

Agenda Item A7	Committee Date 7 March 2016	Application Number 15/01510/FUL
Application Site Lancashire Fire And Rescue Service Fire Station And 38 Cable Street Lancaster		Proposal Erection of new appliance bay building with attached canopy to cover proposed ambulance parking bays, a 2.4m high perimeter wall and gate and replacement drill tower, associated parking and soft and hard landscaping, change of use of 38 Cable Street from offices (B1) to mixed use ancillary office, washing/changing and sleeping accommodation and Relevant Demolition of existing fire station
Name of Applicant Mr Ben Bourke		Name of Agent Mr Andy Hutchinson
Decision Target Date 21 March 2016		Reason For Delay None
Case Officer		Mr Mark Cassidy
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approval

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site that is subject to this application includes the existing Lancaster Fire Station, which comprises Appliance Bays linked to two buildings which provide office, fitness, dormitory and garaging for the Fire Service. The application site also includes the adjacent 38 Cable Street, which was last used as local authority offices with a private gymnasium above.
- 1.2 Part of the site lies within the Lancaster Conservation Area and there are Grade II (23-25 North Road, The Bobbin) and Grade II* (Church of St John) Listed Buildings within close proximity. Other surrounding buildings are deemed to be locally-important, as non-designated heritage assets, and these include 28-42 North Road, and 38 Cable Street itself.
- 1.3 The site lies within Flood Zone 2, and also occupies a position within the designated Lancaster Air Quality Management Area.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The scope of the application is to demolish the existing Fire Station buildings and construct a new facility which would provide appliance parking bays for the Fire Service and a canopied area for ambulance parking. The new building would be physically linked to 38 Cable Street via a new glazed structure. As part of the proposal 38 Cable Street would be converted to provide administrative, recreational, dining and sleeping accommodation for staff. The purpose of the application is to provide modern, joint facilities for the Fire Service and for the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).
- 2.2 The application also involves demolition of the existing Drill (Training) Tower and erection of a new tower; a freestanding canopy over designated 'Rapid Response' parking bays; amended vehicular entrances to the site; the erection of a 2.4m high natural stone-faced curtilage wall; a small length of

black security fencing at the rear of the site and a new pedestrian gate; the removal of an existing tree and planting of new trees and shrubs within raised beds; and provision of ancillary (enclosed) cycle compound and refuse storage.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The existing fire station site has been the subject of a limited number of planning applications for insertion of windows or creation of car parking spaces. 38 Cable Street has been the subject of similar minor applications. None of the planning history affects the current proposal.

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
County Highways	No objections – further information has been provided regarding swept path tracking analysis. Off-site highway works will be required and can be controlled by Section 278 (Highway Act) Agreement. Other conditions include construction/demolition management plan; cycle storage; and vehicle turning spaces to be provided.
Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA)	No objections – subject to conditions regarding surface water drainage scheme; surface water lifetime management/maintenance plan; and SuDS management and maintenance plan.
Environment Agency	Comments – Acknowledge the existing fire station use; however the inclusion of the ambulance base introduces another highly vulnerable use in this Flood Zone 2 area (and an area which flooded). They recommend that the Sequential Test is robustly applied during determination to examine alternative sites. Consideration needs to be given to potential for disruption of the facility during storm events.
United Utilities	No comments received within the statutory consultation timescale.
Historic England	Comments – Welcome the re-use of Number 38 and commend the design approach taken, which has been reached via pre-application consultation. It takes the opportunity to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
Lancaster Civic Society	No objections – efforts have been made to curtail building/tower heights; the use of random course stone is in keeping with the locality; pleasing to note re-use of the St John's School arch; good to see Number 38 brought back into use. Lead roof would have been preferable, and a revised Flood Risk Assessment should be undertaken.
County Archaeology	Comments – Concern regarding the Heritage Assessment which dismisses the potential for archaeological remains. There is potential significance at this site, and they recommend a condition of archaeological recording and analysis.
Conservation Officer	Support – will bring a non-designated asset back into use; will deliver a contemporary replacement for the existing structure; and will see the stone arch from St John's School re-used. The relocation of the training tower will, on balance be a positive one. Comments regarding materials are provided as suggested conditions.
Environmental Health	No objections – Conditions regarding hours of construction and a scheme for dust control during construction to be included. No air quality objection.
Tree Protection Officer	No objections – the retention of the lime tree is desirable but that is not compatible with the scheme. The new landscaping scheme should be reconsidered to maximise public benefits, notably with regard to the car park.
Emergency Planning Officer	No comments received within the statutory consultation timescale.
Lancashire Constabulary	No objections – a series of security recommendations are provided and these have been forwarded to the applicant.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 There have been no representations other than from the consultees listed above.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) – Adopted December 2014

