

Agenda Item A10	Committee Date 10 December 2018	Application Number 18/01436/CU
Application Site Bus Station Central Drive Morecambe Lancashire		Proposal Change of use of bus shelter to young person's assembly and recreation building (D2).
Name of Applicant Lancaster City Council		Name of Agent N/A
Decision Target Date 4 January 2019		Reason For Delay N/A
Case Officer		Mr Robert Clarke
Departure		No
Summary of Recommendation		Approval

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, the building that forms the subject of this application is within 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 building that forms the subject of this application is a former waiting room for Morecambe Bus Station. It is located in a prominent position to the north of Central Drive, close to the junction with Northumberland Street, the bus lay-by and the existing skateboard park. The building features a grey metal clad pyramidal roof with green timber clad elevations. The bus station shelter was originally erected to provide a seated passenger waiting area, toilets and information display areas for bus passengers. The building has not functioned as a bus shelter for a number of years.
- 1.2 The site is located within the boundary of the Morecambe Area Action Plan, specifically within the Town Centre designation, Development Opportunity site D05 as well as forming part of a Key Public Space and Key Pedestrian Route. The Morecambe Conservation Area is located 40 metres to the north east.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This application seeks permission to change the use of this former waiting room building to be used as a young people's assembly and recreation building (D2).

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 There is a limited planning history associated with the site which is set out overleaf.

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
97/00821/DPA	Erection of a bus station building, bus shelters and creation of associated car park	Permitted
04/00029/DPA	Change of use of part of bus station to skateboard park	Permitted
17/01431/PAD	Prior approval for the demolition of Bus Station building	Prior approval granted

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
County Highways	No objection
Conservation Team	In support of the application
Regeneration Team	No response at the time of compiling this report
Lancashire Constabulary	In support of the application
Environmental Health	No response at the time of compiling this report
Parish Council	No response at the time of compiling this report
Ward Councillor	No response at the time of compiling this report

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 1 letter of **objection** has been received by the Local Planning Authority raising concerns about anti-social behaviour.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 12 – Achieving well designed places
Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following 2 Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations 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. The DPDs were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 15 May 2018 for independent Examination, which is scheduled to commence in spring 2019. If the Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council later in 2019.

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 2017, 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

DM32 – The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets
DM35 – Key Design Principles

6.4 Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)

SC1 – Sustainable Development
SC6 – Crime and Community Safety

6.5 Morecambe Area Action Plan Policies:

SP1 – Key pedestrian routes and spaces
SP4 – Town Centre
DO5 – Festival Market and area

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The main issues are:

- Principle of the use
- Design and impact upon the wider locality

7.2 Principle of the use

7.2.1 The building that forms the subject of this application is a former waiting room that once served the adjacent bus station. The building has not been formally used in this capacity for a number of years and has subsequently fallen into a state of disrepair. For this reason and without the prospect of a formal use the building had previously been granted Prior Approval to be demolished.

7.2.2 Morecambe Town Centre has identified anti-social behaviour 'hotspots'; the presence of such dispersed and difficult to manage areas creates difficulties in crime prevention and neighbourhood policing. The building is now proposed to be used as an assembly point and recreation building for young people that will be open for use at all hours. In practice this is to be a safe space that young people will be encouraged to utilise in preference to less desirable locations in the Town Centre. Since the use of the building as a waiting room ceased, it has formed an informal gathering place for young people though this has not been subject to a management scheme. This application seeks to regularise this use and ensure it can be adequately managed to ensure the building remains a suitable and attractive space in which a young person can socialise.

7.2.3 The location of the building is considered to be suitable, it is located close to areas of the town centre that currently experience issues with anti-social behaviour and in close proximity to the skateboard park. The principle of providing a managed building in a central location close to existing facilities that will provide a place in which young people can gather is supported.

7.2.4 Some concern has been raised by a local resident regarding the management of the use and its potential implications in terms of security and crime. The building is situated in a central town centre location in a prominent position that can be easily observed from the surrounding area. The local Neighbourhood Policing team of the Lancashire Constabulary have been in discussions with the applicant from an early stage in the development process and are in support of the proposal.

7.3 Design and impact upon the wider locality

7.3.1 No external alterations are proposed as part of this development. The building is currently in a poor state of repair and refurbishment will take place prior to the building being brought into formal use, including the installation of plexi-glass to the window openings, interior painting and the permanent blocking up of the internal toilets and cleaners cupboard in order to make this a more attractive and safe space in which to congregate.

- 7.3.2 The subject building forms a key urban space within the boundary of the Morecambe Area Action Plan and is viewed in the context of Morecambe Conservation Area which is located 40 metres to the northwest.
- 7.3.3 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Listed building, a Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by policies DM30, DM31 and DM32.
- 7.3.4 As set out above, the building has fallen into a state of disrepair, the re-purposing of this building will allow for an ongoing maintenance scheme to be established and implemented to ensure that this remains an attractive space for young people. In doing so the visual appearance of the structure will be enhanced and maintained. In view of its association with the Key Pedestrian Route into Morecambe town centre from the bus station and train station and its proximity to the Conservation Area boundary the buildings use and maintenance is considered an enhancement in this setting.
- 7.3.5 The building is within a town centre location which features a number of late opening uses. In addition to this, the site is located within the setting of numerous well used highways, the bus and train stations and existing skateboard park. Combined with a separation distance of 50 metres to the closest residential occupier, the proposed use will not significantly increase existing noise levels currently experienced by neighbouring residents.

8.0 Planning Obligations

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

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The former waiting room building has not had a formal use for a number of years. This proposal effectively seeks to regularise the use of the building as a young people's assembly point and recreational space. This use will then be subject to a regular management regime by both the City Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team and the Lancashire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Team that will both ensure the safety and security of those using the space and surrounding residents. The building will also be the subject of regular maintenance to ensure that it remains a suitable space for young persons to use.

Recommendation

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

1. Standard 3 year timescale
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans

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