

COMMITTEE DATE: [21/11/2017](#)

Application Reference: **17/0503**

WARD: Talbot
DATE REGISTERED: 02/08/17
LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION: Town Centre Boundary
Retail Cafe Zone
Defined Inner Area

APPLICATION TYPE: Full Planning Permission
APPLICANT: Thompson Management Services

PROPOSAL: Internal and external alterations including erection of a "plaza" to first floor level within existing service yard area, installation of replacement windows to Edward Street, re-modelling of former post office counter and use/ conversion of buildings to provide leisure uses, retail uses, offices, restaurants and cafes within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, D2 with associated administrative offices, car parking, landscaping, boundary treatment, refuse storage, access, servicing, plant and associated demolition works.

LOCATION: 26-30 ABINGDON STREET, BLACKPOOL, FY1 1AA

Summary of Recommendation: Grant Permission

CASE OFFICER

Mr Mark Shaw

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL PLAN 2015 -2020

This application accords with **Priority one of the Plan** - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is considered to be an appropriate and beneficial re-use of the application premises which, subject to appropriate conditions, is in accordance with the relevant national and local planning policy guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and Blackpool Local Plan relating to heritage, conservation, sustainable development and town centre uses.

INTRODUCTION

The current two applications (this application and application 17/0504 at Item 8 on the Agenda) are a revision and re-submission of the planning permission and listed building

consent reference: 16/0428 and 16/0429 granted by Planning Committee on 22 November 2016. The essential differences are the deletion of the hotel from the proposal, the removal of the former post office counter and its re-use to form of a central kiosk within the former counter hall which will open up the remainder of the ground floor to public access. As part of this adaptation of the former counter hall the partitions will be removed re-exposing the original room proportions. The applications also propose to replace the original metal windows on the Edward Street elevation and create a mobility access into the building from Edward Street.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application premises comprise the Grade II Listed former post office fronting Abingdon Street with associated former sorting office to the rear fronting Edward Street with a central service yard area accessed from Edward Street. The former post office building is within the Retail/ Cafe Zone (Policy SR6) and the sorting office building is within the Mixed Use Zone (Policy SR7) as defined within the Blackpool Local Plan. The former post office is a three storey Portland stone building with basement accommodation and the sorting office is a four storey, brick building and has an industrial warehouse type appearance. There is an additional floor within a roof top metal clad extension which will be re-clad and retained. The application property is a key and prominent building within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning application and listed building consent (see Agenda Item 8) for a mixed use conversion, refurbishment, including the demolition of more recent post office structures with the central service yard, and conversion of the premises into over 5,300 sqm of Class A1 retail/ restaurant/ café uses, over 400 sqm of Class B1 offices, and over 400sqm of Class D2 assembly and leisure floor space. There is some flexibility between the uses given that at this stage there are no known end users. It is proposed to provide 24 car parking spaces and to construct a glass first floor plaza within the central service yard to provide a covered retail, dining, office and leisure facility. Abingdon Street would provide pedestrian entrances into the complex. The roof top extension will be re-clad in red coloured metal. An enclosed refuse storage and sub-station area and ramped mobility access is shown from Edward Street which will require the removal of sections of the original metal railings.

The former public counter area of the post office fronting Abingdon Street will be adapted and re-located centrally within the former counter hall and existing partitions removed to re-instate the original proportions of this key space within the building. This re-opened space will provide retail floor space and access through to the remainder of the building.

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, Planning Statement including a Flood Risk Assessment and Transport Statement, Planning Appraisal, Design and Access Statement and a Drainage Report.

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

The main planning issues are considered to be:

- Principle of Uses
- Design of the Proposal and its impact on the Listed former Post Office building and the Town Centre Conservation Area
- Access, Parking and Servicing Arrangements
- Impact on Adjoining Property
- Economic and Employment Benefits
- Other Issues

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

CONSULTATIONS

County Archaeologist Lancashire County Council - 26 -30 Abingdon Street is a Grade II Listed Building, recorded as a Post Office dating to 1910. It was designed by architects of the Office of Works, built by R. Neill and Son of Manchester and is slightly altered. The national significance of this site has been recognised by virtue of its listing. The building also lies within the Extended Town Centre Conservation Area, another designated heritage asset. The proposed changes to the former post office will impact on its historic integrity.

Whilst Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service (LAAS) is satisfied the alterations can go ahead, this building merits a record being made. Due to its significance this building requires a more analytical record. The changes to the circulation and use of this building are however considered to be relatively sympathetic, therefore a level three rather than a level four record is recommended.

Built Heritage Manager - I refer to the proposed development at the former Abingdon Street post office. My comments are as follows:

CCTV cameras should not be fixed to the Abingdon Street building. Application reference: 16/0428 stated that the railings on Edward Street were an important feature and would be restored. The current application proposes to remove the railings and create a modern ramp which will have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the building and the conservation area. The doors to the substation have also been altered to a less appropriate design.

