanked by convex quadrantal side walls of brick, that to the left linked to the lodge.

3.2 THE FIRS AND ATTACHED ANNEX.

List entry number: 1270605

SJ89SE WHITWORTH LANE, Rusholme 698-1/9/815 (East side) 03/10/74 The Firs and attached Annex (Formerly Listed as: WHITWORTH LANE, Fallowfield (East side) The Firs)

GV II

Large house. 1851, by Edward Walters for Sir Joseph Whitworth; altered. Stucco on brick, slate roofs. Irregular linear plan on east-west axis. Two and 3 storeys over cellars. The entrance front to the north, which is asymmetrical, with 4:2:1 windows at 1st floor, the 2-window portion projected and the one-window portion to the right with a projected ground floor, has a diamond-patterned string-course, modillioned eaves, and 12-pane sashed windows with moulded architraves. The 2-window projection, which contains the porch to the left and the staircase to the right (and formerly had a turret over the left bay), has a round-headed doorway with moulded head and volute keystone, side-windows, panelled and glazed door, fanlight with radiating glazing bars, and inner door with 2 round-headed glazed panels which have gold ornament; banded pilasters at 1st floor of the left bay; and to the right at ground floor a glazed false window. The 4-window range to the left has a curved single-storey link to the Annex (former coach-house and office); and set back at the left end is a 3-storey service wing. The south front (to the garden), 3:3:2 windows, the centre projecting and the right-hand end (the service wing) set back and 3-storeyed, has windows with moulded architraves (those at ground floor shouldered) including single-storey canted bays to the projection and in the centre of the left range (with French windows), 4-pane sashes at ground floor and windows with altered glazing at 1st floor; and the 2nd floor of the service wing has low tripartite windows with console-shaped mullions. Main range has gable chimneys and 2 ridge chimneys; service wing has hipped roof with 2 chimneys (one very large). Interior: fine generously-proportioned open-well staircase with ornamented cast-iron balusters.

4.0 Assessment of Impact and Mitigation.

4.1 The containers have been on site for the past three years with minimal impact on the heritage assets and have become an important asset for atmospheric research. The site also now houses a modern botany facility which demonstrates this site is vital for research into earth sciences.

Gregory Farmer
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14 May 2021

Appendix 1.

Photographs



Photo 1. View from Whitworth Lane looking towards the site entrance, atmospheric testing station in the background.



Photo 2. View from Whitworth Lane site entrance towards the new botany facility, atmospheric testing station to the right hand side.