

**COMMITTEE DATE:** [27/09/2016](#)

**Application Reference:** **16/0363**

WARD: Talbot  
DATE REGISTERED: 28/06/16  
LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION: Town Centre Boundary  
Winter Gardens  
Defined Inner Area

APPLICATION TYPE: Outline Planning Permission  
APPLICANT: Blackpool Council

**PROPOSAL:** Erection of three storey extension to existing Winter Gardens complex to form conference centre fronting Leopold Grove, erection of single storey link extension to ballroom and associated demolition works (Outline Application)

**LOCATION:** WINTER GARDENS, 97 CHURCH STREET, BLACKPOOL, FY1 1HW

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**Summary of Recommendation:** Grant Permission

#### **CASE OFFICER**

Mr M Shaw

#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

This outline planning application is submitted to meet a funding application requirement and is expected to be followed with a detailed planning application and an application for listed building consent in the near future as the proposal is worked up in more detail.

#### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application relates to the Winter Gardens, a Grade II\* Listed Building, in a block bounded by Church Street, Leopold Grove, Adelaide Street, Coronation Street, Adelphi Street and Carter Street.

The Winter Gardens complex dates back to the 1870's and the site was extended and developed up until 1939. The main areas within the complex are the vestibule, Floral Hall, Ambulatory and Pavilion Theatre, Arena, Opera House, Empress Ballroom, The Olympia and the Spanish Hall suite which comprises the Spanish Hall, Galleon Bar, Renaissance Room and Baronial Hall. This application relates to the recently cleared site on Leopold Grove frontage which is currently used as a surface level car park and fenced off from Leopold Grove.

The Winter Gardens complex is within the designated Town Centre and the Town Centre Conservation Area. Directly across Leopold Grove from the application site is a modern contemporary flat conversion at the junction with Church Street, four vacant and fire damaged period properties and a surface level car park which is the subject of a current outline planning application for the erection of a five/ six storey 156 bedroom hotel with basement parking ref: 16/0553.

### **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This is an outline planning application involving the erection of a three storey extension to form a conference and exhibition centre with a capacity for 1,500 people with all matters reserved for subsequent approval other than the scale of development. The extension will be linked into the existing Winter Gardens buildings and the application also seeks consent for the demolition of existing back of house structures including the box like extension on the rear of the Empress Ballroom which abuts Leopold Grove.

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and a Design and Access Statement.

### **MAIN PLANNING ISSUES**

The main planning issues are considered to be:

- Principle
- Design of the building and its impact on the Winter Gardens and the Town Centre Conservation Area
- Access, Parking and Servicing Arrangements
- Economy/ Employment
- Other Issues

These issues will be discussed in the assessment section of this report.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

**Built Heritage Manager:** I refer to the outline planning application to erect a three storey extension to the Leopold Grove elevation of the Winter Gardens on the site of the former car park. I have no objection in principle to this development and look forward to receiving further details in due course.

**Blackpool Civic Trust:** is, in principle, supportive of the development of a conference centre associated with the Winter Gardens. We do not object in general to the proposed design, but we recognise that there is much to develop from this point. We are concerned about sustainability and the lack of an immediately adjacent hotel. We would ask to be given the opportunity to comment further as the project progresses.

**Head of Transportation:** No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

**Head of Housing and Environmental Protection:** There are residences nearby so I will need details of any external plant /air con units especially if unenclosed in order to assess if nearby dwellings will be affected by noise. Delivery times should also be restricted. Is there anything in place already?

**Blackpool International Airport:** No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

**The Twentieth Century Society:** The application involves the construction of a new three storey extension within the Winter Gardens complex, a single storey link extension and other demolition works. The Society considers that new use of what is a currently vacant and unattractive element of the Winter Gardens complex would be beneficial, and do not object to the development in principle. However, as acknowledged within the application, the new development would need to be of high quality, and sensitively relate to the listed heritage assets onsite in both scale and appearance. The extent and nature of alterations to the 1930s fabric in order to accommodate these extensions would also need to be carefully considered. The Society has no further comment at this stage, but would request that we are consulted again as and when further details become available in subsequent planning applications.

**Theatres Trust:** The Theatres Trust supports the application.

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England requiring the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre'.

The Trust supports this application for a conference centre extension on the site of the recently demolished Winter Gardens car park adjacent to the Empress Ballroom and Opera House. While we note the proposal is an outline application and the exact details of the interventions required are not available at this stage, the Trust is supportive of the conceptual scheme as it has clear benefits for the wider use and operation of the Winter Gardens and its ability to attract new business and therefore investment in the upkeep of this unique important heritage asset. Furthermore, the proposals to remove the later Leopold Street extensions and to restore many of the original and historic features around the north and west side of the ballroom are to be welcomed. In terms of the operation of the Opera House, it is essential clear and safe access for delivery vehicles to the theatre's get in loading dock is maintained, and we are pleased this is shown on the indicative drawings provided. We also seek clarification at the next stage of how the Opera House is to be linked to the new extension to facilitate its use for conferencing, and a noise analysis to ensure the enclosed loading bay and back of house kitchen areas located next to the auditorium wall do not affect the acoustics within.

