

Report for Planning Committee – 13th January 2020

Ref No: 3PL/2019/0827/F

The Railway Station, Station Road Attleborough

Demolition of the two small ancillary buildings. Redevelopment of the existing car park to include new car park area to be laid out including new parking bays, ticket machine and CCTV and lighting. Demo of existing boundary retaining wall and construction of new realigned wall, footway/cycleway and new bus stop.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 Reason for Committee Consideration

The application is referred to Planning Committee at the request of a Ward Representative.

2 Key Issues

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building
- Impact upon amenity
- Highway safety

3 Description of development

3.1 Full planning permission is sought for;

- the demolition of two small ancillary buildings;
- redevelopment of the existing car park area to be laid out including new car parking bays, ticket machine, CCTV and external lighting, and;
- demolition of existing boundary retaining wall and construction of new realigned wall, footway/cycleway and
- a new bus stop.

3.2 Access to the site is via the existing access off Station Road (B1077).

3.3 The application is submitted in addition to planning ref: 3PL/2019/0780/LB, which seeks listed building consent for the proposed works.

4 Site and location

4.1 The proposed development is located north east of Station Road, Attleborough, on approximately 3208 square metres of land, which is currently used as a car park for the railway station, but also partially covered by trees, shrubs and two out-buildings. It is within the settlement boundary for Attleborough and is surrounded by built development, including the railway station and line, which is directly to the south east of the site. Attleborough railway station is a Grade II Listed building and the land subject to the application, including the two out-buildings proposed for demolition fall within the station's curtilage and are therefore curtilage listed.

5 EIA Required

No

6 Relevant site history

3PL/2018/0084/LB Permission 24-08-18

Proposed repair works to building. Externals: Roof repair, Lead replacement, Brick rendering, Replace windows to Single glazing, Replace missing chimney pot. Internals: Hack off all plasterwork to expose brickwork up to 1.0m from floor level and leave to dry out, Repair ceiling and joists repair.

3PL/2019/0780/LB

Demolition of the two small ancillary buildings, redevelopment of the existing car park to include new car park area to be laid out including new car parking bays, ticket machine and cctv and lighting. Demolition of the existing boundary retaining wall and construction of new realigned wall, footway-cycleway and a new bus stop.

7 Policy considerations

7.1 The following policies of the Breckland Local Plan, including the Proposals Maps, have been taken into consideration in the determination of this application.

COM01 Design

COM03 Protection of Amenity

EC04 Employment Development Outside General Employment Areas

ENV07 Designated Heritage Assets

ENV08 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

GEN02 Promoting High Quality Design

LBC Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

NP Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan

The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance have also been taken into account, where appropriate, in particular Section 16 of the NPPF, paragraphs 193-202.

8 Obligations/CIL

Not Applicable

9 Consultations

Attleborough Town Council

Approve - Concerns regarding parking charges.

Historic Buildings Consultant

The two structures proposed for demolition are curtilage listed as they are within the curtilage of the principal building and clearly predate the 1st of July 1948. The comment received from Historic England is noted although you will appreciate that they have worded their response to neither suggest objection nor support. It merely indicates that they defer to my comment.

I have inspected the buildings, externally, and in my opinion, the building to the south-west (the larger of the two) should be retained and restored. The building to the east however, has been significantly altered since its primary construction and is in the worst overall condition. In all likelihood, an attempt to restore this building would result in a complete rebuild dictating a complete loss of any special interest. With some creative thinking, the restored building could easily be given a new adaptive reuse. Consequently, I am unable to support the current application.

Additional comment received 18 December 2019:

In my opinion, the additional information submitted on 16th December 2019 does demonstrate an appropriate response to Para. 195 of the NPPF and I can no longer sustain my previous objection to the proposals.

10 Representations

A site notice was displayed on 22 July 2019 and twelve neighbours directly consulted. Four representations were received, including three objections and one letter with comments;

Objections

-Loss of curtilage listed buildings - these buildings are connected to the history of the Station and should be preserved equally. Other stations in the area (Lowestoft Station) have restored buildings to provide a community asset. The owners have allowed these buildings to fall into a state of disrepair. They should not be neglected and then demolished. They are listed for good reason and should be protected.

Comments

-Highway safety queries in respect of the proposed bus stop and visibility for users entering / exiting existing properties on the same side of the road and buses entering and exiting the site, given the likely increase in traffic that will be caused by new housing development within Attleborough.

11 Assessment notes

Principle of development

- 11.1 This application has been considered in conjunction with the associated Listed Building Consent application ref: 3PL/2019/0780/LB.

- 11.2 Policy EC 04 of the Breckland Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) states that proposals for employment uses outside of the identified General Employment Area and allocated sites will only be permitted where they meet a certain set of criteria. One such criteria is the expansion of an existing business. The proposed works relate to an existing business, which is seeking to improve customer facilities, by re-designing and in turn increasing the current provision of customer car parking spaces within its facility. Therefore, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable, having due regard to Policy EC 04 of the Breckland Local Plan.

