

Item No. 8

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/12/01275/LB
LOCATION	51 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1EQ
PROPOSAL	Demolition of boundary wall to No.51 North Street and reconstruction using salvaged materials in the denoted position to allow the construction of site access road. Works to include the retention of the existing dedication plaque.
PARISH	Leighton-Linslade
WARD	Leighton Buzzard North
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Johnstone, Shadbolt & Spurr
CASE OFFICER	Vicki Davies
DATE REGISTERED	10 April 2012
EXPIRY DATE	05 June 2012
APPLICANT	Trustees of the Leighton Buzzard Townlands Trust
AGENT	BHD Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	At the request of Cllr Shadbolt due to concerns regarding the impact on the Listed Almshouses
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Listed Building - Granted

Site Location:

The site is located to the north of Leighton Buzzard town centre, on the western side of North Street. The site is approximately 70m from the town centre boundary.

The application site is a small area of land on which stands a boundary wall located to the north of the Almshouses. The application is made in connection with a full application for residential development, CB/12/01255/FULL.

The whole site falls within the built up area of Leighton Buzzard and the boundary wall falls within the Conservation Area.

The Application:

The application seeks consent for the demolition of boundary wall to no.51 North Street and reconstruction using salvaged materials in the denoted position to allow the construction of site access road. Works to include the retention of the existing dedication plaque.

The wall consists of three parts, the frontage wall enclosing the front garden area, the enclosure wall (of the rear garden) and the return wall. The frontage wall is a low wall of some 450mm in height built of red brickwork. The enclosure wall is some 2.1m high where it meets the frontage wall but due to the increase in the level of the land it is only 1.5m where it meets the fire engine house to the rear. The wall is constructed from local sandstone. The return wall is similar in construction and height to the enclosure wall.

An approximately 6m length of existing frontage wall will be removed to provide sufficient space for the proposed widened access to the development site. A 5m length of the return wall and a 15m length of the enclosing wall would be removed. A new wall along the access road would be constructed and tied in to the frontage wall. The wall would be constructed from salvaged materials.

The return wall currently includes a carved dedication plaque which would be incorporated into the new wall.

A previous application for Listed Building Consent (CB/11/03394/LB) was refused on 4/1/12 as the related full planning application for the residential development of the site was refused which meant that there was no justification to grant consent for the demolition of the wall.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Regional Spatial Strategy East of England Plan (May 2008)

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

No relevant policies

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 - Design Considerations

The NPPF advises of the weight to be attached to existing local plans for plans adopted prior to the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as in the case of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review. Due weight can be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. It is considered that the above policy is broadly consistent with the Framework and significant weight should be attached to it.

Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy (November 2010 as amended), adopted for Development Management purposes, Executive August 2011

CS1 - Development Strategy
CS8 - Quality of Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development

Planning History

- CB/11/03394/LB Demolition of boundary wall to No. 51 North Street and reconstruction using salvaged materials in the denoted position to allow the construction of site access road. Works to include the retention of the existing dedication plaque. Refused 4/1/12.
- CB/11/03341/FULL Demolition of existing house, outbuildings and boundary wall and redevelopment of site with 10 houses and 5 flats and all ancillary works and reconstruction of boundary wall to No. 51 North Street. Refused 4/1/12.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Object on the following grounds:

- detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the listed building;
- detrimental effect on the streetscene.

Neighbours 6 letters of objection have been received in connection with the application.

Many objectors made comment on this application and the full planning application in the same response therefore only the comments relevant to this application are included below.

- the removal and relocation of the boundary wall would result in an unacceptably small rear garden to number 51;
- the demolition of the wall would have a detrimental impact on the area;
- impact on history of the site and loss of historic buildings;
- would set a precedent for any developer to remove listed structures which get in their way.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Conservation The application site is allocated housing land in the South Beds. Local Plan Review, January 2004, under guidelines that any development must take account of the location of the site on the edge of the Town Centre Conservation Area, and the setting of the listed North Street almshouses and Friends Meeting House.

The current scheme seeks to redevelop the site with these guidelines in mind and the applications need to be considered on this basis, but the proposed North Street access additionally entails demolition and reconstruction, on a new alignment, of the sandstone rubble built flank wall of the North Street almshouses, to form a site access between

this listed group and the listed Wheatsheaf Public House adjacent.

Almshouses boundary wall (E) – this is a robust boundary wall constructed in the locally distinctive coursed sandstone rubble. On the North Street frontage return, it incorporates a historic wallplaque (F), now largely unreadable and concealed by shrubbery, which may commemorate the construction of the earlier group of almshouses on the site. The wall clearly has both historic and townscape value. The 1880 Ordnance Survey Town Plan, however, shows the layout of the almshouse group in some detail, and from this it is evident that repositioning of this wall, as proposed, would not affect the rhythm of individual house and back garden that appears to be basis of the layout.

The success of reconstruction of this wall, as proposed, and including the historic wall plaque, will be dependant upon the quality of the work and the use of appropriate coursing and mortar bedding. This should be an absolute condition of any permission for demolition.

Suggested Conditions

If Permission/Consent is minded to be granted, I recommend the following Conditions to be applied:

- Drawn details to be submitted showing the constructional method and mortar mixes for the boundary wall to be reconstructed, including details of the incorporation of the relocated historic almshouses wallplaque.
- A sample panel in respect of the boundary wall reconstruction shall be produced and agreed.
- The existing almshouse rear boundary wall, forming the eastern boundary of the site, shall be protected during constructional works and any damage or necessary repairs shall be carried out in an agreed manner.
- Full constructional details of the access road including, as appropriate, the method of protecting the wall fabric and foundations of adjoining listed buildings, both during and after construction, to be submitted and approved.
- Drawn details of a historical plaque, to permanently commemorate the site and function of the Fire Engine House to be submitted and agreed by the LPA in consultation with local amenity groups.