Policy DM20 – Accessibility and Transport
Policy DM22 – Vehicle Parking Provision
Policy DM30 – Development Affecting Listed Buildings
Policy DM31 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
Policy DM32 – The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets
Policy DM33 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets and their Setting
Policy DM34 – Archaeology
Policy DM35 – Key Design Principles
Policy DM36 – Sustainable Design
Policy DM37 – Air Quality Management and Pollution
Policy DM38 – Development and Flood Risk
Policy DM39 – Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage

6.2 Lancaster District Core Strategy – Adopted July 2008

Policy SC1 – Sustainable Development
Policy SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design
Policy SC7 – Development and the Risk of Flooding
Policy E1 – Environmental Capital
Policy E2 – Transportation Measures

6.3 Saved Policies of the Lancaster District Local Plan (Saved September 2008)

Policy T11 – Managing Private Transport (North Road and Cable Street)
Policy T15 – Non-Residential Development in Lancaster Central Parking Area

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The main issues that arise from this proposal are:

- The Principle of Development;
- Flood Risk and Site Selection;
- Design, Scale and Layout;
- Impact upon Heritage Assets, including Massing;
- Impact upon the Highway Network; and,
- Impact upon Trees.

7.2 The Principle of Development

The proposal seeks to deliver a new operational fire and ambulance station within Lancaster City Centre. This will include provision for two covered fire appliance bays and seven (canopied) ambulance parking bays. Two 'Rapid Response' bays are to be located at the rear of the site. Much of the site is already used as the City's Fire Station, and so a replacement facility raises no issues in terms of principle; similarly the principle of re-using Number 38 Cable Street for the ancillary office, dining, recreational and sleeping functions associated with the emergency services is a logical one.

7.3 Whilst there are clearly operational benefits arising from the provision of a new, shared facility, the principle of development cannot be established until the local authority is satisfied that the use is sequentially acceptable in terms of flood risk.

7.4 Flood Risk and Site Selection

The site lies within Flood Zone 2, which is identified as having a medium probability of fluvial and tidal flooding. However parts of Cable Street, including the application site, experienced severe flood disruption during the events of Storm Desmond in late-2015. Given this, it is essential to consider whether the site is a suitable location as a base for emergency services. Emergency services are nationally categorised as a 'highly vulnerable' use; meaning that they need to be

operational during flood events.

