

Application No: 2010/0228

Application Type: Full

Proposal: Erection of 1-storey Staff
Accommodation Block

Location: Fire Station
Queens Square
Rawtenstall

Report of: Planning Unit Manager

Status: For Publication

Report to: Development Control
Committee

Date: 5 July 2010

Applicant: Lancashire Fire & Rescue
Service

Determination Expiry Date:
22 June 2010

Agent: Jenkins Design Services Ltd

REASON FOR REPORTING **Tick Box**

Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation

Member Call-In

Name of Member:
Reason for Call-In:

3 or more objections received ✓

Other (please state)

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights:-

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

APPLICATION DETAILS

1. SITE

The application relates to the site of Rawtenstall Fire Station, a 1-storey stone and slate building which is located within the centre of the Queens Square Gyratory. This building faces east, taking access from Bury Road.

There is which with an open frontage to the south for the egress and ingress of vehicles to the site leading to the building entrance and parking to the side/rear. Such is the topography of the land, and the extensive tree/shrub planting to the site boundaries to the north, east and west, the fire station and the yard to its rear are largely hidden from public view.

The site is located within Rawtenstall Town Centre, as designated in the Rossendale District Local Plan, and its Conservation Area. There are a number of Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site, the nearest being the Library, the Queens Arms and St Mary's Chambers.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2009/640 Erection of Staff Accommodation adj to Fire Station

Withdrawn due to concerns raised by LCC Highways.

3. THE PROPOSAL

The Fire Service wishes to introduce a new duty system. As a result it seeks permission for the erection a single storey 'L' shaped building to the rear of the fire station to enable staff to sleep on-site.

The proposed building would have a maximum depth of 17m, reducing to 9m, with a width of 20m, reducing to 9m. Its hipped-roof would have a height at the ridge of 6.7m (approximately 0.5m lower than the existing building). It would possess 5 individual rooms (each with its own bedroom/ lounge area and bathroom facilities) and a separate communal lounge/kitchen/dining room. External materials would be artificial stone and slate, to match the existing building.

The construction of this building will allow staff to remain on-standby in the accommodation from 8pm to 8am, with up to 3 family members. Families will only be allowed within the accommodation during the standby period and children will not be allowed outside of the accommodation block or in the fire station.

The applicant advises that the proposal will result in the loss of 2 existing parking spaces, but still leave ample hardstanding to the front, north side and rear of the fire station to meet the needs of the premises. It is also said that by having staff remain on-site on-standby may actually result in less traffic movements to and from the site, most notably at morning rush-hour.

The application is accompanied by a Tree Report and a Flood Risk Assessment.

The Tree Report indicates that there is a need to fell 5 young trees (of 6-10m in height) within the site in order to construct the proposed building, but the boundary-screening trees/shrubs can remain intact.

The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the proposed building will not add significantly to flood risk elsewhere but, as there is a risk of flooding of the site in an extreme flood event, the building should have a floor level no lower than that of the existing fire station, its floors made of concrete and electrical sockets 1.2m above floor level. As it is to be used in association with the fire station its occupiers will be fully aware of Environment Agency flood warnings issued for the area.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Guidance

PPS1 Sustainable Development
PPS5 Historic Environment
PPG13 Transport
PPS 23 Pollution Control
PPS25 Flood Risk

Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy (2008)

DP1-9 Spatial Principles
RT2 Managing Travel Demand
RT4 Management of the Highway Network
EM 1 Environmental Assets
EM 5 Integrated Water Management

Rossendale District Local Plan (1995)

DS1 Urban Boundary
DC1 Development Criteria
DC4 Materials
HP1 Conservation Areas
HP2 Listed Buildings

Other Material Planning Considerations

4NW Draft Partial Review of the RSS
LCC Parking Standards
LCC Historic Town Assessment Report for Rawtenstall
RBC Core Strategy

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

RBC (Conservation)

No objection. The proposal reflects pre-application discussions held with the applicant.

Environment Agency

No objection subject to a condition requiring floor levels within the building to be set at 166.12 metres above Ordnance Datum. It wishes the applicant to explore the option of surface-water disposal to a soakaway (if ground conditions are appropriate).

LCC (Highways)

No objection. Recommends condition regarding provision of wheel-washing for vehicles exiting the site during construction.

LCC (Archaeology)

No objection

LCC (Ecology)

The proposal should not result in any major impacts to biodiversity. Although several trees would be felled to facilitate the development these appear to be largely young trees planted as part of the original landscaping of the site and are of limited biodiversity value. However, it recommends :

- 1) Tree felling/vegetation clearance and other works that may affect nesting birds be avoided between March and July.
- 2) All trees being retained within or adjacent to the application area be adequately protected both during and after construction.
- 3) Implementation of a scheme be required providing replacement trees for those being felled.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

To accord with the General Development Procedure Order a newspaper notice was published on 29/1/10, two site notices were posted on 12/05/10 and 38 neighbours were notified by letter on 29/04/10.

