

DECISION DATE 27 March 2007	APPLICATION NO. 07/00124/FUL A11	PLANNING COMMITTEE: 19 March 2007
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOVERCRAFT HOUSING BUILDING		SITE ADDRESS LAND ADJACENT STONE JETTY MARINE ROAD CENTRAL MORECAMBE LANCASHIRE LA4 4BY
APPLICANT: Royal National Lifeboat Institution West Quay Road Poole Dorset BH15 1HZ		AGENT: Thomas Associates

REASON FOR DELAY

N/A

PARISH NOTIFICATION

Views awaited, any comments will be reported directly to Committee.

LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE

Lancaster District Local Plan - Site protected under European of International Conservation designation (Morecambe Bay cSAC/SPA/Ramsar site). Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

Natural England - Site is located within the Morecambe Bay cSAC/SPA/Ramsar site. Formal views over the actual proposal awaited, however, no objections raised in 2005 (English Nature) to the principle of the development. At the time, it was considered that as the proposed building is to be located on existing rock armour it would be unlikely that a planning application would be significant as regards to possible adverse effect upon the ecological integrity of the Morecambe Bay European site.

County Highways - No objections in principle to the development - Noted that the design statement indicated that 'parking would be allocated off site with the agreement of the traffic authorities'. This could not be reserved and designated 'off highway' crew parking would need to be agreed with other parties.

Environmental Health Officer - Views awaited.

Property Services - Views awaited.

Archaeology Unit - No comments to make.

Chief Engineer - Views awaited, any comments will be reported directly to Committee.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED

None to date; any comment will be reported directly to Committee.

REPORT

Site and its Surroundings

The application site is located at the junction of the promenade and The Stone Jetty alongside the extended slipway. The building and forecourt access are placed on made ground in front of the original promenade over the embankment of boulders that currently act as part of the sea defences.

The landward side of the site comprises the open promenade and beyond the open vacant site, formerly the Harbour Band Arena and the vacant Bubbles complex. The area neighbouring the site, excluding the Midland Hotel form part of a redevelopment zone with comprehensively redevelopment due to commence in 2008. The site is currently in the preliminary design phase with partners, Urban Splash, Flaqc (Architects) and Lancaster City Council.

The Proposal

The current application seeks to develop a building and open forecourt area to house the RNLI's hovercraft. The building and forecourt is located over an area of boulders, currently forming part of the sea defence works to the seaward side of the promenade, close to the Stone Jetty. The development comprises a tall single storey building and a new forecourt area alongside the original promenade.

The building is angled towards the promenade and has a footprint of a 'flat iron' with the point of the building facing towards the Bubbles complex. The roof of the building is proposed to be a curved metal standing seam, the lower end (2.5m) of the roof facing the promenade and rising to a height of 7.0m above promenade level on its seaward elevation. The main materials for the walling are natural sandstone with the introduction of render/cladding panelling around the main window and entrance.

The main access to the building is on the elevation facing the stone jetty and slipway. This arrangement allows the hover craft to run out of the building, over the forecourt and down the slipway to launch but also will allow the hovercraft to be loaded onto a vehicle and transported to other areas. Parking for two essential cars is also available within the forecourt area.

Planning History

The application has no relevant planning history.

Planning Policy

The application site is located within an area protected under European of International Conservation designation (Morecambe Bay cSAC/SPA/Ramsar site) and will need to be considered against policy E15 of the Lancaster District Local Plan. In addition the site is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the development will also need to be considered against policy E16 of the Lancaster District Local Plan.

Both Policy E15 and E16 are protectionist in nature seeking to resist any development that will damage or destroy the designated site. As indicated earlier, English Nature (now Natural England) raised no objections to the principle of the development at the initial concept stage in March 2005. It was considered that as the proposed building is to be located on existing rock armour it would be unlikely that a planning application would be significant as regards to possible adverse effect upon the ecological

integrity of the Morecambe Bay European site. The formal views of Natural England are awaited on this detailed proposal, however, it is anticipated that no objections will be raised over the development.

Comments

This proposal and application site is the result of longstanding discussions with the applicant and other consultees in seeking a suitable location for the hovercraft station. Members may recall that the current temporary location of the hovercraft is within a car parking area to the rear of Hornby Terrace and is not considered to be an ideal situation. The applicants are also on notice to vacate this site. A number of locations have been considered on the promenade frontage resulting in this application.

The site is considered suitable for the needs of the RNLI as it has direct access via the new slipway to the foreshore and has the benefit of good vehicle access to allow loading and transportation to other areas.

As indicated earlier in the report, the site is located opposite the redevelopment zone comprising the Harbour Band Arena and the bubbles complex. The agent have indicated that the location of the new RNLI station has been considered in respect of the preliminary design for the zone in an effort to minimise its impact upon its potential neighbours. It is understood that the developers Urban Splash and architects, Flaqc have been kept up to date with the current application and have been forwarded a copy of the submission.

The hovercraft station is considered to be sensitively located in respect of the draft design. The overall height, orientation and final distances from the redevelopment site helping to minimise impact upon the future development site.

Conclusion

The development is one which is considered appropriate to the area, developing a permanent building for the hovercraft, within a striking bespoke building utilising a contemporary design with a mixture of traditional and modern materials. Subject to no significant objection being raised by the consultees the application should be supported.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

This application has to be considered in relation to the provisions of the Human Rights Act, in particular Article 8 (privacy/family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Having regard to the principles of proportionality, it has been concluded that there are no issues arising from the proposal which appear 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That subject to no significant objections being raised by the consultees that **PERMISSION BE GRANTED** with the following conditions: -

1. Standard Time Limit
2. Development to be built in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Samples of the external material to be submitted and approved.
4. Precise detail of the foundation design and any encroachment upon existing sea defence construction.
5. As may be required by the consultees.