**Victorian Society:** No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

**Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service:** Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service (LAAS) has had the opportunity to look at the replacement Heritage Statement on the website. We are satisfied with the outline proposals. LAAS is in agreement with the comments made by the Twentieth Century Society. We would also request that LAAS are consulted on any subsequent planning applications for this site.

**Historic England:** No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

**Waste Services Manager:** No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

#### **PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

Press notice published: 14 July 2016  
3 site notices displayed: 12 July 2016

Neighbours notified: 7 July 2016 - No representations have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the Update Note.

#### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012. The National Planning Policy Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development. There are three strands to sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It contains 12 core planning principles including :-

1- 'building a strong, competitive economy'- ensure the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth

2-'ensuring the vitality of town centres'- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality

7- 'requiring good design'- good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people

12-'conserving and enhancing the historic environment'-the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. 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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

**The National Planning Practice Guidance-** Development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, local man-made and natural heritage and culture, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. The successful integration of all forms of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective, irrespective of whether a site lies on the urban fringe or at the heart of a town centre.

Natural features and local heritage resources can help give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, reinforce and sustain local distinctiveness, reduce its impact on nature and contribute to a sense of place. Views into and out of larger sites should also be carefully considered from the start of the design process. Local building forms and details contribute to the distinctive qualities of a place. These can be successfully interpreted in new development without necessarily restricting the scope of the designer. Standard solutions rarely create a distinctive identity or make best use of a particular site. The use of local materials, building methods and details can be an important factor in enhancing local distinctiveness when used in evolutionary local design, and can also be used in more contemporary design. However, innovative design should not be discouraged.

### **BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN PART 1: CORE STRATEGY**

The Blackpool Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy has been adopted by the Council its meeting on 20 January 2016. The document will be published on the Council's website in due course. In accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework significant weight can now be given to the policies of the Core Strategy. Certain policies in the Saved Blackpool Local Plan have now been superseded by policies in the Core Strategy (these are listed in the appendices to the document ). Other policies in the Saved Blackpool Local Plan will remain in use until Part 2 of the new Local Plan is produced.

The policies in the Core Strategy that are most relevant to this application are –

CS1 - strategic location for development

CS5 - connectivity

CS7 - quality of design

CS9 - water management

CS10 - sustainable design

None of these policies conflict with or outweigh the provisions of the saved Local Plan Policies listed below.

### **SAVED POLICIES: BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN 2001-2016**

The Blackpool Local Plan was adopted in June 2006 and the majority of its policies saved by direction in June 2009. The following policies are most relevant to this application:

LQ1	Lifting the Quality of Design
LQ2	Site Context
LQ3	Layout of Streets and Spaces
LQ4	Building Design
LQ7	Strategic Views
LQ9	Listed Buildings
LQ10	Conservation Areas
BH3	Residential and Visitor Amenity
BH4	Public Health and Safety
AS1	General Development Requirements
AS2	New Development With Significant Transport Implications

### **ASSESSMENT**

**Principle** - The proposed extension relates to the site of a car park which also included a service ramp and retail premises enclosed by the Empress Ballroom, the Opera House and restaurant premises 'Amparo' and a shop fronting Church Street. The proposal includes the demolition of a number of out-dated back of house buildings including the two storey scale box extension built onto the rear (Leopold Grove elevation) of the Empress Ballroom.

Subject to the subsequent submission of full details which will form part of the forthcoming planning and listed building consent applications of the proposal, the extension will make beneficial use of an neglected and under-used part of the Winter Gardens complex and remove some unsympathetic additions to the complex and re-instate some original features to the Empress Ballroom. The proposal will strengthen the offer, viability and long term future of the Winter Gardens and will significantly assist in the regeneration of the town centre. It is considered therefore that the proposal, subject to the submission of satisfactory detailed applications and subject to Historic England's, the Head of Transportation's comments, would constitute sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and should be supported.

### **Scale of the building and its impact on the Winter Gardens and the Town Centre**

**Conservation Area**- the application seeks approval for the scale (height and bulk) of the extension and is shown at this stage as being setback from the rear elevation of the Empress Ballroom giving a clean visual break between the new and existing buildings. The setback will also help to reduce some of the bulk of the proposed building. The illustrative plans also indicate a two storey height glazed entrance feature abutting the Empress Ballroom which

will lighten the appearance of the building. The eaves level of the proposed building will line through the ledge feature directly above the high level circular detail on the rear gable wall of the Empress Ballroom, the proposed building is also shown with a shallow hipped roof.