Design and impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building

- 11.3 Part 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 clearly states that any object or structure within the curtilage of the (principal) building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before the 1st of July 1948, shall be treated as part of the (principal) building. In this instance the principle building is the Railway Station, which was listed at Grade II, in September 2011. Section 66 of the Act states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

- 11.4 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In addition, paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

- 11.5 Paragraph 195 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

“a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”

- 11.6 Policy ENV 07 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that the significance of designated Heritage Assets (including their settings), such as Listed Buildings, will be conserved, or wherever possible, enhanced. Great weight shall be given to their conservation. Proposals that may affect the significance of a designated heritage asset will be required to provide proportionate evidence to the assets importance, sufficient to identify its significance, including any contribution that its setting makes to enable any impact to be fully assessed, in accordance with the NPPF (2019). Where a proposed development will affect the character or setting of a Listed Building, particular regard will need to be given to the protection, conservation and potential enhancement of any features of historic or architectural interest; including within the curtilage of a Listed Building that predates 1 July 1948.
- 11.7 The proposal involves the following works; the demolition of two small ancillary buildings; redevelopment of the existing car park area to be laid out including new car parking bays, ticket machine, CCTV and external lighting, and; demolition of existing boundary retaining wall and construction of new realigned wall, footway/cycleway and a new bus stop.
- 11.8 Historic England were consulted as part of the application process and advised that they would not wish to offer any comments on the application. However, they did recommend that the Local Planning Authority obtain a view from the Council's specialist heritage adviser.
- 11.9 The Historic Buildings Officer initially raised an objection to the proposal as a whole. However, he advised that in respect of the building to the east, it has been significantly altered since its primary construction and is in the worst overall condition. In all likelihood, he considered that an attempt to restore this building would result in a complete rebuild dictating a complete loss of any special interest. There was no initial objection to the loss of that building.
- 11.10 In response to the Historic Buildings Officer's comments regarding the proposed demolition of the two curtilage listed out-buildings, the applicant provided further information regarding the viability of retaining the larger building for use and addressing the criteria set out at paragraph 195 of the NNPOF, having regard to the conclusion from the Historic Buildings advisor at that the loss of the western building would be "substantial".
- 11.11 It concluded that the buildings were in a dilapidated state and the demolition of the buildings would allow for the construction of a modern car parking facility to serve the station as well as an enhanced bus stop facility.
- 11.12 It also pointed out that a report and advice received from the independent Railway Heritage Trust expressed astonishment that the buildings should be considered heritage assets. The applicants consider that they have demonstrated the buildings' asset life expiration and the level of investment required in their restoration, with no evidence of interest from local persons or organisations to take on the responsibilities for repair and ongoing maintenance. Should the retention of the buildings be recommended then

Greater Anglia's investments of over £1million in the facilities at Attleborough will be removed and it may put at risk the separate aspirations to improve the bus stopping provisions which they understand would be unpopular with the people of Attleborough as they have received the Town Council's support of the proposal.

- 11.13 The 16th December 2019 submission also details the benefits of bringing the site forward for car parking and weighing that benefit against the loss of the buildings.
- 11.14 It is accepted that the growth associated with Attleborough will require the re-development of the facilities at Attleborough Station and that this can be seen to outweigh the loss of the two buildings.
- 11.15 In light of the above considerations relating to the justification for the loss of the buildings when assessed against paragraph 195 of the NPPF that the proposal, which includes the loss of two curtilage listed buildings, is acceptable.
- 11.16 In coming to that conclusion regard has been had to policies COM 01 and ENV 07 of the Breckland Local Plan as well as the requirements of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in particular Section 66.

Impact upon amenity

- 11.17 Policy COM 03 of the Breckland Local Plan seeks to protect residential amenity and states that development will not be permitted, which causes unacceptable effects on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants, or does not provide for adequate levels of amenity for future occupants. Consideration will be had to a number of factors including (but not limited to); the protection of adequate areas of usable and secluded private amenity space for the occupiers of existing dwellings; overlooking of windows of habitable rooms and private amenity space; odour, noise vibration or other forms of nuisance, such as artificial light pollution and other forms of pollution, such as dust, air pollution etc.
- 11.18 Whilst it is acknowledged that dwellings are located nearby, they are separated from the site by either Station Road, existing commercial businesses, or the Attleborough Town Football Club's access. Given the site's existing long established use as a car park and the proposed works, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on amenity when having due regard to Policy COM 03 of the Local Plan. Therefore, in terms of amenity considerations, the application is considered to be policy compliant.

Highway safety

- 11.19 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF (2019) states that applications for development should ensure that;
- appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be (or have been) taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and,

- any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

11.20 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2019) states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

11.21 Policy COM 01(m) states that new development should not compromise highway safety. In addition, it should enable safe access for vehicles and for walking and cycling. Policy COM 01(n) states that new development must provide adequate parking as outlined in TR 01 and consideration of safe storage for bicycles.

11.22 The site is already used for parking and it is considered that there are no highway objections.

12 Conclusion

12.1 It is considered that sufficient information has been submitted to justify the loss of the out-buildings on site which are curtilage listed. The proposal is considered to meet the test set out at paragraph 195 of the NPPF and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990. The proposal also complies with Policies ENV 07 and COM 01(a) of the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Conditions

Full Permission Time Limit (3 years)

1 The development must be begun not later than the expiration of THREE YEARS beginning with the date of this permission.

In accordance with submitted plans

2 The development must be carried out in strict accordance with the application form, and approved documents and drawings as set out in the table at the end of this notice.

Access and car park laid out prior to use

3 The access and parking shown on the approved plans shall be laid out and surfaced to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority prior to the application site being used for parking. Any area so provided shall be maintained and made available permanently for that purpose to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

Access to building

- 4 Prior to demolition of the buildings the developer shall provide a full photographic survey of the buildings to be demolished to be carried out before and during the course of works hereby approved. The type and manner of the survey to be provided shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development and shall be carried out in accordance with those details as approved.

Surfacing of parking etc, scheme to be submitted & implemented

- 5 Prior to the commencement of any works other than clearance precise details of the construction, surfacing and drainage of the parking and servicing areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such work shall be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before the final completion of the development and thereafter retained.

Variation of approved plans

- 6 Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action. You or your agent or any person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Development Control Section immediately of any proposed variation from the approved plans and ask to be advised to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new application.