

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/2(d)

Parish:	King's Lynn	
Proposal:	LISTED BUILDING: Internal alterations - Infill floor voids in upper foyer, form two cinema auditoria, foyer, toilet, access stair and lift. Alterations and refurbishment of ground floor foyer and toilets. External alterations - new digital display screens to front elevation, infilling first floor windows and new satellite dish in rear plant area	
Location:	Corn Exchange 20 Tuesday Market Place King's Lynn Norfolk	
Applicant:	BCKLWN	
Case No:	19/00887/LB (Listed Building Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs P Lynn	Date for Determination: 26 July 2019

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Borough Council application with objection

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The Corn Exchange stands on the western side of the Tuesday Market Place and within the conservation area. It was Listed Grade II under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest in November 1951. The statutory entry was amended as part of re-survey in 1993 and it was further amended in June 2018.

This application seeks listed building consent for works to facilitate the conversion of the bar area to the front of the first floor to provide two new cinema auditoria with ancillary foyer, toilets and a new staircase and lift access from the ground floor foyer which is also to be refurbished.

Corresponding applications for planning permission (19/00885/F) and advertisement consent (19/00886/A) are also before Members today, both with recommendations to approve.

Key Issues

Impact on the significance of the listed building (designated heritage asset)
Impact of the external works on the character of the conservation area

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The Corn Exchange was built in 1854 to the design of local architects Cruso & Maberly. The roof was replaced in 1877 and the building was re-modelled by Levitt Bernstein Associates between 1995 & 1997 to provide a concert hall and community venue.

It has been listed grade II since 1951 and the statutory list entry was revisited by Historic England in 2018 as part of their input into the current HAZ Scheme. Their advice report and the amended (current) list entry is available to read in full on the application file but in brief the reasons for its designation are:-

Architectural interest:

- its exuberantly elegant and playful façade not only enlivens the streetscape but shows how the architects used the Baroque idiom to give the building an air of respectability and grandeur without undermining its authoritative role.

Historic interest:

- It makes a significant contribution to the rich architectural and historic character of Tuesday Market Place, described in Pevsner as 'one of the most splendid open spaces in provincial England'.

Group value:

- It has strong group value with the surrounding buildings on Tuesday Market Place, most of which are listed.

Listed building consent is sought for the following works:-

Internal.

- Infilling of the floor voids in the upper foyer to facilitate the formation of two new cinema auditoria, foyer, toilet, access stairs and lift
- Encasing the existing steel trusses with acoustic cladding and with the key features highlighted
- Installation of acoustic wall panels and profiled ceilings with concealed & feature lighting to articulate the appearance of the cinema and foyer.
- Alterations and refurbishment of the ground floor foyer and toilets.

External

- Infilling of 3 first floor windows: two on the southern side elevation and one on the northern side elevation with brickwork in Flemish bond to match existing infills
- Replaced of recently installed ventilation grilles on the northern side to match the grilles installed in 1995/96
- New zinc profiled sheet covering to replace glazed roof element above the main foyer and the installation of air intake/extraction grills in place of existing louvers in the roofs crown
- The insertion of a new satellite dish to the rear of the building
- 4No. new digital display screens to replace the existing illuminated poster panels on the front elevation.

SUPPORTING CASE

The application is supported by:-

i) A Design & Access Statement explaining that the proposal is to create high quality two screen cinema facilities to complement the existing offer and provide a valuable additional leisure facility for the local community and visitors. The Cinema will operate throughout the year making more efficient and cost-effective use of existing facilities and resources.

ii) A Heritage Statement which may be viewed in full on the application file. In brief it explains that the proposal has been informed by discussions with the LPAs Conservation Officers. The approach taken is to respect the heritage and enhance the character and key features of the historic building whilst creating the additional facilities and the proposal has therefore been designed to minimise impact on the external appearance and internal features of the building. It then goes on to mention the key changes and clarify some questions and concerns raised during the consultation process.

PLANNING HISTORY

19/00886/A: ADVERT APPLICATION: Proposed 4No illuminated digital display screens to replace existing illuminated poster panels – Current application also before Members with a recommendation to approve

19/00885/F: External alterations to enable the creation of two cinema screens and ancillary facilities – Corresponding planning application also before Members with a recommendation to approve

13/01589/CU: Change of use of part of public highway to seating areas in association with local bars, restaurants and other businesses – Approved January 2104 (Committee decisions)

12/00724/LB: Installation of a new water chiller at the rear of the building to provide cooling to the auditorium in summer – Approved June 2012 (Delegated)

07/02182/CU: Provision of seating area at the front of the building – Approved December 2007 (Delegated)

2/96/0699/A & 2/96/0700/LB: Installation of floodlighting and signs – Approved August 1996 (Committee decision)

2/94/1453/CA: Demolition of former fire station building – Approved March 1995 (Committee decisions)

2/94/1401/F & 2/94/1402/LB: Alterations and extension to improve facilities to create concert hall/multi-purpose hall including demolition of single storey structure to rear of main hall – Approved March 1995 (Committee decisions)

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Historic England: Do NOT wish to comment on the basis of information available but suggest that the LPA seek the views of their specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, and other relevant consultees.