It is understood that there may be a marble mosaic floor under the carpet in the counter hall. If the floor is revealed during works it should be repaired and remain exposed if possible. Provided that access to the plaza from within the counter hall is considered essential for the future viability of the scheme, I am prepared to support the reconfiguration of the counter as proposed.

Blackpool Civic Trust - No objections.

Historic England - Listed Building - No comments.

Electricity North West Ltd - 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.

Head of Transportation - 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.

WASTE - Commercial - 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.

Police - 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.

Blackpool International Airport - 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.

PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Press notice published: 24 August 2017

Site notices displayed: 14 August 2017

Neighbours notified 8 August 2017: **Stefan Salem 32 Abingdon Street Objects-** my company own the freehold of the adjoining property at 32 Abingdon Street and I vigorously object.

It is an ill-conceived proposal on the grounds in that it will cause significant loss of light, privacy, views and overshadowing to neighbouring properties including my own (adjacent to the proposed development) and at the back on Edward Street. The proposed development will block off one of my windows completely, blocking the light and views from all my other windows to the back of my property as well as the alterations to the party wall to increase its heights and lines to restrict light and views from my property as this application is clearly against your planning policies in regards to:

- 1- Loss of light overshadowing
- 2- Overlooking loss of privacy
- 3- Visual amenity
- 4- Highway safety, traffic generation and parking
- 5- Noise and disturbance resulting from the new proposed use.
- 6- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- 7- Design, appearance, materials, character
- 8- Relevant planning policies and guidance

The proposed development will have some devastating effects on many surrounding properties in the area and should be fully rejected unless a satisfactory plan with new design is provided.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The NPPF 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.

BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN PART 1: CORE STRATEGY

The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy has been adopted by the Council at the meeting of full Council on 20th January 2016. 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
CS8 - heritage
CS9 - water management
CS10 - sustainable design
CS17 - Blackpool Town Centre
CS21- leisure and business tourism

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. A number of policies in the Blackpool Local Plan (2006) have now been superseded by policies in the Core Strategy (these are listed in Appendix B of the Core Strategy). Other policies in the Blackpool Local Plan are saved until the Local Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies is produced.

The following policies are most relevant to this application:

SR6 Retail cafe zone
SR7 Mixed use zone
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
BH12 Retail development and Supporting Town Centre Uses
AS1 General Development Requirements
AS2 New Development With Significant Transport Implications

ASSESSMENT

Principle- The two applications are supported subject to a number of conditions relating to detailed matters including ventilation, treatment of the railings and the former counter hall and servicing arrangements. The two interconnected Grade II listed buildings are important

heritage features of the Town Centre Conservation Area and have been vacant for a number of years. The applications represent a good opportunity to adapt the buildings to ensure their long term future and beneficial re-use adding to the town centre offer of retail, restaurant/ cafes, office and leisure uses all within a covered space. It is accepted that the viability of the scheme and importance of bringing this key town centre building back into use necessitate some adaptation of important features but it is considered that the overall public and heritage benefits of having the building converted and re-used ensuring its long term future outweigh the changes required.

Design of the Proposal and its impact on the Listed former Post Office building and the Town Centre Conservation Area - the Grade II listed former post office building(s) comprises the three storey (with basement) ornate white Portland stone building fronting the pedestrian section of Abingdon Street with the eight listed red telephone boxes immediately outside. This building included the public counter area and was in use before being transferred to WH Smith on Bank Hey Street. Internally in this former public area behind the stained glass windows and heavy wooden doors is the counter hall which has its original counter still intact albeit altered with security glazing affixed to the top. The original proportions of the room appear to have been reduced but the ornate ceiling is also still largely intact.

To the rear of this former public counter area is the back of house former sorting, delivery and parcel collection offices with a central courtyard. The sorting office building is four storey in height and has a metal clad box-like addition on the roof and fronts Edward Street. This building has a more functional, though not unattractive appearance being constructed of brick. The Edward Street boundary is formed with a low stone wall and ornate railings above.

It is not considered that the centrally located glazed atrium will impact adversely on the character and setting of the application premises. The atrium will cover the central courtyard area at first floor level, which itself is not of special significance, and the proportions of the courtyard space will remain intact given that the atrium is glazed. It will however protect the development from the weather, make full use of the space available and provide an all year round facility. Glazed roof shopping precincts, often involving historic buildings, are a feature of many town and city centres.

The main issue is considered to be how the original post office counter is adapted and re-used as part of the proposal. The option that has been chosen is to re-use the counter to create a freestanding centrally located retail stall/ kiosk within the former counter hall. This is considered necessary to open up the ground floor to pedestrian flows through the building to ensure the viability and practicality of the proposal. It is intended to re-open the original room proportions on the front ground floor and also to re-expose the mosaic floor which is still understood to exist in the former counter hall. Whilst the proposal would have some impact on the Listed Building, it is considered that the impact is acceptable and would be of public benefit.

