

Agenda Item A5	Committee Date 19 October 2015	Application Number 15/00913/FUL
Application Site University Of Cumbria Bowerham Road Lancaster Lancashire		Proposal Partial demolition of the Askwith Building and erection of a new three storey teaching block with associated landscaping and replacement car parking and the erection of a single storey extension and installation of new windows to the retained part of the Askwith Building
Name of Applicant University Of Cumbria		Name of Agent Mr Alexander McCallion
Decision Target Date 27 October 2015		Reason For Delay None
Case Officer		Mr Mark Cassidy
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approve with conditions

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The Lancaster Campus of the University of Cumbria occupies a prominent position within the city, fronting the main highways of Bowerham Road, Coulston Road and Wyresdale Road. The site is allocated as education (Campus) land.
- 1.2 Part of the wider campus also enjoys Key Urban Landscape designation, but that does not apply to the land that is within the application red edge. Other areas of the campus are designated as Open Space, Sports and Recreation land, including the adjacent football pitch.
- 1.3 None of the buildings within the wider site are listed, although there are a number of buildings (including the Keep and the perimeter wall) which are identified as non-designated heritage assets, and thus are 'locally-important'.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This is a full application for partial demolition and extension of an existing structure (known as the Asquith Building), and the construction of a new teaching 'hub', along with associated landscaping. The works form the first phase of wider transformation of the Lancaster Campus. It should be noted that the wider Campus Masterplan has not yet been formally submitted as a planning application, but the current proposal for a single teaching block can be considered in advance of any wider masterplanning proposals.
- 2.2 The new building will accommodate a lecture theatre and 2 flexible teaching rooms on the ground floor, along with an open foyer and learning zone. This level will also provide back-office, boiler room, toilets and lift. The first floor has similar teaching facilities and a plant room, whilst the upper floor provides 6 separate teaching spaces.
- 2.3 Externally, new landscaping is proposed in a number of locations around the building, not least in the remodelled area known as the 'Quad', which is due north of the structure. Realigned (and

resurfaced) pedestrian footways seek to improve accessibility around this part of the campus.

- 2.4 Other smaller structures - including part of the inner perimeter wall complex known as The Range, (which provided music rooms) and the modern drama block - are identified for demolition as part of a separate Prior Approval application (see Paragraph 3.1 of this report below).

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 The campus has been the series of many planning applications. However the most relevant application is a Prior Approval application (Ref: 15/01007/PAD) for the demolition of buildings to accommodate the current proposal. The Council considered that further details were required, and those details have now been submitted (these details also help to inform the current proposals). The Prior Approval decision is a technical one as to whether the method of demolition and related details are acceptable, and any decision on the Prior Approval does not prejudice consideration for the current proposal.

The applicant also formally submitted a pre-application proposal as a forerunner to the current scheme (Ref: 15/00557/PRETWO).

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
County Strategic Planning	No comments received within statutory consultation timescale.
County Highways	Initial objection – absence of construction traffic details and implications for car parking. Further details provided; any comments will be verbally reported.
Environmental Health	No objection – conditions recommended (hours of construction; unforeseen contamination; scheme for dust control)
Tree Protection Officer	Initial objection – acknowledged receipt of planting proposals, which are acceptable, but absence of detailed Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) justifies initial objection. AIA since submitted, verbal update will be provided.
Conservation Officer	No objection – removal of unsympathetic later additions are a positive. Proposal has been designed to minimise the impact upon surrounding structures. Conditions requested regarding materials and finishes.
Public Realm Officer	No comments received within statutory consultation timescale.
Lancaster Civic Society	Comments – observations made regarding consultation/wider masterplan. Proposals will rationalise the wider site and the layout is effective. More details regarding materials and appearance would be welcome. Reservations regarding landscaping layout. Contractor's parking will need to be controlled during construction.
Lancashire Constabulary	Comments – secured by design principles including specific window and door lock matters. Planning considerations include a request for low-level planting only to aid security, sufficient lighting columns and consideration given to CCTV.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

- 5.1 At the time of compiling this report, 4 items of correspondence have been received from 3 residents. Of these, one supports the development (but has made comments in relation to the separate Prior Approval application, and the possibility of retaining existing features such as plaques, benches, etc). The remainder object to the proposal on the grounds of car parking congestion on the local roads; loss of daylight; overbearing development; loss of privacy; inappropriate design and confusion as to where the proposal is located.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

- 6.1 The most relevant National and Development Plan policies are:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 - Sustainable Development and Core Principles
Paragraph 32 – Access and Transport
Paragraphs 56-65 – Requiring Good Design
Paragraphs 131-136 – Historic Environment

Lancaster District Local Plan (Saved Policies)

Policy R13 – (refers to) University College of St Martin

Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)

Policy SC1 – Sustainable Development
Policy SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design
Policy SC6 – Crime and Community Safety
Policy ER1 – Higher and Further Education
Policy E1 – Environmental Capital