- 7.5 Where development is in an area at risk of flooding, development should be directed away from areas of highest risk. Where development is considered necessary, it is important to ensure that it is made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. To assess the suitability of the current proposal, a Sequential Test has been applied. The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to 'reasonably-available, alternative' sites areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
- 7.6 The search for an appropriate site was undertaken in advance of developing proposals for Cable Street. The operational requirements of both the Fire Service and NWS meant that a central location within the city was the only option in terms of risk/response area times. This particular requirement therefore had the effect of discounting alternative sites, including new-build, in areas to the north of the River Lune, and areas further to the south.
- 7.7 However two alternative sites within the search area were actively considered. These included (i) the Lawson's Quay site located between Caton Road and Bulk Road; and (ii) land at Back Caton Road (the land and buildings leased to the current car wash and carpet shop). With regard to the former, this site was topographically difficult for the Fire Service to provide a service from, and the site was already under (separate) offer. With regard to the latter, the site was considered too small and also would have been difficult to procure. With regard to flood risk, the Back Caton Road site is also within Flood Zone 2, and would have offered no flood classification hierarchy advantage; whilst a small section of the Lawson's Quay Site is also within the same Flood Zone. Given the difficulties associated with both sites, these options were discounted. Existing car parks around the city were also discounted during pre-application, as not being available.
- 7.8 There were no other reasonably-available (and suitable) sites within the search area. In such circumstances, an Exception Test then needs to be applied. The Exception Test is a method of ensuring that flood risk can be managed satisfactorily, thereby allowing necessary development to proceed in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available.
- 7.9 The Exception Test is in two parts; firstly it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and that a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) demonstrates that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking into account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and (where possible) will reduce flood risk overall.
- 7.10 With regard to the sustainability benefits, the supporting literature identifies that the current site is best-positioned to ensure continuity of service for the local community. It is accepted that the site is currently used as a Fire Station, and that if the current application had not been submitted, then the Fire Station would be likely to continue to operate from its' current base without any betterment in terms of delivering an improved, modern facility. This is a matter that carries significant weight. Conversely, the addition of the ambulance base introduces a further 'highly vulnerable' use to the site, which weighs against the proposal. However, the operational requirements of both emergency services and the need to be located in a central city location to serve the community are paramount, and as such it is considered that the development will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community.
- 7.11 It is then incumbent to consider the flood resilience measures that are proposed in the FRA and subsequent correspondence. These will include locating all electricity sockets at least 600mm above the 1 in 100 year (plus climate change) flood level; similar operational requirements for water, gas and electric meters; the use of concrete floors at ground level to eliminate potential for damage from flood water; use of other water-resistant materials; the incorporation of damp-proof membranes to minimise passage of water through ground floors; and the provision of flood doors to prevent all internal areas from flooding. An amended plan includes precise locations and specifications of removable flood barriers at certain parts of the building. Additionally no sleeping accommodation is proposed on the ground floor of Cable Street – all such accommodation will be located on the first floor. The FRA also confirms that the site will be registered with the Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service in the event that an evacuation is required. Finally, the applicant has confirmed that in the most extreme of circumstances (where an evacuation due to flooding is required), then appliances are able to perform their functions without station facilities for a "*significant number of days*". This is because resilient measures are already in place – and are tested on a regular basis – for refuelling, maintenance and staff welfare. Where crews require an area for temporary vehicle

housing, this will occur at another nearby station or an identified 'Strategic/Tactical Holding Area', details of which would be nominated in the station's Business Continuity Plan).

7.12 Taking all these matters into account, it is considered that a relocation of the services elsewhere - on an appropriate site and satisfying the operational requirements of the Fire Service and NWS - cannot be achieved. The FRA identifies measures that will make the proposed facility more robust in terms of flood resilience than the current Fire Service facility. Therefore subject to the implementation of the identified Flood Defence System measures, the principle of development is acceptable.

7.13 Design, Scale and Layout

The proposal has been the subject of extensive discussions via the Development Management Pre-Application Service. These have resulted in the evolution of the proposal to ensure that the local authority's concerns in terms of scale, design and layout have been resolved.

7.14 The agreed design approach results in a new stone-clad colonnade across the appliance bay frontage, returning along the front of the proposed ambulance parking bays. Translucent cladding at a higher level with a membrane roof and glazed vehicle doors will complete the front elevation. At a height of less than 7m, this building will be subservient to 38 Cable Street, and will be connected to it by a glazed link measuring approximately 6.2m in height. The general use of stone and glass in a contemporary context will deliver a building of merit that appropriately responds to its surroundings.

7.15 New windows are proposed within the eastern elevation of Cable Street, but with the exception of ventilation louvres (coated to match the existing stone), there is little change to the existing building.

7.16 Elsewhere the 2.4m high perimeter wall will be constructed from natural stone with stone coping. Sliding timber gates will have a controlled access for vehicles entering and exiting the site, and this leads to a car park and service yard. Details of the freestanding canopy at the rear of the site (over five parking bays) will be conditioned. The use of landscaping, particularly at the front of the building along Cable Street, and within the main car park, is discussed later in the report.

7.17 The existing training (drill) tower is partially hidden from some prominent views by the height of the existing Fire Station building. The provision of a lower fire station building may emphasise the training tower's height; however the tower is being replaced by a new tower, measuring approximately 13.7m in height and repositioned further to the east. The reduction in height equates to 3.5m compared to the current tower.