Planning Committee
29 July 2019

Theatres Trust: SUPPORT this proposal. Their full response is available to view on the application file but in brief they make the following comments:-

These works will preserve the buildings theatre function, expand cultural provision in King's Lynn and optimise use of the Corn Exchange as a social/cultural facility thus bringing more people into the building. This should help preserve this important cultural and heritage asset and have a positive impact on surrounding businesses.

In terms of impact on the significance of the historic building the Theatre Trust makes the following comments;

- Externally, digital display boards of the nature proposed are displayed at a number of theatres including those which are statutorily listed. They will help promote upcoming events and afford greater flexibility as they can display a broader series of adverts more frequently. This will be more important than might otherwise be the case as the Corn Exchange would in future be hosting up to three different shows/films at the same time. Advertisements and show signage are in any case an integral aspect of the character and appearance of theatre buildings.
- We have no objections to the infilling of first floor windows, which we do not consider to undermine the historic and architectural significance of the building as a Grade II listed heritage asset.

In conclusion we welcome this proposal and recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

Kings Lynn Civic Society: NEUTRAL but express great concern about the viability of this proposal. With regard to the impact on the significance of the historic building KLCS feel that the heritage statement is quite brief for a building of significance and go on to make the following points:-

- The Grade II building was re-roofed in 1877 with a glazed roof by W E Rendle of Westminster Chambers. In 1995-96 it was attractively adapted to maximise its use as concert hall/ venue for other events.
- We understood that the glazed roof was removed except for three bays towards the front which were re-glazed but it is not clear whether the original metal frames were retained. If they were they should be conserved, as Rendle seems to have pioneered this type of putty-less construction. The Civic Society spoke with the Victorian Society who suggest this should be highlighted for expert consideration.
- The height and airiness of the existing foyer and views of the original Victorian ironwork structure will be lost which is disappointing.
- We are also concerned about what will happen to the 'clapping hand' balustrade in the existing foyer which is arguably the most striking feature of the 1990s refurbishment and a unique piece created by Jon Mills, a well know British metalwork artist. Pevsners describes the work as 'unusual and effective'.
- We query what is proposed for the King's Lynn themed Sharon Ting roof blinds, and the Julia Graves wall hangings, a popular public artwork. If nothing else it should be placed on display to remind us that their used to be a 'percentage for art' in publicly funded development!
- We would like to know more about the proposed 'display screens' for the front of the building. We note that illuminated signage is normally not permitted in the conservation areas.

REPRESENTATIONS: One letter has been received from St Margaret's with St Nicholas Ward Forum who do not formally object but express the following concerns:

- Will the income from the cinemas justify the expenditure
- The existing foyer already suffers from lack of natural light. Extending the floor and the new zinc will make it dark unless copiously illuminated affecting staff and theatre users. Advice from lighting experts is suggested.
- The Forum regrets the removal of the clapping hands balustrade but understands that it is to be reused on the new staircase. Any excess should be suitably relocated.
- It is not clear if the lift will serve the theatre as well as the cinema. It should serve both.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS12 - Environmental Assets

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. (para.192). It also states that great weight should be given to their conservation and any harm to their significance requires clear and convincing justification, (paras 193 &194). Any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para.196). Furthermore, policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that the historic and built environment play a crucial role in delivering environmental quality and well-being. The Council will preserve and where appropriate enhance its qualities and characteristics.

The considerations in the determination of this application are therefore whether the proposed development harms the significance of the designated heritage asset and if this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits sufficient to outweigh that harm, including keeping the building in ongoing and viable use.

Proposal

The entrance range of the building has an inserted balcony with a metal "clapping hand" balustrade at first floor which currently forms quite a large bar/foyer with WCs. The space is very under used and so the proposal is to cover over the voids on either side, reconfigure the toilets and insert new partitions and ceilings to form two new cinema auditoria with a smaller foyer. Access will be via new stairs to be installed in the southeast corner and lift set

between the two of the doors. The ground floor entrance foyer will be refurbished as part of the process.

The works which require consideration under this application for listed building consent are detailed above. Infilling the first floor windows to match others on the side (north & south) elevations, rationalising the variety of grills/vents, installing a satellite dish (on the unlisted part of the building but partially visible) and installing new stairs and lift to the new foyer area are all modest and will have little or no impact on the fabric, appearance or overall character of the building. However, there are a number of items which require further consideration, particularly as some have been the subject of comment.

Externally:-

It is proposed that the glazing above the foyer will be replaced with zinc and the glass in the upstands of the crown will be replaced with louvres. In both cases the glazing dates to the 1996 conversion so has no historic value but the metal frames on the roof which are thought to date from 1877, are all being retained. Their retention had not been confirmed at the time of the Civic Society exchange with the Victorian Society mentioned in their letter of comment and the Victorian Society have not themselves made any representations in respect of these applications. With regard to the new roof covering, zinc is generally accepted as an appropriate roof material for historic buildings and the change of material will have relatively little visual impact as the existing glass appears grey when viewed from street level.