Development Management DPD (adopted December 2014)

Policy DM23 – Transport Efficiency and Travel Plans
Policy DM32 – Setting of Heritage Assets
Policy DM35 – Key Design Principles
Policy DM36 – Sustainable Design

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 There are six main issues to consider regarding this proposal, namely:

- Principle of use and integration with the remainder of the campus;
- Materials, design, scale and massing;
- Impacts upon heritage assets;
- Impacts upon car parking spaces;
- Impacts upon residential amenity; and,
- Landscaping

7.2 Principle of Use and Campus Integration

The intention to upgrade teaching accommodation is most welcome and appropriate in the location specified. The structures identified for removal are either (a) of poor quality; or (b) provide an obstacle to logical redevelopment due to their difficult orientation (e.g. The Range). The proposed building will not impinge upon the usable part of the adjacent football pitch. It will also provide greater coherence in terms of the site layout, by providing improved pedestrian accessibility in an area that currently suffers from a confusing layout. Much more will need to be done as the wider masterplan evolves, but this first phase is a promising start.

7.3 Materials, Design, Scale and Massing

There is a slight difference in ground levels across the site, and so the building will sit on a plinth to create a level floor slab. The external walls will be buff brick and zinc rainscreen cladding. The brickwork identified – Grantchester Blend – appears to be a sympathetic colour respecting the surround sandstone of the College Main and North buildings, and the brickwork of the nearby existing teaching block. However officers intend to work with the applicant regarding the submission of samples to ensure that the most appropriate materials are selected. An aluminium curtain-walling system is also proposed as are aluminium windows and doors. The flat, membrane roof will have a parapet and the soffits will be red cedar.

7.4 The longest elevation is broken-up by the full-height curtain walling system. This incorporates a series of side-hung windows to assist with natural ventilation, and vertical ‘fins’ which will provide shade to the façade. The end elevations have added interest with the protruding, glazed stairwells. These protrusions help limit the massing of the building.

7.5 This building cannot be accommodated without alterations to the Asquith Building. The loss of the more modern additions to Asquith (link building and drama block) is to be welcomed; and this will allow a small, canopied lobby extension which will also provide accessible toilet facilities. This modest extension will be clad in zinc to match the new teaching block.

7.6 At three storeys high, the teaching block will have sufficient scale to create impact without overwhelming the existing, retained buildings. The flat roof clearly assists in delivering sleek, clean lines to the structure. Those clean lines could be compromised by the manner in which the cladding meets the brickwork on the south-east elevation facing the playing fields (which given that this elevation provides access to the boiler room and electrical room, isn't as aesthetically pleasing as the opposite elevation). It is for this reason that further material detail will be necessary prior to construction. However, the building is acceptable both as an individual set-piece and in the manner it will complement existing structures.

7.7 Impact upon Heritage Assets

The applicant has worked with officers, including Conservation Officers, during the evolution of these proposals. In the context of this proposal, five non-designated heritage assets have the potential to be affected; some more than others. They are:

- The Keep;
- Askwith;
- College North;
- College Main; and,
- The part of the former perimeter wall known as The Range.

7.8 The setting of The Keep is considered to be improved by the removal of the 1960's drama block. The new building is of sufficient distance away from the Keep as to not compromise the improved setting. The Asquith Building will be less visible from the playing fields, but it will also enjoy a much-improved setting as a consequence of the drama block's demolition. The new single-storey extension to Asquith will act as a visual (but not physical) link to the proposed teaching block.

7.9 With regard to College North and College Main, these buildings sit due south and due north respectively. Views of College Main will continue to be uninterrupted from the playing fields, and the angled nature of the new structure will enhance its prominence. Part of College North will be obscured in longer-range views, although the impact of this is significantly lessened by the fact that the existing collection of 1960/1970s buildings (including the existing nursery building) already compromise views of College North.

7.10 There is a stone perimeter wall around much of the wider site, and this is the former defensive barracks wall. Where this wall abuts public highway, those areas are unaffected by the proposal. The wall also exists along an internal part of the site known as The Range. The three small existing structures that comprise The Range are to be demolished, with some of the wall being removed. This is compensated for by the removal of the current music accommodation from its position adjacent to the wall, and the restoration of significant parts of the structure. Existing openings in the wall would be retained and steel steps will provide access to three new 'social seating' areas. New planting (see 'Landscaping') will also improve the legibility of this important feature.

7.11 Notwithstanding the absence of any listed building or conservation area status across the application site, the proposals will improve the visual relationship between buildings of local importance, and from a heritage perspective the development is acceptable.

7.12 Impact upon Car Parking Spaces

Whilst the overall masterplan for the site has yet to be formally submitted, this stand-alone development will have implications for car parking during the construction phase. A Construction Management Plan has already been submitted which indicates that building demolition will be a separate, distinct phase to building construction. The former will require increasing the width of the campus access road from Coulston Road and the provision of a site cabin. Following completion of demolition, the site cabin will be removed and site operations will be relocated to the existing nursery building. Whilst car parking within the car park fronting Coulston Road will be affected during the

works, construction disturbance itself is not a reason for withholding consent, unless the transport impacts arising from the activity is severe.

