

Agenda Item A11	Committee Date 21 August 2017	Application Number 17/00223/FUL
Application Site The Former Dance Inc. The Coach House Edward Street Lancaster Lancashire		Proposal Relevant Demolition of 3 existing ancillary buildings and installation of security gates
Name of Applicant Mrs Sarah Price		Name of Agent Design Group - Projects Team
Decision Target Date 7 July 2017		Reason For Delay Amended plans/details requested and committee cycle
Case Officer		Mr Robert Clarke
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approval

(i) Procedural Matters

The proposed works would normally fall within the Scheme of Delegation. However, the property to which this application relates is in the ownership of Lancaster City Council, as such the application must be determined by the Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee.

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

1.1 The Coach House is a late 19th century workshop, possibly for a furniture makers, which is situated in Lancaster's Conservation Area. The building was identified as having medium significance in the "Canal Corridor North: Assessment of Heritage Values & Significance" and is outlined as a positive building in the Conservation Area, though it is not Listed. The building features stone walling underneath a natural slate dual pitch roof. Three more recent ancillary structures, mostly of brick with metal sheet roofing, have been constructed within the constrained site.

1.2 The development site is located to the north of Lodge Street car park and immediately to the south of Upper St Leonards Gate car park. The Grand Theatre and Music Co-op lie to the west and access to the site is made from Edward Street to the east. Stone walls form the boundaries to the south and north of the site.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 This application seeks consent for Relevant Demolition of the three ancillary structures from site, blocking up of resultant openings to The Coach House (which is to be retained), installation of security gates to the Edward Street entrance and repairs to the existing stone boundary walls, including the felling of a tree.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The Local Planning Authority has no planning history relating to this particular site.

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Consultee	Response
Conservation Officer	No Objection – to the demolition of the ancillary structures though concerns were raised regarding the appearance of the proposed gates and with the mortar to be used to repair the boundary walls. Amended plans and details have been received which have resolved these concerns.
Tree Protection Officer	No objection – to the removal of the tree
Canal and River Trust	No objection
Environmental Health	No objection

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 No comments received during the statutory consultation period.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Paragraph 14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Paragraph 17 - 12 Core planning principles
- Section 7 - Requiring good design
- Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 14 December 2016 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to undertake public consultation on:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD); and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enabled progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. Public consultation took place from 27 January 2017 to 24 March 2017. Whilst the consultation responses are currently being fully considered, the local authority remains in a position to make swift progress in moving towards the latter stages of: reviewing the draft documents to take account of consultation outcomes, formal publication and submission to Government, and, then independent Examination of the Local Plan. If an Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council, potentially in 2018.

The **Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD** will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual 'saved' land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2016, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The **Review of the Development Management DPD** updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft 'Review' document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the 'Review' will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.3 Development Management DPD

DM29: Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

DM31: Development affecting Conservation Areas

DM33: Development affecting Non-Designated Heritage Assets of their Setting

DM35: Key Design Principles

7.0 **Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The key considerations arising from the proposal are:

- Scale, design and impacts on the character of the Conservation Area; and,
- Impact upon biodiversity

7.2 Scale, design and impacts on the character of the Conservation Area

7.2.1 The Coach House, which was formally used as a dance studio, has been vacant for nine years and has been subject to multiple break-ins, arson attacks and is frequently occupied by the homeless and drug users. The property is no longer tenanted due to the uncertainty brought about by the proposed development under the Canal Corridor North scheme and there is now no power supply to the property, which is in a rapidly deteriorating condition.

7.2.2 The application site is situated between large open car parks. The surrounding terraced housing and workshops were demolished in the 1960s, which has negatively impacted the setting and the historic understanding of the building. This harm has been further exacerbated by the construction of the unsympathetic ancillary structures. The proposal to removal the modern extensions to the building, which have no heritage significance, is supported as it will better reveal the significance of the asset and provide a more coherent and better maintained appearance to the site.

7.2.3 The principle of erecting security gates to the Edward Street entrance is acceptable as it will serve to ensure the security of the site and building. It is also acknowledged that the development site lies within the area of the Canal Corridor North scheme, and therefore any structure may well be temporary in nature, though a regeneration scheme is yet to come forward. Given the degree of uncertainty regarding the regeneration scheme and how it may affect this site, the use of appropriately designed gates is imperative. The initial gates proposed were considered to have a harsh and hostile appearance that would have appeared inappropriate in a Conservation Area. An amended design was received, which is considered acceptable.

7.2.4 Repairs to the masonry boundary walls are acceptable. They will serve to ensure the structural integrity of these structures, which contribute towards the setting of the non-designated heritage asset. However, concerns were raised with the proposed mortar (Cement sand mortar 1:4) as cement mortar is too dense and traps moisture within the stone thus increasing erosion and long term damage to the stonework. The applicant has agreed to use a hydraulic lime (NHL 3.5) mortar which is more appropriate for the age and construction of these boundary walls.

7.3 Impact upon biodiversity

7.3.1 Due to the nature of this proposal, the deteriorating condition of The Coach House and its location approximately 100m from the Lancaster Canal, a bat survey has been carried out. The building inspection undertaken concluded that there were abundant access points to both The Coach House and the ancillary buildings proposed to be demolished. A night time bat survey was therefore carried out. No bats were seen entering/exiting the site during the activity survey. The illumination coming from the nearby car park lights dissuades bats from using the site. Given the location of the site within an urbanised environment and no significant foraging habitat nearby it was determined that the building contained little potential for use by bats.

7.3.2 As part of the preservation of the existing stone boundary walls it is proposed to fell a lime tree at the Edward Street entrance to the site. The tree is located 440mm away from the southern boundary wall and is causing structural issues due to its rooting. The Tree Protection Officer is satisfied that, due to the damaging effects that the subject tree is having upon the boundary wall, it can be removed to facilitate the repair and safe retention of the stone boundary wall. The loss of this tree is acceptable given the number of other trees which are located along the boundaries of the neighbouring car parks.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 There are no planning obligations to consider as part of this application.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 In conclusion, this proposal does not adversely affect the character of this non-designated heritage asset and will act to enhance its setting. It is on this basis that Members are advised that this application can be supported, subject to a condition to ensure the works are carried out in accordance with the approved plans and agreed details.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard three year timescale
2. Works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans
3. Works to be undertaken in accordance with agreed details
4. Works to be undertaken in accordance with the recommended bat mitigation measures

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In accordance with the above legislation, Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been made having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

Background Papers

None