Leighton Buzzard
Society

Object. The application must be vigorously refused as the only reasonable access to the site should be from Baker Street.

Tree and Landscape

Recommends conditions to secure a tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement, ensure the

installation of new services in root protection areas does not have an adverse effect on trees and the submission of a landscaping scheme.

Highways Development
Control

The applicant is proposing to improve the existing narrow access serving the site, to a standard which may be adopted as public highway.

The junction improvement works will be subject to a section 278 agreement and will involve the realignment of the kerb line in front of the Wheatsheaf Public House and the kerbing of the lay by. The proposed layout is intended to be a shared space and will therefore have no vertical deflection where the carriageway would normally meet the footway/service margin. Instead it is proposed to construct the blockwork to the footway/service margin using a stretcher bond and the carriageway to a herringbone bond. The site layout has been designed to potentially adoptable standards. There are various existing traffic regulation orders in the vicinity of the site entrance which will be reviewed and amended as necessary within the Section 278 works, the cost of which will be borne by the developer.

English Heritage

A response was received stating that it is not necessary for English Heritage to be consulted on this application. They did however respond in relation to the full application. The comments relevant to this listed building application are set out below.

Whilst English Heritage does not object to the principle of developing the site, the proposals will have some impact on the Conservation Area, principally associated with the new access. Currently there is a narrow single vehicle driveway at this point which hardly interrupts the enclosure on the west side of North Street. This enclosure is reinforced by a 1.5m high stone wall and a mature tree. Forming the new access would result in the loss of part of this stone wall and the tree and will open up views into the new development. These views terminate on unit 1 where the projecting bay will provide an appropriate visual stop. It will be important to ensure the enclosure to the rear garden to plot 1 on its east side is formed by a brick wall at least 1.5m high. This revised design shows the parking bays visible from the conservation area will be screened by planting which is an improvement.

Due to the limited number of dwellings the access would serve consideration should be given to forming it as a shared surface roadway. Such a solution would allow for the width of the opening to be reduced, thereby allowing a greater length of historic wall to be retained.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Impact on the Listed Building and its Setting

Considerations

1. Impact on the Listed Building and its Setting

The Conservation Officer considers that the existing wall is a robust boundary wall constructed in the locally distinctive coursed sandstone rubble. On the North Street frontage return the wall incorporates a historic wallplaque, now largely unreadable and concealed by shrubbery, which may commemorate the construction of the earlier group of almshouses on the site. The wall clearly has both historic and townscape value.

The 1880 Ordnance Survey Town Plan shows the presence of the wall. The 1880 plan also, however, shows the layout of the almshouse group in some detail. The layout of the almshouses is a regular pattern of a dwelling with a small rear garden. The land to the north of number 51 which would be affected by this application does not appear to form part of the rear garden of number 51 but is ancillary land likely to be common to all dwellings. The Conservation Officer is satisfied that the repositioning of this wall, as proposed, would not affect the rhythm of individual house and back garden that appears to be basis of the layout shown on the 1880 plan. The repositioning of the wall is therefore not considered to be detrimental to the setting of the listed buildings.

The success of reconstruction of this wall as proposed will be dependant upon the quality of the work and the use of appropriate coursing and mortar bedding. It is important that the new part of the wall matches as closely as possible the retained parts. The details required by condition will ensure that the mortar, coursing and general construction are appropriate. To ensure the quality of the new part of the wall a sample panel will be required to be constructed and approved prior to any construction commencing.

The Conservation Officer concludes that the demolition and relocation of the boundary wall is acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact on the listed almshouses. In addition English Heritage has no objection to the proposal and accepts the repositioning of part of the historic wall in order to provide access to the site.

Whilst granting listed building consent would result in the repositioning of part of the historic wall it would not result in the loss of the historic boundary treatment. Listed Building Consent to reposition the wall would not be granted if there was no reason for the repositioning however as the relocation of the wall would provide access to an allocated housing site it is considered acceptable.

In order to protect the rear boundary wall of the almshouses, which forms part of the listed building group, a condition will be added to any planning permission requiring details of the protection of the wall to be submitted and approved. In addition any works to the wall which are necessary in terms of maintenance or due to damage need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before they are undertaken.

Listed Building Consent should however only be granted in connection with the residential development to the rear set out in CB/12/01255 as without the residential development there is no justification for the relocation of the wall.

Recommendation

That Listed Building Consent be granted subject to the following:

- 1 The works hereby consented shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that this consent does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.

- 2 **Prior to the commencement of development drawn details of the constructional method and mortar mixes for the boundary wall to be reconstructed shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the specification of the incorporation of the relocated historic almshouses wall plaque. The wall shall then be reconstructed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting of the Listed Building.

- 3 **Prior to the commencement of development details of the protection of the rear boundary wall of the almshouses, forming the eastern boundary of the development site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The protection measures shall remain in place throughout the duration of works on site. Any damage or necessary repairs to the wall shall be undertaken within 6 months of the completion of the development in accordance with details previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to protect and maintain the Listed Building.

- 4 Prior to the reconstruction of the boundary wall hereby permitted a sample panel of the proposed boundary wall shall be produced and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary wall shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved sample panel unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the setting of the Listed Building.

- 5 The works hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plan number PL-004.2 rev A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the grade II listed building and associated boundary walling. The proposed works are considered, subject to appropriate conditions, to preserve the special interest, character and appearance of the grade II listed building. The proposal accords with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes to Applicant

1. This consent relates only to that required under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

DECISION

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