7.13 In this case, County Highways initially expressed concern about the construction element, although they had no objections to the new building in principle. The applicant subsequently pointed out that discussions with other Officers at the County had already taken place and that given that the net level of activity on the campus would not change following construction, the planning application could be supported from a travel and parking perspective. This would appear to remove the highway objection, although at the time of report preparation final confirmation from County Highways was outstanding. This matter will be verbally clarified at Committee.

7.14 Despite the footprint of the building, there are remarkably few existing formal car-parking spaces that are permanently affected – just four in total. These four spaces would be replaced with four new spaces prior to opening, located directly to the south-east of the new building. On this basis, there is no objection in terms of parking provision.

7.15 The applicant is in contact with the County Council's Sustainable Transport Adviser regarding new travel survey work for the entire campus, and both parties have agreed that this would make sense to be undertaken post-construction (i.e. 2017).

7.16 Impact upon Residential Amenity

The location of the application site away from residential property (almost 90m to the nearest rear garden boundary of Anderson Close) means that there will be no loss of outlook or privacy arising from the proposal. Hours of construction will be enforced by planning condition. The nearest residential blocks within the campus are closer (approximately 58m) but given the intervening buildings, the impacts arising from demolition and construction can be adequately mitigated via planning condition.

7.17 Landscaping

The proposals are accompanied by a detailed planting schedule, with six separate areas for new landscaping. These will be:

- Areas 1 & 2 - two new planting beds around the existing open area known as The Quad, which will frame the setting of the pedestrian entrance into the new block. New hard-surfacing will provide pedestrian linkage across this area with external seating areas and down-lighting.
- Area 3 – a linear bed of planting along the western elevation of the new block.
- Areas 4 & 5 – two separate borders around the Asquith Building and College North, further softening the main pedestrian walkway.
- Area 6 – this area will provide 12 new trees located around a series of remodelled external seating areas adjacent to the football pitch.

In addition to the above, 17 trees will be lost to the development with 51 new specimens planted around the campus. The ratio accords with the Council's Tree Policy. At the time of report-writing 2 further specimens that were due to be retained adjacent to the new block were instead identified for replacement by 2 more 'upright' specimens. Subject to precise details, this minor change is considered acceptable.

7.18 The Council's Tree Protection Officer has been a participant in the pre-application process. Her objection at the time of writing this report is a technical objection, due to the fact that the proposal does not provide a full Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA). This outstanding AIA is anticipated to be submitted before the Committee date, and it is expected to reflect the principles that have been agreed during the pre-application stage. A verbal update will be provided.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 There are no planning obligations required for this proposal.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The University's Lancaster Campus has suffered due to poor legibility, wayfinding and poorly designed (1960/1970) building stock. The Gateway Building has improved this at the Bowerham Road end of the site. It is anticipated that the proposed Teaching Hub will have a similar, positive effect upon the campus at the Coulston Road part of the site.
- 9.2 Subject to the planning conditions listed and satisfactory resolution of the landscaping and highway matters, this is a scheme that will provide improved educational accommodation and it will deliver an enhanced public realm and setting to existing, important buildings. Notwithstanding future phases of the eventual Campus Masterplan, this stand-alone phase can now be supported.

Recommendation

That subject to the satisfactory receipt of the Arboricultural Implications Assessment, and the removal of the outstanding highway objection, Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year consent
2. Development as per approved plans
3. Prior to construction (not including demolition or site clearance) details of the following materials and finishes to be agreed:
 - All external materials and finishes to all buildings, including samples of elevational and roofing materials (the latter to include projection, soffit and fascia details);
 - All windows, doors and rainwater goods;
 - Depth of recess of horizontal flashings at floor levels;
 - Curtain-walling, including the vertical mullions/fins and projecting frame to the walling; zinc cladding and louvres;
 - Finish of the newly-exposed north-east elevation of the Asquith Building;
 - The dormer and entrance lobby to the Asquith Building;
 - All hard landscaping, floor surfaces and boundary treatments (including details of the retaining walls/plinth, steps, fixings, copings, mortar/pointing (including a sample panel), gabion wall, handrail, external lighting and seating features; and,
 - Paint colour of the cast iron railings.
4. Development to accord with the Arboricultural Implications Assessment (due to be submitted)
5. Landscaping and tree planting to accord with Planting Schedule
6. The four replacement parking spaces to be provided prior to the building being brought into first use
7. Scheme to accord with Construction Management Plan, including hours of construction (0800-1800 Monday to Friday and 0800-1400 Saturday, No working Sunday or Bank Holidays) and Scheme for Dust Control
8. Standard unexpected land contamination condition

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

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm that it 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.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

None.