The proposed material and profile specifications of the new window details for the Edward Street elevation has been provided and the new windows will comprise slim line aluminium frames broken up into a number of small panes which effectively will be a like for like

replacement of the existing windows. The windows are therefore considered acceptable in terms of the building and its setting within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

The Edward Street elevation is enclosed with ornate black metal railings with a low stone wall and pillars. The application indicates that a mobility ramp will be provided on this elevation and the plans also show sections of the railings removed to provide pedestrian accesses to the refuse and an electricity sub-station. This would leave little of the original railings intact. The architect has been requested to reconsider this aspect of the proposal and it has been requested that more of the railings be retained. An update on this matter will be given prior to the meeting.

Access, Parking and Servicing Arrangements - The existing service courtyard will be retained and re-used to provide 24 car parking spaces whilst also continuing to provide service access. However, this town centre site is in a sustainable location and is readily accessible by train, coach, tram, bus, taxi and there are also numerous public car parks within walking distance. The access, parking and servicing of the development is therefore considered acceptable although some servicing details including delivery times may need to be agreed by condition to safeguard residential amenity.

Impact on Adjoining Property - In terms of the built form, the proposal involves the retention of the main buildings to both Abingdon Street and Edward Street, the removal of more recent post office structures and canopies within the central service yard and the construction of a glass plaza at first floor level above the ground floor car parking and service area. In this respect the applications are unchanged from the application approved by the Planning Committee on 23 November 2016 and will have no more of an impact on adjacent property. The objector's business premises adjoin what will be a pedestrian entrance from Abingdon Street and the rear outriggers are also close to part of the central plaza and on the basis that the proposal adjoins a back of house outrigger to the rear of the objector's property the proposal is still considered acceptable.

Any right to light, party wall or other land ownership issues are independent of the planning application/ listed building consent and would be a private civil legal matter between the applicant and the objector.

Economy/ Employment- the application property comprises over 6300 sqm of floorspace and its re-use for the combination of proposed uses will be of considerable benefit to the town centre economy and improve Blackpool as a visitor destination providing a new and attractive indoor shopping, eating and leisure experience within a heritage setting. A significant number of jobs would also be provided (indicated to be in the region of 200 people) working within the shops, restaurants, offices and leisure facilities although exact numbers will not be known until the end users are found.

Other Issues- there are some matters including the approval of ventilation systems, lighting and the servicing details which still need to be approved and would be dealt with as conditions on any approval granted.

CONCLUSION

With appropriate conditions and further clarification given prior to the meeting as set out above, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national policy and advice and is therefore recommended for approval.

LEGAL AGREEMENT AND/OR DEVELOPER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

None

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) 16/0428 and 16/0429 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. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 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 including the following plans:

16049- P100, P101, P102, P103, P104, P105, P110, P111, P112, P113, P114, P120, P121, P130, T309, S101
SK00 57 M01 01

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

3. No development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Management Plan shall include and specify the provision to be made for the following:

- dust mitigation measures during the construction period
- control of noise emanating from the site during the construction period
- hours and days of construction work for the development
- contractors' compounds and other storage arrangements
- provision for all site operatives, visitors and construction loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period
- arrangements during the construction period to minimise the deposit of mud and other similar debris on the adjacent highways
- the routing of construction traffic.

The construction of the development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of surrounding residents and to safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policies LQ1 and BH3 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

4. 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 plan 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.

5. 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 any Class A3 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 and wider amenity, in accordance with Policies BH3 and LQ14 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

6. The building/uses hereby approved shall not be occupied/first commenced until the servicing provisions, including manoeuvring areas, have been provided in accordance with the approved details; 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.

7. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use the car parking provision shown on the approved plans shall be provided and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the locality and highway safety, in accordance with Policies LQ1 and AS1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

8. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use secure cycle storage and changing facilities shall be provided in accordance with details to be submitted and agreed 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, 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.

9. Details of an external lighting scheme to the building to be incorporated into the development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works above ground level and such scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the development in accordance with Policies LQ1, LQ4 and LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7, CS8 and CS18 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

10. Prior to the commencement of development a programme of building recording and analysis shall be undertaken. This must be carried out in accordance with a timetable and written scheme of investigation, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason- To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological and historical importance associated with the building in accordance with Policy LQ1 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7 and CS8 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

11. Notwithstanding the submitted plans detailed treatment of the former counter hall and associated rooms on the Abingdon Street frontage, including the removal of non original partitions, re-exposure of wood panelling and mosaic floor and creation of new openings on the rear of the former counter hall shall be carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of retaining and re-exposing original features of the listed building, in accordance with Policies LQ1, LQ2, LQ4, LQ9, and LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7 and CS8 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

12. All new windows and doors on the development hereby approved shall be recessed 50mm from the face of the building unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the building and the locality, in accordance with Policies LQ1, LQ2, LQ4 and LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7 and CS8 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

Advice Notes to Developer

Not applicable