

Heritage Asset Statement for Blackley Crematorium

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, this Heritage Asset Statement is submitted as a component of an LBC Planning Application for the proposed installation of Wi-Fi access points at Blackley Crematorium. The purpose of this statement is to provide a comprehensive overview of the heritage significance of the building and the proposed works, demonstrating a clear understanding of the historical, technical, and architectural aspects.

Description of Heritage Significance

Blackley Crematorium, constructed in 1959 under the architectural guidance of Leonard C Howitt, holds Grade II listed status. The building is recognized for its pioneering modern design, embodying a departure from traditional crematoria architecture. The architectural interest lies in the building's confident and striking design, characterized by crisp clean lines and a massive bow window dominating the main chapel's front elevation. The crematoria's simple plan layout of three chapels set alongside each other demonstrates careful planning to allow concurrent funeral services while maintaining a discreet and private atmosphere. Preserving and respecting this heritage significance is at the core of the proposed works, ensuring that the building continues to stand as a symbol of Manchester's architectural and cultural heritage.

Specification of Works

The installation of Wi-Fi access points and the necessary cabling will require drilling six 20mm holes and a single 50mm through several of the crematoria walls. Metal tray will be used to support cabling, chosen for their durability and compatibility with the existing architectural elements, as advised by MCC's Heritage and Urban Design team. These trays are to be installed in six locations with cables following existing trays where possible. The Wi-Fi access points are to be mounted in eight locations across the site with four mounted via a metal bracket and the remaining four via industrial Velcro due to their sensitive positioning. Plans detailing the exact locations of the access points, cable trays and brackets are provided in the accompanying documents.

Justification for Works

The proposed installation of Wi-Fi access points aims to enhance the functionality of Blackley Crematorium without compromising its heritage value. The chosen locations for drilling holes through non-historically significant walls and the alternate use of metal trays, brackets and Velcro have been carefully considered to minimize any impact upon the original character of the building.

The completion of these works will result in a multitude of benefits for both staff and clients. The installation of Wi-Fi within Blackley Crematorium presents inherent social benefits (e.g. the ability to video call family and friends or to stream videos as a part of the funeral services) as well as organizational benefits (e.g. the ability for staff to more readily collaborate and share information with colleagues). The works contain the long-term potential to preserve Blackley Crematoriums relevance and standing within the community as a functioning building and thus to extend the life of Blackley Crematoriums relevance as a heritage asset.

Assessment of Impact

The impact on the architectural and historical character of the building has been thoroughly assessed. The proposed works focus on areas that are not of special architectural or historic interest, such as the rear service areas housing furnaces, machinery, and service equipment. Cable runs and metal trays will avoid the three chapels, with the only AP installations made to the chapels using velcro. This will minimize damage should the AP be removed from the chapels and aid in retaining the buildings original character. These considerations ensure that the essential fabric of the listed structure remains untouched while meeting the modern needs of the facility.

Demolition and Alteration of Original Fabric

No demolition of original fabric is proposed. The works focus on non-significant areas, and alterations are limited to drilling holes for cable installation. The use of metal brackets is chosen to minimize visual impact and retain the integrity of the original building fabric.

Design Statement for Repairs

As the proposed works involve installations rather than repairs, a design statement is not provided.

Details of Wall Finishes and Other Features

Our approach does not affect the state of Wall Finishes within Blackley Crematorium. As stated above, our approach ensures that the walls finish of historically significant areas of the building are undamaged by the long-term presence of AP's by using Velcro, which is intended to leave features undamaged upon removal.

Remedial/Restoration Works

No remedial or restoration works are required as part of the proposed installation. The existing historic fabric and finishes remain intact, the focus is on minimal intervention to preserve the building's original character.

Photographic Documentation

Photographs of all areas of the building affected by the proposal are included in the submission. These images provide a visual record of the current state of the building and the specific locations where the works are to be undertaken.

Conclusion

This Heritage Asset Statement is presented with the aim of providing a transparent and informed basis for the proposed works at Blackley Crematorium. The carefully considered approach to the installation of Wi-Fi access points ensures that the historical, technical, and architectural significance of the building is respected and preserved, aligning with the principles outlined in Section 16 of the NPPF.