7.18 The proposed design, scale and layout is considered appropriate, coherent, and operationally-deliverable.

7.19 Impact upon Heritage Assets including Massing

Paragraph 1.2 of this report describes the designated and non-designated heritage assets that lie in close proximity to the site. In addition, longer-distance views of Lancaster Castle (Grade I) and the Priory and Parish Church of St Mary (Grade I) are available along Cable Street.

7.20 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Conservation Area or the setting of a listed building, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area or the setting of the building. This is reiterated by policies DM31 and DM32, with the former setting out that new buildings within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- Proposals respect the character of the surrounding built form and its wider setting in terms of design, siting, scale, massing, height and the materials used; and,
- Proposals will not result in the loss or alteration of features which contribute to the special character of the building and area; and,
- Proposed uses are sympathetic and appropriate to the character of the existing building and will not result in any detrimental impact on the visual amenity and wider setting of the Conservation Area.

- 7.21 The proposed building is modest in scale when compared to the structure it will replace. The Appliance Bay and canopy will be viewed against a backdrop of the side elevation of 38 Cable Street, which in turn (as a non-designated heritage asset) will be better revealed by the loss of the current buildings. The reduction in built form and massing also enhances the setting of St John's Church. Consecrated in 1755, the Church is an important feature of Lancaster's skyline, and the new buildings will respect this. The issue that has to be carefully considered (in relation to St John's) is the demolition of the existing training (drill) tower and the erection of a replacement tower. As paragraph 7.17 says, the lower roof heights of the fire station may accentuate the height of the training tower, particularly when viewed at distance from across the city. However there is a balance to be struck in terms of the reduction in overall scale of the tower compared to the current structure. Given this, the revised location and lower height of the new training tower has the potential to preserve the current setting of St John's (and that of the wider Conservation Area).
- 7.22 The reduction in mass also assists with enhancing the longer distance views of the Castle and the Priory from the east. Those heritage assets are surrounded by substantial trees and sit in an elevated position overlooking the city, and thus the enhancement is not a significant one, but it still represents a positive outcome arising from the evolution of this proposal. Additionally, the demolition of the existing three-storey fire station building opens up views of 23-25 North Road (Gillow's Building), which enjoys Grade II status. This would be a clear enhancement to its' setting.
- 7.23 The scheme benefits from other layout and design matters that have the potential to enhance the Conservation Area. The inclusion of soft landscaping, including a raised bed along Cable Street, is welcomed to negate the visual impact of the (necessarily-wide) entrance forecourt. The stone wall around the perimeter will help screen the required car parking spaces, whilst the retention and reuse of the original stone arch from the former St John's School is a nice touch and will make it more visible.
- 7.24 With regard to archaeology, the Heritage Assessment dismisses the possibility of archaeological remains. This conclusion is not evidenced within the submission, and is not accepted by officers. Despite the fact that the site has been redeveloped previously, the possibility of remains of local significance still exists – a view shared by the County Archaeologist. He advises that there is potential significance in the buried remains of the 18th-19th century houses along the south side of Cable Street, and in the structure of 38 Cable Street itself. Modest mitigation, in the form of a condition requiring a programme of archaeological recording and analysis, is recommended.
- 7.25 On the basis of the above, by virtue of the scale, mass, design and layout, the proposal will enhance the designated heritage assets, most particularly the Lancaster Conservation Area and the setting of St John's Church, and will also enhance the setting of the non-designated heritage assets in close proximity.
- 7.26 Impact upon the Highways Network
- The original plans required some clarification in terms of the vehicle swept path of the larger emergency vehicles. This has been provided and demonstrates that vehicles can enter the site and manoeuvre, although some works under Section 278 of the Highways Act will be necessary to deliver the revised entrance and exit arrangements. The proposal removes the existing entrance into the site immediately adjacent 38 Cable Street. This is welcomed, as visibility - in terms of potential conflict with pedestrians - is poor.
- 7.27 The main service yard is approximately 450 square metres in area – sufficient to accommodate the emergency vehicles. The revised layout also provides 29 car parking spaces. This figure reflects the expected full-time staff, permanent fire crew and ambulance personnel. Two visitor bays will be permitted on the front forecourt, but in an area framed with black-coated metal bollards to prevent indiscriminate car parking.
- 7.28 Other conditions recommended by County Highways relate to secure cycle provision (a compound for 12 cycles is to be provided at the rear of the Appliance Bays), a Demolition/Construction Traffic Management Scheme, and a condition requiring the layout permitting vehicles entering and exit the site in forward gear. Subject to these the scheme is appropriate in terms of traffic and highway impact.
- 7.29 Impact upon Trees