Three objections have been received, making the following points :

- The fire station already has adequate accommodation for fire crews.
- The additional building, and removal of various trees, will be a visual blight to visitors and local residents.
- The shift pattern proposed may work at other fire stations but not on a busy roundabout in Rawtenstall Town Centre - it raises child welfare issues. It is unrealistic to suggest that family members should be virtually locked into their rooms.
- Parking is currently a real issue and this problem will be exacerbated by additional visitors and the use of an existing parking area for the building. The allocated parking for ten cars is inadequate. On a normal working day there are often present 6 operational crew members; 6 retained duty staff; & 5 others. There are 2 fire appliances, 6 other vehicles and occasionally vehicles associated with specialist training exercises. If the Day Crewing System goes ahead there could be potentially another six cars of family members who are staying overnight at the station.

7. ASSESSMENT

The main considerations of the proposal are :

1) Principle; 2) Visual Amenity/Heritage Interest; 3) Neighbour Amenity; 4) Highway Safety; 5) Flood Risk

Principle

The site is located within the Urban Boundary where the Council seeks to locate most new development. The use of the site would remain as a fire station, the proposed building with ancillary accommodation. Accordingly, there is no objection in principle to the proposal.

Visual Amenity/Heritage Interest

PPS1 emphasises the importance Government attaches to 'good design', paragraph 35 stating that high quality and inclusive design "means ensuring a place will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area".

With respect to Conservation Areas, S.72 (1) of the T&CP (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, states that :

"in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of the [Act], special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

A broadly similar test relates to proposals affecting the setting of Listed Buildings.

The RSS or Local Plan contain policies that accord with the above.

I concur with the advice of the Council's Conservation Officer that the proposal will not detract from the character and appearance of the Rawtenstall Town Centre Conservation Area, the setting of any Listed Building or the street-scene generally.

The proposed building can be accommodated without undue harm to visual amenity/heritage interest due to the topography of the site, its height and the retention of the existing boundary treatments. It is to be of slightly less height than the fire station and of matching facing materials. Whilst a handful of young/small trees within the site will be removed, the boundary planting to remain will effectively screen the proposed building from public view.

It is considered appropriate to attach conditions to secure the protection/retention of boundary planting and adequate replacements for the trees to be removed.

Neighbour Amenity

The siting, size and intended use of the proposed building, and the boundary screening, is such that the proposal will not adversely affect any neighbours.

Highway Safety

Objectors have raised concerns about providing residential accommodating within the gyratory.

The Highway Authority raised such concerns to Application 2009/640 it was withdrawn and has since met with the Applicant. It now raises no objection to this re-submission, being satisfied that the addition of the proposed accommodation block will not result in traffic movements to and from the site that materially alter the likelihood of accidents, a lack of on-site hardstanding for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles or child safety. relating to the residential aspect of the application and the effect of increases in traffic onto the gyratory from the site in relation to the previous application. As recommended by the Highway Authority, a condition is proposed to require provision of a vehicle wheel- washing facility during the construction of the building.

Flood Risk

As recommended by the Environment Agency a condition is proposed in relation to the finished floor levels within the building.

8. SUMMARY REASON FOR APPROVAL

The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle, and would not unduly harm the character and appearance of Rawtenstall Town Centre Conservation Area, the setting of any Listed Building, the amenities of neighbours or highway safety, or give rise to undue flood risk. The scheme is therefore considered to accord with PPS1 / PPS5 / PPG13 / PPS25 , Policies DP1-9 / RT2 / RT4 / EM1 / EM5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Policies DC1 / DC4 / HP1 / HP2 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That the application be approved.

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: Required by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 Act.
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans numbered 21031-11A and 210311-12B, 29108-10B, and the recommendations of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Arboricultural Implication Assessment Report, unless otherwise required by the conditions below or otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure the development complies with the approved plans and for the avoidance of doubt.
3. Any construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall not take place except between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm Monday to Friday and 8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. No construction shall take place on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day or Bank Holidays.
Reason : To safeguard the amenities of neighbours, in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

4. The building hereby approved shall be constructed with facing materials to match the existing fire station building in terms of colour, form and texture.
Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Policies DC1 / HP1 / HP2 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.
5. Notwithstanding what is said in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, the proposed building shall be constructed with floor levels of 166.12 metres Above Ordnance Datum, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason : To avoid flood risk, and to accord with the advice of the Environment Agency and PPS25 and Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
6. Prior to the commencement of development the option of surface-water disposal to a soakaway shall be investigated and a scheme for surface-water disposal submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to first use of the proposed building.
Reason : To avoid flood risk, and to accord with the advice of the Environment Agency and PPS25 and Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
7. Prior to the commencement of development a plan indicating all hard-surfaced areas associated with the development and delineating all vehicle parking spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to first use of the proposed building and these areas shall thereafter be kept freely available for use as such.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
8. Prior to the commencement of the development details of wheel-washing facilities for construction traffic connected with the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facilities shall be installed prior to the commencement of the development, and once installed such facilities shall be used to prevent mud and other debris being deposited on the highway during the construction of the development hereby permitted.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.
9. Prior to the commencement of development details of siting/species for the replacement trees to be provided shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in the first planting season following substantial completion of the building hereby permitted. Any new planting, or existing boundary planting, which is removed, dies or becomes seriously damaged or diseased within 5 years of completion of the building hereby permitted shall be replaced within 12 months with others of the same species, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan.

Contact Officer	
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