

<b>Agenda Item</b> A10	<b>Committee Date</b> 7 January 2019	<b>Application Number</b> 18/00852/LB
<b>Application Site</b>  Grand Theatre St Leonards Gate Lancaster Lancashire		<b>Proposal</b>  Listed building application for removal of external stairwells and ramps and erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre
<b>Name of Applicant</b>  Mr Michael Hardy		<b>Name of Agent</b>  Mr Fenton
<b>Decision Target Date</b>  9 November 2018		<b>Reason For Delay</b>  Committee cycle and revised information/plans
<b>Case Officer</b>		Ms Charlotte Seward
<b>Departure</b>		No
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>		Approval

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

- 1.1 The Lancaster Grand is an established theatre. The building is Grade II Listed and lies within the Lancaster Conservation Area (Character Area 5). The site lies adjacent to St Leonards House, which is also Grade II Listed. The site also falls within the Canal Corridor North site.
- 1.2 The Grand Theatre building was Listed for its historic association as the first theatre established in Lancaster in 1782. The building has been altered and damaged by fire, but overall retains its historic Neo-Classical external appearance with an early-20th century interior. The building is constructed in sandstone rubble, with a rendered façade. Historically, there were terraced buildings to the north of the theatre which were demolished in the 1960s for a link road which was not developed. This has eroded the historic association of the setting of the theatre, but does allow for the building to be appreciated along the main street.
- 1.3 There are a number of trees within the site. The parts of the site that are subject to 1:1000 surface water flood risk are along its frontage with St Leonard's Gate and its return frontage along Lodge Street. These 2 aforementioned roads are also subject to surface water flood risk of 1:30 and 1:100 risk in the immediate vicinity of the theatre.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 This application seeks permission for listed building consent for the removal of external stairwells and ramps and erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre.

## **3.0 Site History**

- 3.1 A similar application was approved in 2008 (08/00421/FUL and 08/00422/LB). This permission lapsed due to lack of implementation. In 2015 (15/00965/FUL and 15/00964/LB) a very similar application was made. This application was withdrawn due issues in relation to the impact on the adopted highway not being able to be resolved within the scope and character of the application made.

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
15/00965/FUL	Removal of existing single storey store house and external fire escape staircase to the side elevation, erection of a two storey side extension	Withdrawn
15/00964/LB	Listed building application for the removal of existing single storey store house and external fire escape to the side elevation, erection of a 2-storey side extension, creation of 2 doorways at the lower ground level, 1 doorway at the upper ground and 2 doorways at the first floor level, removal of the existing first floor bar and toilets and installation of replacement toilets	Withdrawn
08/00421/FUL	Part removal of existing single storey store house and external fire escape staircase at the north eastern elevation. Development of a two storey side extension to provide additional foyer accommodation and associated alteration	Permitted
08/00422/LB	Listed building consent for part removal of existing single storey store house and external fire escape staircase at the north eastern elevation. Development of a two storey side extension to provide additional foyer accommodation and associated alterations	Permitted

#### **4.0 Consultation Responses**

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

Consultee	Response
<b>Conservation Officer</b>	<b>No objection.</b> Whilst during the determination period some clarifications have been provided on the information submitted, further justification and details are required which will need to be conditioned. The proposal will still lead to a level of harm to the Listed building, considered to be less than substantial, but some of the harm has been mitigated by the design which will allow the side elevation of the principal Listed building to still be appreciated from within the extension and the contemporary high quality design will make a positive addition to this part of the Conservation Area.
<b>Theatres Trust</b>	<b>Support.</b> Audience experience will be significantly enhanced. Performance rehearsal place will provide the theatre with help to maximise income. Removal of later additions to side will enhance, the proposal is minimal impact and the setting will be improved. Decorative features around box office door should be retained. Design suggestions made in relation to the placement of the disabled toilet.