A lime tree occupies a position adjacent to the eastern elevation of 38 Cable Street. It sits within a slightly raised bed and provides visual and environmental benefit in this streetscene. However the tree is proposed to be removed because of the position of the new building and the need to cater for an increased parking area.

- 7.30 To mitigate the loss of the specimen, the applicant proposes to plant 7 new trees. 4 of these would be along Cable Street, whilst the remaining 3 would be provided within the parking area. The Tree Officer has no objection to the principle, but recommended reconsideration of the location of the 3 trees within the car park. However their proposed location has been chosen to help screen the longer views of the training tower, without compromising views of St John's Church. Subject to standard landscaping conditions, the development is acceptable.

7.31 Other Matters

Contaminated Land – the proposal is accompanied by a Phase 1 Desk Study. Standard planning conditions are required given the petroleum and diesel contamination likely in the sub-surface.

Noise and Dust – Environmental Health have requested conditions regarding a scheme for dust control and specified hours of construction. These will be included within a broader Construction Management Plan condition.

Air Quality – The site lies partially within the Lancaster Air Quality Management Area. Environmental Health Officers have discussed the accommodation elements of the scheme with the applicant, and they are satisfied that the scheme would not introduce any residential permanence to the site, and so no measures or conditions are requested.

8.0 Planning Obligations

- 8.1 There are no planning obligations to consider.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The proposal will replace a building that was constructed over 40 years ago and has become unfit for modern-day purpose. It will maintain a fire station within the city centre, in a position which enables them to respond expeditiously to emergencies and call-outs, and will include provision for the NWS to share the site for the same purpose. The phasing of the development will ensure that the Fire Station remains open during construction of the new facility.
- 9.2 Aside from the operational benefits, the scheme brings 38 Cable Street back into beneficial use, will remove buildings of limited quality in the Conservation Area, and will deliver new a building of merit. The evolution of the scheme during the pre-application service has benefitted all involved to the extent that officers can recommend approval, subject to the conditions below and overleaf.

Recommendation

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

1. Standard 3 year consent
2. Development as per approved plans
3. The following materials and finishes to be agreed (and development implanted in accordance with approved details):
 - Details of new windows and all modifications to 38 Cable Street (including louvres, fixed screens and doors)
 - Samples of stone heads and cills to 38 Cable Street
 - Samples of all external materials to the new build, including curtain walling, roofing (including profile) staff entrance (arch, surround and glazed doors), timber gates, and raised bed materials
 - Details of materials and finishes to new Drill Tower and Canopies
 - Details and sample of all boundary treatments, including stonework and coping.
 - Details of mortar and pointing

4. Construction Management Plan (including Hours of Work (0800-1800 Mon-Fri, 0800-1400 Sat); Scheme for Dust Control, and development to be undertaken in accordance with the agreed details.
5. Construction Traffic Management Plan (including construction parking, unloading and loading, storage of plant and materials during construction, any security hoardings, and any HGV routing that may be necessary during construction). Development to be undertaken in accordance with the agreed details.
6. Scheme for off-site highway works (Cable Street)
7. Cycle and motorcycle provision
8. Vehicles to enter and exit in forward gear
9. Surface water drainage scheme (including implementation in accordance with approved details)
10. Lifetime Management and Maintenance Plan for the sustainable drainage system.
11. Flood defence system/measures to be implemented and maintained at all times thereafter
12. Landscaping scheme to be agreed and implemented
13. Scheme of archaeological recording and analysis
14. Standard land contamination condition
15. Prevention of new contamination
16. Bunding of tanks
17. No importation of soils, materials and hardcore

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

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm the following:

Lancaster City Council has made the decision 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 decision has been taken 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.