

Agenda Item	A7
Application Number	22/00036/LB
Proposal	Listed building application for removal of single storey toilet block, external stairwells and ramps, and erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre
Application site	Grand Theatre St Leonards Gate Lancaster Lancashire
Applicant	Mr Michael Hardy
Agent	Ms Joanna Holland
Case Officer	Mrs Petra Williams
Departure	No
Summary of Recommendation	Approval, subject to conditions.

(i) Procedural Matters

The application would normally be dealt with under delegated powers but as the site includes land in the ownership of the City Council the application must go before Planning Committee.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

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 opposite 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 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 two 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 Proposal

2.1 The submission is a Listed building application for removal of single storey toilet block, external stairwells and ramps, and erection of a 2-storey extension. A similar application was approved in January 2019 (18/00832/FUL and 18/00852/LB) but was not implemented due to funding issues.

3.0 Site History

3.1 A number of relevant applications relating to this site have previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. These include:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
22/00048/FUL	Relevant Demolition of part of Music Co-op building, single storey toilet block, boundary walls and external stairwells and ramps, and erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre, extension of existing car park, construction of a retaining wall, construction of a replacement access ramp and steps, and repair to exposed facades of music Co-op building	Pending consideration
22/01307/LB	Listed building application for the installation of lighting to front and side elevations, installation of signs to side elevations, facade repair to front elevation	Permitted
19/01530/LB	Listed Building application for the removal of render and repointing to the Lodge Street elevation, installation of one CCTV camera and installation of a defibrillator cabinet to the side elevation	Permitted
18/00832/FUL	Relevant Demolition of part of Music Co-op building, boundary walls and external stairwells and ramps, erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre and a retaining wall, and repair to exposed facades of music Co-op building	Permitted
18/00852/LB	Listed building application for removal of external stairwells and ramps and erection of a 2-storey extension to the Grand Theatre	Permitted
18/01623/LB	Listed building application for the installation of one CCTV camera	Permitted
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 internal consultees:

Consultee	Response
Historic England	No comments received
Conservation Team	No objections - This scheme is essentially the same design as the 2018 submission. We support the minor changes in terms of parking access and circulation.
County Archaeology	No objections – Requests a condition for a programme of archaeological work.
The Theatres Trust	No comments received
Lancaster Civic Society	No objections - Welcomes plans to expand the reception facilities and other offices at this historic site.
National Amenity Societies	No comments received

4.2 The following responses have been received from members of the public:

- No representations received.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle
- Design and impact on designated heritage assets

5.2 **Principle** (NPPF Section 2: Achieving Sustainable Development)

5.2.1 The accompanying full planning application (22/00048/FUL), which also appears on this Committee Agenda, outlines the planning considerations in this case relating to matters that require full planning consent. This Listed Building application considers the impact of the proposed alterations upon the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.

5.2.2 The principle of the proposed extension and works to the Listed Building has previously been accepted under the 18/00852/LB consent which has now lapsed. The aforementioned application will determine the principle of all the works collectively. The application has been considered to be acceptable and put forward with a recommendation for approval.

5.3 **Design and impact on designated heritage assets** (NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places and Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment; Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD Policy SP7: Maintaining Lancaster's Unique Heritage; Development Management (DM) DPD Policies DM29: Key Design Principles, DM30: Sustainable Design, DM37: Development affecting Listed Buildings and DM38: Development affecting Conservation Areas)

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 The proposal relates to a Grade II Listed Building, which is situated in a Conservation Area. As outlined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the local authority should have a desirability of preserving the Listed Building and any features of special interest which it possesses (s.16 and 66) and preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72). The NPPF states that (para 199) 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 200). 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 202).

- 5.3.3 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 schemes submitted and approved in 2015 and 2018. The proposal will also facilitate the creation of a plaza area which will provide a public realm enhancement. The current scheme involves a small area within the adjacent City Council Pay and Display car park, which has been leased to the Lancaster Footlights in order to support delivery of the foyer extension which, together with external improvements, is identified as a key project within the Lancaster High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme.
- 5.3.4 It is considered that the principle of a modern extension remains 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.
- 5.3.5 As in the case of the 2018 submission, concerns have been raised regarding the marginal intersection of the extension with the existing blocked up windows on the north-east elevation. 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. Therefore, in order to maintain the right proportions of the building as a whole, the roof of the proposed scheme is at a height where it intersects with the top of the arches, which means part of each arch is not visible. Although the tops of the arches may be hidden from view, the existing stone theatre wall will remain completely exposed. As in the case of the previous approval details of the connection points of the extension to the building will be conditioned.
- 5.3.6 Clearly the overall finished quality of the development will hinge 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.
- 5.3.7 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.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

6.1 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:

Condition no.	Description	Type
1	Standard listed building consent timescale	Control
2	Development to accord with listed plans	Standard
3	Details and samples of all external materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	Pre-commencement
4	Details and samples of all internal materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• internal doors• internal fixtures (including bar and storage space)	Pre-commencement
5	Details of fixtures to the main building (inc. details of connection to exposed window arches)	Pre-commencement

Background Papers

None