#### **5.0 Neighbour Representations**

5.1 No representations received.

#### **6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies**

##### **6.1 National Planning Policy Framework**

- 127-130: Achieving well-designed places
- 193-202: Considering impacts on 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:

- The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- 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

- DM30: Development affecting listed buildings
- DM31: Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- DM32: The setting of Designated Heritage Assets
- DM35: Key design principles

## 7.0 Comment and Analysis

### 7.1 Design and impact on designated heritage assets

- 7.1.1 National policy states that development should be of good design that contributes positively to making places better for people, requiring development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. It is clear that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take opportunities for improving the quality and character of an area. Local policy echoes this requiring that design should have regard to local distinctiveness have appropriate siting, layout, materials, orientation and scale.
- 7.1.2 The NPPF states that (para 193) that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of the degree of harm the proposal would result in. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification (para 194). Where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (para 196).
- 7.1.3 The proposal involves the removal of a modern inappropriate fire escape and a single storey extension, which would be of benefit to the appearance of the building. This elevation would then be altered and extended to allow for a contemporary part glazed and part cladded extension which would connect to the Lancaster Grand and the adjacent original cottages. This scheme is reflective of the original scheme permitted in 2008 and the scheme submitted in 2015.
- 7.1.4 Following detailed assessment of the proposal, it is considered that the principle of a modern extension is acceptable. It is clear that there is a need for the proposed extension as the existing reception area, bar and disabled access are all constrained and negatively impact on the user experience of the building. There is also a lack of alternative performance space and a lack of suitable space for customers to use the building during the day. As such there is a clear need for the extension to enhance and improve the theatre experience at this site. In relation to the design of the proposed extension, given the scale, form and design of the Listed building, the situation of the building relative to neighbouring buildings it is considered that the only option for extending the facilities at the theatre would be to the north east elevation of the building (as proposed), and that it would be very difficult to extend in a traditional manner in a way that would maintain and enhance the Listed building. The design of the extension has been carefully considered to have a glazed connection to the existing buildings, allowing the original building to be perceived, and the bulk of the structure to be set out from the original building. The design of the building to use rain screen

cladding and glazing materials would also result in a quality clean finish which would be distinct but complementary both to the sandstone rubble and the rendered façade.

- 7.1.5 There are a number of details that have raised concern. This includes the intersection of the extension with the existing blocked up windows. Whilst it would be preferable to have these windows left unaffected by the extension and fully perceived internally, any increase to the height of the building would result in the overall scale of the building being too great, which would be overbearing on the original building in scale. In addition to this the solidity of the connection of the modern extension to the existing elevation has raised concern. Revised plans have been submitted to remove the plaster cladding to the existing external north east wall so that this will be left exposed within the building, ensuring that the original wall can be perceived and understood in the new extension internally and through the glazed connection. Alternative options for the sizing and location of extraction and ventilation equipment has been considered to reduce the scale of the building, and therefore its impact on the existing elevation, but no smaller size units or alternative locations that would have a reduced level of harm could be identified.
- 7.1.6 No further details have been provided about the connection points of the extension to the building. Whilst it would be preferable to have this information upfront it is considered that the principle of the connection can be considered acceptable, subject to the final details of the scheme being agreed through condition.
- 7.1.7 Clearly the overall finished quality of the development very much hinges on the final detail and execution of the works. In order to ensure this, conditions would be required (in addition to those set out above) in relation to stonework repairs, materials, external/internal doors, balustrades and bollards, surfacing, lighting, flues and vents, rainwater goods and internal fixtures.
- 7.1.8 National policy requires that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and where there is less than substantial harm to the significant of the Listed building, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Overall it is concluded that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the Listed building, but it is recognised that the design of the extension has been optimally considered to ensure the least harm or impact to the Listed building and its settling. The scheme would clearly result in the optimal use of the heritage asset and would have considerable public benefit from ensuring the growth and bringing up of the existing facility modern standards and expectations of a theatre. On this basis, subject to the conditions proposed, it is considered that the public benefit of the scheme would outweigh any harm to the Listed building and also ensure a high quality finish to the development.

## **8.0 Planning Obligations**

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

## **9.0 Conclusions**

- 9.1 The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure that the impact on the Listed building would not amount to greater than less than substantial harm. It is considered that this harm is outweighed by the public benefit that would result from the enhancement of the facilities at the theatre which are desperately needed to secure its continued growth and success. Subject to conditions, matters relating to design and materials can be adequately dealt with by condition. It is considered that this application can be recommended for approval.

## **Recommendation**

That Listed Building Consent **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard listed building consent timescale
2. Development to accord with listed plans
3. Details and samples of all external materials:
  - cladding
  - roof materials
  - frames
  - fin details

- glazing
  - external doors
  - balustrades and bollards
  - surfacing treatments
  - external lighting, including any lighting to window arches
  - flues and vents
  - rainwater goods
4. Details and samples of all internal materials:  
internal doors  
internal fixtures (including bar and storage space)
5. Details of fixtures to the main building (inc. details of connection to exposed window arches)

**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