

Beaumont Park Heritage Statement

Assessment of Significance:

Adjacent to the Beaumont Park Visitor Centre, Park Lodge is a Grade II listed building dating back to 1883, with 20th-century additions. It is a charming stone-built lodge featuring a deep, moulded eaves cornice and a Westmorland Slate Roof. The single-storey building (with attic) is situated at the main entrance off Beaumont Park Road. Beaumont Park itself is a Grade II listed historic park and garden, divided into two main areas: the formal and open park layout in the southern part, and an informal layout in the northern part, where the scarp is steeper and pre-existing woodland has been mostly retained. Historically, the park had a refreshment room in the centre of the northern part, which was demolished in the 1960s. The application site includes the Visitor Centre but the site adjacent to it has been predominantly used for maintenance, with several temporary buildings camouflaged by mature hedging and trees. The existing Visitors' Centre is located in the southern part of the application site, on the steep cliffs that form part of the park's interest. It is currently not visible from Beaumont Park Road due to the hedge and established trees.

Impact Assessment:

The application seeks permission to make the existing Visitors' Centre a permanent structure. This centre, which is already constructed, has proven to be a valuable asset to the community. It provides a vital facility for local people, educating them about the park's history and encouraging its use and appreciation. It is an invaluable resource for the community hosting various classes and providing the hub for the work of the Friends of Beaumont Park. The principle of having a facility in this location is acceptable, as this area is already used for such buildings. The addition of a permanent centre will have a minimal impact on the significance of the park and garden. The scale (height and massing) of the centre will remain unchanged as it is already on site as a temporary facility.

Justification:

The permanent establishment of the visitors' centre is essential for several reasons. The visitors' centre is crucial for managing the influx of visitors and providing necessary amenities and information. It supports the site's operational needs, and any proceeds from the centre are invested back into the wider park. Making the visitors' centre permanent will secure its role in the long-term conservation of the heritage asset. The centre facilitates educational programs, guided tours, and community events that promote the site's historical significance and ensure its continued relevance. Kirklees Council are currently investigating using the Visitors' Centre as a polling stations. Alternatives to making the visitors' centre permanent, such as temporary structures or off-site facilities, would not provide the same level of service or integration with the heritage site. These alternatives could potentially cause more harm by disrupting the visitor experience and failing to offer a consistent educational resource.

In conclusion, the proposal to make the Visitors' Centre permanent is justified by its necessity, the public benefits it provides, and the lack of viable alternatives that would

cause less harm. The Centre's permanent establishment will enhance the heritage asset's significance and ensure its long-term conservation.