In terms of the acceptability of the scale, the proposal is considered acceptable subject to the design being finalised with a suitable setback, an appropriate level of glazing, quality materials and subject to no adverse comments being raised by Historic England.

The comments of Historic England are awaited and will be reported via the Update Note.

**Access, Parking and Servicing Arrangements-** servicing access and back of house facilities are shown on the submitted plans to the rear of Amparo restaurant and retail premises fronting Church Street which share the servicing access. No off street car park facilities are included with the proposal and the proposal will rely on existing Town Centre parking facilities and public transport facilities. A travel plan, cycle parking and servicing arrangement condition will be imposed on any approval of outline planning permission for the proposal.

The comments of the Head of Transportation are awaited and will be reported in the Update Note.

**Economy/Employment-** the construction of a purpose built conference and exhibition facility for a maximum of 1,500 conference delegates will add significantly to the economy of the Town Centre and help make Blackpool a stronger and more vibrant all year round visitor destination. As well as providing employment opportunities at the new conference centre the proposal will help strengthen employment opportunities at local hotels, bars, shops and restaurants and the contribution to the Blackpool economy and the employment opportunities offered are to be welcomed.

**Other Issues-** Plant details and exact servicing arrangements queried by the Head of Housing and Environmental Protection finalised are unclear at the present and their agreement will be subject to conditions imposed on any planning permission.

## **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons outlined above the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policy and guidance and should therefore be supported.

## **LEGAL AGREEMENT AND/OR DEVELOPER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

None

## **FINANCIAL BENEFITS**

This matter is covered elsewhere in this report.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Under Article eight and Article one of the first protocol to the Convention on Human Rights, a person is entitled to the right to respect for private and family life, and the peaceful enjoyment of his/her property. However, these rights are qualified in that they must be set against the general interest and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is not considered that the application raises any human rights issues.

## **CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the Council's general duty, in all its functions, to have regard to community safety issues as required by section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Planning Application File(s) 16/0363 which can be accessed via the link below:

<http://idoxpa.blackpool.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>

**Recommended Decision:** Grant Permission

## **Conditions and Reasons**

1.
  - i. Approval of the following details (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority:
    - Layout
    - Appearance
    - Access
    - Landscaping
  - ii. Applications for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission and the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason i and ii: This is an outline planning permission and these conditions are required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development shall be carried out, except where modified by the conditions attached to this permission, in accordance with the planning application received by the Local Planning Authority on including the following plans:



Plans stamped as received by the Local Planning Authority on 28 June 2016.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and so the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied as to the details of the permission.

3. The building/use hereby approved shall not be occupied/first commenced until the servicing arrangements, including manoeuvring areas and delivery times, have been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local Planning Authority; the servicing shall thereafter carried out in accordance with the approved details and such areas shall not be used thereafter for any purpose other than that indicated on the approved plan and all servicing within the site including loading and unloading shall take place from within the servicing area shown.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the locality and highway safety, in accordance with Policies LQ4 and AS1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

4. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use the secure cycle storage and refuse storage provision shall be provided in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To enable access to and from the property by sustainable transport mode and to ensure safe and adequate refuse storage provision, in accordance with Policies AS1, LQ1 and BH3 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS5 and CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027

5. Details of materials to be used on the external elevations shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development being commenced.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the locality, in accordance with Policies LQ1, LQ2, LQ4, LQ9, and LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7 and CS10 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

6. The development shall not be occupied until a travel plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such travel plans shall include the appointment of a travel co-ordinator and a format that consists of surveying, travel audits, a working group, action plans with timescales and target setting for the implementation of each element.

No part of the development shall be occupied prior to the implementation of the Approved Travel Plan (or implementation of those parts identified in the Approved Travel Plan as capable of being implemented prior to occupation). Those parts of the Approved Travel Plan that are identified therein as being capable of implementation after occupation shall be implemented in accordance

with the timetable therein and shall continue to be implemented as long as any part of the development is occupied.

Reason: In order to ensure appropriate provision exists for safe and convenient access by public transport, cycle, and on foot as well as by car, in accordance with Policy AS1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001 - 2016 and Policy CS5 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

7. Details of the surfacing materials to be used shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the locality, in accordance with Policies LQ1, LQ3, LQ9 and LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

8. Details of the appearance, technical specification and siting of any external ventilation ducting and plant shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. The agreed ducting and shall then be provided prior to first use and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of the occupants of nearby residential premises, in accordance with Policies BH3, BH4 and LQ1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

**Advice Notes to Developer**

Not applicable