

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 27 August 2008

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	08/00597/DC
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	8 September 2008
WARD/PARISH:	CENTRAL
LOCATION:	Arriva Bus Depot, Feethams
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of former Bus Station and change of use to Public Car Park
APPLICANT:	Director of Corporate Services

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This is an application submitted under Regulation 3 of Town and Country Planning Regulations 1992. The application site consists of the two-storey Arriva Bus Station building and the proposal involves the demolition of the building and the change of use of the site to a car park providing 266 No parking spaces.

The application site forms part of a wider area, which is the subject of a Development Brief, currently under public consultation, for the redevelopment of the areas known as Feethams East and West. The use of the site as a car park would be an interim use until it can be redeveloped.

A Statement of Community Involvement exercise has not been carried out as it was evident that the proposal did not constitute a "significant" application in the context of the wider consultation exercise for the Feethams Planning and Development Brief. It was also considered important not to conflict with or prejudice that consultation exercise.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

Policy E16 (Appearance From Main Travel Routes) and E18 (The River Skerne) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan are relevant.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

No objections received following the Council's consultation exercise.

Northumbrian Water

Northumbrian Water have requested a planning condition relating to ensuring that they retain unrestricted access to their apparatus (sewers) located in and near the application site.

Environment Agency

Any comments from the Environment Agency will be reported verbally to Members.

PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues to be considered here are whether or not the development is acceptable in the following terms:

- Visual Appearance
- Highway Safety

Visual Appearance

Policy E16 (Appearance From Main Travel Routes) states that the appearance of the Borough from main travel routes (in this instance the Inner Ring Road) will be maintained and enhanced by, amongst other things:

- By encouraging, assisting and carrying out improvements to unsightly land and buildings;
- By requiring new development to respect its setting, and to incorporate landscaping, wherever appropriate, which makes a positive contribution to the appearance of its surroundings;
- By promoting the comprehensive improvement and landscaping of main road approaches to the central area.

Policy E18 (The River Skerne) seeks opportunities to enhance the appearance, vitality and recreation and nature conservation value of buildings and land adjacent to the River Skerne within the urban area.

A development strategy for the town centre “Adding to Quality”, was approved by the Council in 2001 and has the status of supplementary planning guidance. It identifies the site as being suitable for a range of development purposes. It says that a high standard of design is essential, “helping create a strong gateway to the town centre, acknowledging its prominence from the ring road, the enhancement potential of the riverside and the setting of St Cuthbert’s Church”. St Cuthbert’s Church, 130m to the north of the application site is a Grade 1 listed building.

The existing building does not contain any architectural features of merit and it does not contribute to the visual appearance of the area. The demolition of the building would not raise any planning issues. Steel barriers would form the western boundary, the southern corners and a section of the eastern boundary. The southern boundary will comprise predominately of a new close boarded timber fence to match the existing. The remainder of the boundaries would be open. A CCTV tower would be erected in the north east corner to replace existing wall mounted cameras. The existing cycle shed used by employees of the Town Hall would be demolished and resited within the existing garage area.

As previously stated the use of the site for car-parking purposes is a temporary use, subject to its eventual redevelopment and this is considered an acceptable interim use. It is difficult to put a timescale on the time period for this use as it is planned for between 18 months and 5 years. It is considered therefore, that the proposal should have a high standard of design so as not to have an adverse impact upon the River Skerne, the Inner Ring Road or St Cuthbert’s Church. This can be achieved by the imposition of a suitable planning condition requesting details for the means of enclosure, lighting columns, CCTV towers etc.

Highway Matters

The car park would provide a total of 266 parking spaces, including 16 disabled spaces and 16 family spaces. Access into the car park would be via an entrance on the north west corner, whilst the exit back onto Feethams is via an entrance on the south east corner. This allows for a circular traffic flow. The proposal also provides an opportunity to create a vehicular link between the site and the existing car park to the rear of the Town Hall. A new bus stop would be positioned on Feethams between the two accesses into the car park

A Transport Assessment has been submitted, which concludes that the car park traffic can be accommodated within the highway network. The Council's Traffic Manager has raised no highway objections to the proposal but he has requested the imposition of a condition for off site works to the highway such as tactile paving and dropped kerbs.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its 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. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

The existing building does not contribute to the character of the area and its demolition does not raise any planning issues. The site is highlighted as a development site within the Feethams Planning and Development Brief and the interim use of the site as a car park is considered acceptable, subject to their being a high standard of design. The development does not raise any highway issues or crime prevention. The proposal would accord with policy E16 (Appearance from Main Travel Routes) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO REGULATION 3 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING GENERAL REGULATIONS 1992 AND SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON - To accord with the provisions of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

2. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, plans showing precise details of the means of enclosure; lighting columns; and CCTV tower shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details.

REASON - In the interests of the visual amenity of the locality.

3. Prior to the commencement of the development, precise details of the accurate location, protection of and access arrangements to any Northumbrian Water apparatus shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Northumbrian Water.

REASON - Northumbrian Water 's apparatus is located in/near to the development site and unrestricted access to the apparatus is required at all times. Northumbrian Water will not permit the erection of any buildings or structures over or close to the apparatus. Any proposed crossing, landscaping, parking areas or tree planting must comply with Northumbrian Water guidelines.

4. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, precise details of the following shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details:
 - Method of reinstating redundant accesses to footways;
 - Construction of the new bus top (including raised kerbs; platform; road markings; and bus stop pole);
 - Dropped kerb crossings and tactile paving

REASON - In the interests of highway safety

5. This permission hereby granted shall be for a limited period only expiring on 27 August 2013.

REASON – To enable the Local Planning Authority to reassess the redevelopment of the application site.

6. The proposed development shall be carried out in all respects in accordance with the proposals contained in the application and the plans submitted therewith and approved by the Local Planning Authority, or as shall have been otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON - To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the planning permission.

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The existing building does not contribute to the character of the area and its demolition does not raise any planning issues. The site is highlighted as a development site within the Feethams Planning and Development Brief and the interim use of the site as a car park is considered acceptable, subject to their being a high standard of design. The development does not raise any highway issues or crime prevention. The proposal would accord with policy E16 (Appearance from Main Travel Routes) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.

INFORMATIVES

The applicant must contact Mr M Dunn (0191 4196577) from Northumbrian Water to agree the detailed scheme and to fulfil the requirements of condition 3).