

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 FEBRUARY 2015

1. ASTON FIRE STATION DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority notes the two options for the development at Aston Fire Station to serve the local communities.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority approves the recommended first option that a formal planning application and Listed Building Consent application are submitted to demolish and construct a new Fire Station in its current location.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority approves in principle the recommended second option, subject to 1.2 above not being successful, and allows the formal planning application and Listed Building Consent application to refurbish and modernise the existing building.
- 1.4 THAT the Authority approves the estimated costs of the recommended first option (or the estimated costs of the second option should the first not be achievable) and delegates powers to the Chief Fire Officer to approve the design features of the new Fire Station and associated buildings, subject to progress updates to Members.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to update the Authority that Officers have undertaken investigation and research into the possible options to relocate or redevelop Aston Fire Station.
- 2.2 Officers have considered the benefits of moving to a new site in the Aston area or the modernisation and development of the existing site.

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- 2.3 Sixteen new sites were considered by Officers and an assessment of each site considered a number of factors to determine their suitability as an alternative location to the current fire station.
- 2.4 Following completion of this work Officers have now identified two options that support the performance and trust of the Brigade and are value for money. These options both centralise around development of the existing site into a modern facility that meets the needs of the Community and the Authority.
- 2.5 Options 1 and 2 below are therefore submitted to seek approval from the Authority to progress in order of preference.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Fire Authority meeting on the 25 November 2013 Members considered the options available for the future development of the submitted Building Asset Strategy.
- 3.2 During this meeting Members considered the existing stations essential for response that would benefit from a change of location/investment in existing location.
- 3.3 The Aston Fire Station site was considered for disposal and consideration given for the station to be replaced on a one-for-one basis at a location identified as optimum for emergency response.
- 3.4 An up date on the Building Asset Strategy will be presented at this Fire Authority meeting, 16 February 2015, and will include this reference to Aston.
- 3.5 Members should note that on 10 June 2010 Aston Fire Station was listed with English Heritage as a grade 2 building (list entry number 1393832). Further information relating to this can be found in Appendix 1.

- 3.6 Members should also note that a transformational funding bid for £4.5m was submitted to the government for a joint venture between the Fire Authority, West Midlands Police (WMP) and West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS). Unfortunately this bid was unsuccessful.
- 3.7 At this present time the Fire Service is continuing dialogue with both the WMP and WMAS to determine their requirements in Aston.

4. **OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ASTON FIRE STATION**

- 4.1 In determining any future location for a Fire Station at Aston the Integrated Risk management team were consulted and identified an area around the A38 Aston corridor that would maintain the five minute attendance time in line with the Service delivery Model. This needed to be in close proximity to the existing Aston Fire Station which location fits ideally within our risk management plan.
- 4.2 To identify available suitable sites a property developer was employed to complete a property search around the identified area and report back their findings.
- 4.3 Criteria were applied to each location such as size, access, availability, costs and suitability for community engagement.
- 4.4 Personnel at Aston Fire Station were engaged with and their views and opinions have been taken into consideration in determining the options.
- 4.5 Following an analysis of each new site it was determined that the majority were unsuitable due to their location being within industrial areas and away from the heart of the community and would not therefore support our prevention and community engagement agenda.
- 4.6 The outcome of the analysis is to move forward with the two proposed options in order of preference. Therefore, whilst relocation has been considered it has been discounted at this time in favour of developing the existing site.

- 4.7 When considering the current location it was identified that it currently meets the needs of our risk management plan and attendance times for our Service Delivery Model. The existing site is also known to our communities and is a preferred location for our partnership with the WMAS.
- 4.8 The preferred option is to demolish the existing buildings and completely rebuild a new station to meet the needs of a modern Fire Service. The existing layout does not lend itself to being easily refurbished due to the amount of smaller internal rooms with solid brick construction, which is why a complete new rebuild is preferred.
- 4.9 However due to the planning restrictions on listed buildings Option 2 which is to develop the site incorporating the existing buildings may be the final option following determination through the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications.

4.10 Option 1

- 4.10.1 Demolish existing Fire Station and rebuild new Fire Station on existing site maintaining community contact and attendance times.
- 4.10.2 This option is recommended as the preferred option as it represents the most appropriate solution for the provision of a modern and efficient Fire Station when compared with the remaining options. An enhanced modern designed building will improve service delivery to the community including improvements to the risk based 5 minute attendance times. Due to the layout of the current building it is difficult to meet reaction times when responding to emergencies. Therefore, improvements will be made through enhanced design of the Fire Station to improve reaction and mobilising times of operational crews.

4.10.3 The Authority would be required to submit a formal planning application and Listed Building Consent application to demolish and construct a new Fire Station in its current location. It is anticipated that this will not be easy to achieve as it is a listed building.