The acceptability of the proposed display screens is also the subject of a separate application for advertisement consent but in terms of this application, they will not have any impact on the fabric of the building and illuminated signs such as those which already exist are normally considered acceptable where the business has a night time use. They have the support of the Theatres Trust who note that such displays are not uncommon on theatres and do have a value in terms of keeping these buildings in viable use.

Internally:-

Extending the inserted floor and creating two pods to form auditoria will not harm the fabric of the listed building but will to a certain extent change its internal character and require that some internal features are hidden or removed. Those particularly mentioned are the steel trusses and the art works installed as part of the 1996 alterations, all of which are mentioned in the statutory list entry.

The trusses will simply be encased in acoustic cladding articulated to reflecting their form and the clapping hands balustrade be reused in part on the new staircase. This proposal has the support of the sculptor John Mills and it has also been agreed that the clapping hands motif will be incorporated into the new foyer carpet. The Julia Graves wall hangings are also to be cleaned and retained but the future of internal blinds by Sharon Ting is less certain. They have been in place for 23 years and because of their position in direct sunlight the colours and the fabric have deteriorated over time. It may be possible to reuse some within the building or elsewhere but the exact situation will not be clear until they are taken down and properly assessed.

Other matters mentioned in consultation responses and third party comment, particularly relating to the viability of the project and light levels in the foyer, are not relevant to the determination of this application as listed building consent deals solely with impact of the proposal on the form and fabric of designated heritage assets.

Summary

It is generally accepted that the best use for any building is that for which it was originally intended but, as Historic England comment "commercial premises are intrinsically prone to change and alteration, and cannot be expected to survive in their original configuration".

The original character of the Corn Exchange was altered in 1996 when it was converted to a concert and community hall, an award winning scheme which gave the building a new lease of life without harm to the reasons for which it was originally listed – the exuberant and playful facade and the important contribution it makes to the architectural and historic character of the Tuesday Market Place recognised as one of the most splendid open spaces in provincial England.

Historic England also comment that the 1997 changes have done little to undermine the significance of what was essentially two functional and unadorned open plan spaces prior to the renovation work. The new auditoria and attendant facilities are to be located in the smaller of the original spaces which has already seen the most change by virtue of the installed floor and as such the further subdivision will not greatly alter its character. Furthermore the historic fabric of the building will not be harmed and the work could, realistically be reversed at some future point if that was thought necessary.

Conclusion

In accordance with the NPPF Para.193 great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. In this case the proposed works will have little or no impact on historic fabric beyond what had already been altered as part of the 1996 conversion. It is your Officers opinion that the work will not cause harm to the significance of the listed building but should others have a different perception any harm caused must be deemed to be less than substantial. The relevant paragraph of the NPPF is therefore 196 which states that "Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use"

This proposal will provide a new but complementary use within the building delivering public benefit and ensuring its ongoing viability but with only limited impact upon its historic significance.

It therefore accords with national guidance and it is recommended that Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the conditions below.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: This Listed Building Consent is granted subject to the condition that the works to which it relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

- 2 Condition: This Listed Building Consent relates only to works specifically shown on the drawings detailed below. Any others works, the need for which becomes apparent, are not covered by this consent and details must be submitted to the Council as Local Planning Authority and approved before work continues.

Dwg.no CE.A.31: Proposed floor & roof plan

Dwg.no CE.A 32: Proposed sections

Dwg.no CE.A 33: Proposed elevations

Dwg.no CE.A 34: Digital display panels

- 2 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of works in the interests of safeguarding the Listed Building in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

- 3 Condition: The brick/stone to be used for the external surfaces of the building hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with a sample panel, prepared on site for the inspection and written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The sample panel shall measure at least 1 metre x 1 metre using the proposed materials, mortar type, bond, and pointing technique to be used in the approved scheme.

- 3 Reason: To ensure that the materials are in keeping with the Listed Building in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

- 4 Condition: All mortar, plaster and render to be used in the works hereby approved shall be lime rich and cement free to a specification to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

- 4 Reason: To ensure that such details are in keeping with the Listed Building in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

- 5 Condition: Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of the following items at a scale of 1:20, or as otherwise specified, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development:

- The method by which the new zinc roof covering and louvres are to be attached to the existing metal framework
- The method by which the acoustic cladding will be fitted to the steel trusses and spandrels
- The manner by which the new auditoria ceiling and acoustic cladding are to be attached to the historic building
- The extent to which the clapping hands balustrade and the wall hangings are to be cleaned and re-used.
- A report on the condition and, if appropriate, any future use of the blinds

- 5 Reason: To ensure that the works are properly controlled in the interests of safeguarding the Listed Building in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.