

## Property Background

Stamford Park attracts a significant number of visitors every year and was previously refurbished to a high standard following a successful £3.9million Heritage Lottery Fund ('HLF') bid. The park has a wide range of facilities which include play areas for both younger and older children, water fountains, an aviary, café and toilets within the pavilion, bowling greens, multi-use games area and formal flower displays.

Stamford Park is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The park has also been Grade II listed by Historic England for its special, historic interest. Registration of Stamford Park as a 'Historic Park' recognises the parks importance and historic significance although, the status does not trigger any special statutory protection system.

Towards the Southern end of the park lies Stamford Park Conservatory. The Conservatory is a Victorian style timber and iron framed glasshouse. It was first constructed in October 1907 and was the gift of John Nield. The Conservatory was subsequently completely rebuilt in 1982-84 and refurbished again in May 2003.

The building is made up of three parts with two outer wings - the North and South Houses - which are approximately 4m high to eaves, the roofs to which are each supported off four internal columns in a rectangular layout. The North and South houses are connected at the rear by a lower level Centre House section that is approximately 2.5m high to eaves. The outer sections of the building are supported from glazed timber support frameworks built off low level brickwork, ranging from 600mm to 2m in height depending on external ground levels.

The Central House roof is duo pitched with a raised central ridge and timber / metallic trusses. The trusses support the purlins with 3 sections of glazing panels between trusses, in turn supported off timber glazing bars supported by the steel angle sections at mid span.

Due to the significant rebuilding of the Conservatory - including the use of soft wood and polycarbonate rather than glass - the Conservatory was not a priority for funding from the HLF, as much of its historic integrity was deemed to have been lost. The significant changes to the Conservatory also mean that it is not a listed building in its own right and is not separately protected from the rest of the park.

The Conservatory has been closed to the public since April 2015 after the findings of a structural survey demonstrated safety concerns. In June 2019, Executive Cabinet considered a number of options for the Conservatory, namely;

Option 1 - Repair of existing structure.

Option 2 - Replacement of existing structure with alternative new structure.

Option 3 – Demolition of the conservatory.

Whilst Executive Cabinet initially supported Option 3, shortly after the decision, the Council received a petition from a local community group seeking to preserve the Conservatory. The Council agreed to postpone the proposed demolition of the Conservatory and allow time for further consultation with any community groups who felt that they could develop feasible plans to renovate and operate the building moving forwards.

## Building

Floorplans of the property have been made available to interested parties and these show the following spaces;

- Ground Floor – E-001 – South House (92.7sq.m).
- Ground Floor – E-002 – Centre House (61.1sq.m).
- Ground Floor – E-003 - North House (92.7sq.m).
- Total – 246.5sq.m

### **Current Offer**

The Council are keen to see the building brought back into use and have received expressions of interest from various commercial and community organisations during its period of void. The Council are keen to explore this historic interest, along with any new interest from parties keen to reuse the building.

To facilitate this;

- the Council approved a Disposal Policy in September 2020, a copy of which can be viewed via the following weblink - item 10 - <https://tameside.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=134&Mid=5051&Ver=4>
- More recently, in June 2021, the Council also approved a Community Asset Transfer policy which sets out how the Council would consider interest from the Voluntary and Community sector. A copy of the policy can be viewed via the following weblink - item 7 - <https://tameside.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=134&Mid=5059&Ver=4>
- Finally, in June 2022, the Council declared the Conservatory surplus so that it could explore the potential sale or transfer of the asset to any interested parties – item 14 - <https://tameside.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=134&Mid=8551&Ver=4>

Stage 1 asks interested parties to complete and return the attached expression of interest form by a defined closing date. This has been agreed as **12 (noon) on 25 November 2022**. Once any expressions of interest have been received, these would be evaluated and reported to the Council’s Asset Management Working Group. Any preferred bidders would be contacted following this initial assessment and as part of a ‘Stage 2’ invited to submit a full CAT Application Form and Business Case for consideration.