4.10.4 Starting from a clean site would support and enable an improved building design and layout which will maintain and improve existing partnership engagement and collaborative working.

4.11 Option 2

4.11.1 If planning constraints do not permit the demolition of the existing station then a Listed Building Consent application will be submitted to completely refurbish the existing building whilst retaining some of the listed features.

4.11.2 Whilst this is not the preferred option it means that the Fire Station is still in the preferred location to support our community, partnership work and response standards.

4.11.3 This option also requires planning consent to enable the Authority to develop and change a listed building.

4.11.4 By redeveloping the existing site the Authority would not have the flexibility and planning freedoms as they would if the existing buildings were to be demolished. However, this option would enable the Authority to redesign the existing site to provide a more modern facility, subject to planning conditions.

4.12 If listed building consent is not granted on either option 1 or 2 then additional work will need to be carried out to reconsider the option to locate an alternative site that is within the community and available for development of a new Fire Station.

4.13 Appendix 2 provides a strengths and weakness appraisal of the two options and the discounted alternative to relocate to a new site.

4.14 Members should note that Officers are still liaising with the WMP and WMAS to see if they would require any facilities at our location and therefore there may be an opportunity to lease facilities to these emergency services.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out once an approved option has been agreed and a way forward determined.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be a requirement to undertake the normal conveyance when buying land, undertaking Planning Consent or Listed Building Consent. This will take place using professional services and expertise from Sandwell Legal. Contractual agreements will be established to protect the Authority from risk covering site specific details and conditions prior to any purchase or construction being agreed.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Option 1 New Aston Fire Station £7,475,000

All costs are estimates and include ground surveys, consultant fees, demolition of both buildings (fire station and former fire safety building), rebuilding works, surrounding security, training requirements and relocation of both Fire and Ambulance personnel during these works.

7.2 Option 2 Aston Fire Station Refurbishment £5,315,000

All costs are estimates and include consultant fees, refurbishment of existing building, surrounding security, training requirements and relocation of both Fire and Ambulance personnel during these works.

7.3 It is anticipated that the funding for option 1 or option 2 would be met from the Authority's 'Fire Station Investment' reserve. However, consideration will be given to the capital and/or revenue contributions required arising from any shared site arrangements.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be direct environmental impacts through an improvement in our carbon footprint in the creation of a modern building. Also there will be added benefits of not maintaining the aging building stock of the Fire Station and the former Fire Safety Centre.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The contact name for this report is Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Hales, telephone number 0121 380 6907

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Aston Fire Station – English Heritage Listing

List entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: ASTON FIRE STATION

List entry Number: 1393832

Location

ASTON FIRE STATION, ETTINGTON ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Birmingham	Metropolitan Authority	

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 10-Jun-2010

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 507904

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Aston Fire Station, Ettington Road, Aston, Birmingham (1923) is recommended for designation at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural: The building is a carefully-designed composition which is well-related to its immediate site and neighbourhood and provides a powerful symbol of civic pride and care. * Intactness: It is a particularly intact example of an early C20 fire station with a range of features including a drying tower which retains its internal fittings. * Group value: It has group value with the Broadway Comprehensive School (Grade II) and the Church of the Sacred Heart and St Margaret Mary (Grade II).

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

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Details

997/0/10531 ETTINGTON ROAD 10-JUN-10 Aston Fire Station

II A Fire Station of 1923, built by E. Crowder of Hockley. The building is of red brick, laid in English bond, with stone dressings and a plain tiled roof. The central block of three storeys has the engine shed at ground floor level with firemen's accommodation above. This is flanked by entrances to the fire station at right (east) and the former Fire Chief's house at left (west) with a tower, for hose drying and practice, attached at the north-east corner. EXTERIOR: Facing south onto Ettington Road is a symmetrical, Neo-Georgian front with a central block of six bays and three storeys, which has a gabled roof, flanked by slightly recessed wings of two bays and two storeys with hipped roofs. There is considerable use of ashlar dressings across the front. The central block has four garage doors to the ground floor (replaced in the later-C20) with panelled ashlar pilasters between the openings. Above these is a continuous cornice and frieze, with carved laurel wreaths above the pilasters and a coat of arms to the centre. To the top of the building is another cornice, with dentils and a blocking course, and to the corners are flush quoins which alternate with brickwork. The six bays of first and second floor windows all have stone surrounds and these are tied together by a cornice and pulvinated frieze above each first floor window which connects with a panelled apron beneath each second floor window. The prominent chimneys to the sides and centre all have alternate bands of ashlar and brickwork, continuing the pattern of the quoins below. Each of the lateral wings has a canted bay window of two storeys, set closest to the centre of the front, flanked by a doorway with projecting semi-circular hood which is joined to the first floor sash window above by an ashlar frontispiece. Both eastern and western sides are blank to their lower bodies but with flush stone bands and porthole windows to the gable ends of the central block. To the rear are the four bays of the engine wash, which is a single storey projection which has glazed, pitched roofing to the central bays and asphalted, flat roofing to the lateral bays. New doors have been fitted to the three western bays and the eastern bay is blocked with casement windows, but probably originally conformed to the configuration of the other bays. Windows to the first and second floors are casements of two and three lights and there has been some alteration to these openings to accommodate a fire escape at right and also to an arched doorway at left, which has been blocked. Attached at left is the practice tower which has a double doorway with arched ashlar hood to the north face. The building has four floors and these are blank to the lower body. At second floor level there is a recessed panel to each side and each has a window with triple keystone to the projecting lintel. The northern window has now been removed and the opening blocked. To the top of the tower is an elaborate cap with deep cornice, above which each face has a semi-circular window with emphatic voussoirs and projecting triple

