

COMMITTEE DATE: 22/11/2016

Application Reference: 16/0428

WARD: Talbot
DATE REGISTERED: 25/07/16
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 and use/conversion of buildings to provide leisure uses, retail uses, restaurants and cafes within Use Classes A1, A3, D2 and a 50 bed hotel, with associated administrative offices, car parking, landscaping, refuse storage, access, servicing, plant and demolition works.

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

Summary of Recommendation: Grant Permission

CASE OFFICER

Mr M Shaw

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is considered to be a good scheme and an appropriate re-use of the application site which, subject to appropriate conditions and details, 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.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Grade II Listed former Post Office fronting Abingdon Street with associated sorting office to the rear which fronts onto Edward Street with a central service yard area also accessed from Edward Street. The former Post Office is within the Retail/ Cafe Zone (Policy SR6) and the sorting office is within the Mixed Use Zone (Policy SR7) as defined within the Blackpool Local Plan. Both properties are within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The former Post Office is a three storey Portland stone building with basement accommodation and the Sorting Office is four storey, brick built and has an industrial warehouse type appearance.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning application and listed building consent for a mixed use conversion and re-furbishment of the whole site comprising the conversion of the main part of the Sorting Office into a 50 bedroom hotel (stated to be 3-4*) and the conversion and adaptation of the Post Office building and remaining sorting office into 10 x Class A1 retail uses, Class A3 restaurants/cafes and Class D2 assembly and leisure uses. There is flexibility between the uses, given at this stage there are no known end users. It is proposed to retain the central service yard area to provide 20 car parking spaces and to construct a glass first floor plaza to provide a wholly covered retail, dining and leisure facility. The hotel would be accessed from within the Plaza and vehicle and servicing access would be from Edward Street. Abingdon Street would provide pedestrian entrances into the complex. The box-like addition to the roof of the sorting office will be replaced with a similar but visually better box-like structure and screened plant will also be sited on the roof. An enclosed refuse storage area is shown accessed from Edward Street.

How the public counter area of the Post Office will be adapted, particularly the extent of alterations to the former counter, has been the subject of on-going discussions. Whilst the removal of a central section of the counter may ultimately be an option in order to open the rear of the complex from Abingdon Street, the removal of the whole/most of the counter from its existing position and its re-use elsewhere is not considered acceptable from an enhancement, heritage and conservation viewpoint. For the purposes of the current application however the counter is shown retained intact.

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, Planning Statement (including 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
- 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
- Economy/ Employment
- Other Issues

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

CONSULTATIONS

Physical security

National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 58 - 'Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or

community cohesion'. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 -(1)Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. The above recommendations should be incorporated into the design, prior to achieving planning permission, in order to reduce the risk of crime affecting the businesses, customers, visitors, staff and locality thereby promoting safer communities and reducing avoidable demand on policing resources.

United Utilities Plc (Water) - 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 Highways and Traffic Management- 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: 4 August 2016
4 x site notices displayed: 28 July 2016
Neighbours notified: 27 July 2016

One letter of support has been received from **18 Kirkham Avenue, Blackpool - This** is a wonderful proposal for Blackpool town centre and a great use of a wasted unoccupied central landmark. I am a local business owner (Barcadia Media Limited) and we have just secured a building on Edward Street which we are about to renovate and introduce four new members of staff into our team of 13. To have access to something like this on our doorstep fills me and our team with excitement. There is a distinct lack of premium hotels in central Blackpool and, with most of our clients being from London and the south, we usually opt to put up our guests at the De Vere by Stanley Park. This would change all of that. It would also provide us with a great location outside of the office for networking and meeting local colleagues, which is something we struggle with at the moment, limited to pizza express and cafe dolce (if it's not full). Let's support this 100% and make our Central Business District exciting again.

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 its meeting on 20 January 2016. The document has been 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

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 and the majority of its policies saved by direction in June 2009. 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 applications are supported subject to a number of conditions relating to detailed matters including ventilation and replacement facing materials. The two interconnected buildings are important heritage features of the town centre and are currently vacant. 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 quality hotel accommodation, retail, restaurant/ cafes and leisure uses.

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 Abingdon Street with the eight listed red telephone boxes immediately outside. This building included the public counter area and was in use up until fairly recently before being transferred to the WH Smith branch on Bank Hey Street. Internally in this former public area behind the stained glass windows and heavy wooden doors sits the former 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. This building is four storeys in height fronting Edward Street and 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 railing fence above.

The main issue is considered to be how the public area containing the original counter is adapted and altered as part of the proposal. The agent has now omitted any proposed alterations to the original post office counter from the applications as the proposal is at this stage speculative and to consider alterations to the counter at this stage would appear premature.

It is not considered that the 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 city centres.

Plans indicate the required re-location of a couple of the listed phone boxes on Abingdon Street although this does not form part of the heritage consideration here nor does it imply the acceptance of such works in future.

Access, Parking and Servicing Arrangements- the buildings have an existing service courtyard which will be retained and re-used to provide 20 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 i.e. delivery times may need to be agreed by condition to safeguard residential amenity.

Economy/ Employment- the application property comprises over 9500 sqm and its re-use for the combination of proposed uses will be of considerable benefit of the town centre economy and improve Blackpool as a visitor destination providing an indoor shopping, eating and leisure experience. A significant number of jobs would also be provided in the hotels, shops, restaurants and leisure facilities although exact numbers will not be known until the end users are found.

Other Issues- the Police comments will be included as an informative for the applicant's attention. Crime prevention and security measures will be an integral feature of the conversion although until end users and exact layouts become clearer details cannot really be worked out at this stage.

Plant and ventilation details will be dealt with as a condition of any planning permission and listed building consent to ensure they are sensitively located and do not cause undue noise and odour issues.

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 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. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, details of materials to be used on the all elevations, including proposed doors, windows, any proposed rendering 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 this listed building and the town centre conservation area in accordance with Policies LQ14, LQ9, LQ10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Policies CS7 and CS8 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027.

3. 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 11 July 2016 including the following plans:

Location Plan stamped as received by the Council on 11 July 2016

Drawings numbered 015-023 (68) 01 Rev A , 015-023 (68) 02 Rev A, 015-023 (01) 111 Rev F, 015-023 (01) 102 Rev E, 015-023 (01) 111 Rev F , 015-023 (02) 03 Rev A, 015-023 (02) 02 Rev A, 015-023 (02)01 Rev A, 015-023 (01) 114 Rev E, 015-023 (01)113 Rev E, 015-023 (01)112 Rev E, 015-023 (01)110 Rev F, 015-023 (01)103 Rev E, 015-023 (68)103 Rev A, 015-023 (68)04 Rev A, 015-023 (68)05 Rev A, 015-023 (01)101 Rev E.

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

4. 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 routeing 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.

5. The building/uses hereby approved shall not be occupied/first commenced until the servicing provisions, including manoeuvring areas, have been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority; 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.

6. 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.

7. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use secure cycle storage provision 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.

8. 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.

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

Reason: To safeguard the integrity of this listed building and living conditions of the occupants of nearby residential premises, in accordance with Policies BH3, LQ9 and LQ10 and LQ14 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

1. Please note this approval relates specifically to the details indicated on the approved plans and documents, and to the requirement to satisfy all conditions of the approval. Any variation from this approval needs to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing and may require the submission of a revised application. Any works carried out without such written agreement or approval would render the development as unauthorised and liable to legal proceedings.
2. The applicant/ developer is recommended to incorporate the attached advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer re: crime prevention and security.