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keystone. Above this the ashlar cap has a cornice and blocking course and a shallow pediment to each side.

INTERIOR: The engine shed has black, white and grey patterned tiling to the walls and green, grey and white tiling to the floor which has a chequerboard to each of the four bays, with arrow and diamond shapes to the borders. This has suffered some areas of loss, but is largely intact. Brass fire poles to the centre of each side wall connect to the first and second floors of the building. At first floor level the former firemen's bedrooms have lost their fire surrounds, but the layout appears unaltered in its essentials. On the second floor the space has been subdivided by partition walls. The interior of the tower retains its iron stairways and the pulleys, winches and cleats which formerly allowed for the drying of canvas hoses. The interior of the block of flats has been altered to convert them to office space and corridors have been opened out to connect all of the former flats on each level.

HISTORY The foundation stone for the building was laid on 26th June, 1923 and it opened on 19th November of the same year. The cost was £25,577 and the builder was E. Crowder of Hockley. The building is believed to have originally functioned with the existing, central engine shed to the ground floor, exiting onto Ettington Road, flanked by entrances to the fire station at right (east) and the Fire Chief's house at left (west) Firemen's bedrooms were at first-floor level and the second floor appears to have been a large recreation room. Fire surrounds have been removed from the first-floor bedrooms, which now function as locker rooms and gymnasium spaces. The second-floor space has been subdivided. A separate block of firemen's flats to the east side of the rear yard appears to date from the 1930s and is not of special interest.

SOURCE Mark Field, Aston Fire Station 1923-2009 (2009), (visitors' pamphlet produced for Heritage Open Day).

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION Aston Fire Station, Ettington Road, Aston, Birmingham (1923) is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

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Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

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Ref. AU12701156

National Grid Reference: SP 07371 89687

Map

The national heritage list for England is now publicly available online (the link is here: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>)

Appendix 2

Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis – Aston Fire Station

Option 1

Demolish existing fire station and rebuild new fire station on the existing site maintaining community contact and attendance times.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMFS own the land • Right location for the community • Site supports redevelopment • Provision of modern building • Site location supports Service Delivery Model • Easy access to A38 corridor • Community visibility • Maintain Partnership arrangements • Separate access for other organisations • Ambulance currently use this location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capital funding requirement • Listed Building Consent is required • Public reaction if approval is gained • Loss of a character building in the community • Relocation of operational resources • Sourcing suitably located temporary premises • Increased funding requirements • Temporary relocation of Ambulance response • Impacts to ambulance response times

Option 2

Completely refurbish the existing building whilst retaining the listed features.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMFS own the land • Right location for the community • Site supports redevelopment • Provision of modern building • Site location supports Service Delivery Model • Easy access to A38 corridor • Community visibility • Maintain Partnership arrangements • Ambulance currently use this location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capital funding requirement • Listed Building Consent is required • Loss of flexibility compared to a new build • Demolition time may be time consuming • Overall time to complete works could be extended, work will be dictated by listing consent. • Relocation of operational resources • Sourcing suitably located temporary premises • Temporary relocation of Ambulance response • Impacts to ambulance response times

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Discounted alternative

Location of an alternative site for the new Aston Fire Station.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listed Building Consent will not be required• Flexibility of a new build• Relocation of operational resources will not be required• Sourcing suitably located temporary premises will not be required• Temporary relocation of Ambulance response will not be required• Impacts to Ambulance response times will not be effected• Additional finance will be generated from a capital receipt from the sale of the existing site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WMFS will not own the land and will need to purchase• Difficulty in finding the right location for the community• Difficulty in finding the right location that supports Service Delivery Model• Availability of existing sites for redevelopment• Demolition costs may be incurred• Difficulty may be experienced in maintaining partnership arrangements• New site may not meet the needs of the Ambulance