

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 11 NOVEMBER 2015

Application Number	3/15/1607/FUL and 3/15/1608/LBC
Proposal	Single storey rear extension and glazed infill extension
Location	Courtyard Arts Centre, Port Vale, Hertford, SG14 3AA
Applicant	Courtyard Arts Centre
Parish	Hertford – CP
Ward	Hertford Bengo

Date of Registration of Application	06 August 2015
Target Determination Date	01 October 2015
Reason for Committee Report	Partly on Council-owned property

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission and Listed Building consent be **GRANTED**, subject to conditions.

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The proposal seeks permission for the erection of extensions to the existing Courtyard Arts Centre building (which is curtilage listed). This would result in an increase in the floorspace available for this community use and this weighs significantly in favour of the proposals.
- 1.2 There is no objection in principle to the proposal and the extensions are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the building itself and the wider Conservation Area. Mature trees adjacent to the proposed rear extension can also be satisfactorily protected and retained in the interests of visual amenity.
- 1.3 The proposal would result in the loss of public parking provision in the adjacent public car park. Overall, however, the benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the harm in this respect.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site lies on the southern side of Port Vale, close to its junction with Port Hill and within the town's Conservation Area. It comprises a part two storey, part single storey building, believed to have been originally the stable building for the nearby Grade II listed

Vale House which is situated to the east of the site. The building is considered to be curtilage listed as a result of this historic relationship.

2.2 Land uses to the north of the site comprise predominantly residential dwellings whilst to the east, fronting Port Hill, are a mix of commercial, community use and residential units. Immediately to the south and east of the site is a public car park, which includes some allocated parking provision for local residents and the Courtyard Arts Centre itself.

3.0 Background to Proposals

3.1 The Courtyard Arts Centre was established in the former stables building to Vale House in the mid 1990's and opened formally in 1996. It is a self-funded charity which runs art classes, events and outreach activities across the community.

3.2 The centre is very well used and feels that it has outgrown the capacity of the existing building and needs more, better planned space to cater for demand and improved facilities for the public.

3.3 Two extensions are proposed to the building; firstly, an in-fill extension to enclose the existing courtyard to provide a glazed café and reception area, and secondly, a single storey rear extension to provide an additional studio area and store. The proposed rear extension would project into the adjacent public car park and would result in the loss of some public parking provision as a result.

4.0 Key Policy Issues

4.1 These relate to the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted East Herts Local Plan 2007:

Key Issue	NPPF	Local Plan policy
Community benefits	Paragraph 7	LRC4
The design of the proposed extensions and their impact on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding Conservation Area	Section 12	ENV1 and BH6
Impact on mature trees adjacent to the site	Paragraph 58	ENV2 and ENV11
Loss of car parking provision	Paragraph 39	TR7

Other relevant issues are referred to in the 'Consideration of Relevant Issues' section below.

5.0 Emerging District Plan

- 5.1 In relation to the key issues identified above, the policies contained in the emerging District Plan do not differ significantly from those contained in the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF as identified above. Given its stage in preparation, little weight can currently be accorded to the emerging Plan.

6.0 Summary of Consultee Responses

- 6.1 The Council's Conservation Officer comments that:-

"The proposed use of a glazed roof and walls to infill the courtyard space will be clearly modern and lightweight, and the original stable use of the buildings will still be able to be understood. It is considered the glazed infill extension will cause only limited harm to the character of the building. The rear extension is not considered to have an impact on the character of the building, and will not harm the setting of the Grade II listed Vale House...It is considered that a condition should be put in place to ensure that suitable materials are used for the frame of the glazed extension, so that it will not harm the character of this curtilage structure, and will not harm the setting of the Grade II listed Vale House. Subject to a condition for suitable materials, this application can be granted consent."

- 6.2 The Landscape Officer recommends the grant of permission, commenting that the extent of the Root Protection Area of the adjacent tree that would be compromised "is not significant". Provided the construction methods contained within the submitted Arboricultural Report are followed, any damage to the roots of the adjacent tree will be minimised. He also comments that tree protection during construction works will be important.

- 6.3 The Council's Parking Manager has raised concerns regarding the loss of parking spaces within the public car park to the rear of the site. He comments that a Traffic regulation Order (TRO) is currently under consideration which would alter the allocation of spaces within the adjacent car park. As a result of the TRO, 15 spaces would be allocated to nearby local residents and 6 are currently designated for the Courtyard Arts Centre use. He is concerned that if a further 7 spaces are lost as a result of this application then the majority of the parking

spaces within the car park would be lost to general public use. He asks that the impact on the wider community be taken into consideration.

- 6.4 The County Archaeologist considers it unlikely that the proposal will have any significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological or architectural interest.
- 6.5 The Council's Asset and Estates Manager has confirmed that the Council has agreed that, subject to the grant of planning permission, the Courtyards Arts Centre, will be granted 4 car parking permits to allow them to park within the public car parking spaces of the adjacent car park. This would replace their current allocated 6 spaces.

7.0 Town Council Representations

- 7.1 Hertford Town Council has the following comments to make on the proposals:

“Whilst raising no objection, the Committee was keen to ensure that the original use of the building as stables to Vale House remains visually recognisable after the development and feels that the glazed area could facilitate that, but being aware that, poorly done, it would detract, appropriate materials should be used. Concerns at the loss of parking spaces was also raised.”

8.0 Summary of Other Representations

- 8.1 One letter of objection has been received from the occupier of a nearby residential property which raises the following concerns:
- Loss of public parking spaces will exacerbate existing parking problems in the area
 - From October, residents will have allocated parking spaces which will further reduce the amount of public parking in the car park
 - Many local businesses rely on the car park and will lose custom as a result of the proposals
 - It will exacerbate safety concerns caused by inappropriate parking on adjacent streets currently
 - What support will be given to other businesses in the area that struggle with parking?

9.0 Planning History

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
3/94/1320/FP and 1321/LB	Conversion of building to Arts Centre	Granted	24.10.94
3/13/0414/AD	Externally illuminated lettering to gable wall	Granted	29.04.13

10.0 Consideration of Relevant Issues

10.1 There is no objection in principle to the proposed development and the key issues to be considered are set out above in section 4.0.

Community benefit

10.2 The proposal would support the existing community use of the building, by providing additional art studio space and enhanced facilities for the reception area and café. As such, the proposal would accord with the aims of policy LRC4 of the adopted Local Plan, to maintain and improve existing community facilities. It also supports the social dimension of sustainability as set out in the NPPF. This is a positive aspect of the proposal to which significant weight can be given.

Design and impact on the curtilage listed building and Conservation Area

10.3 The proposed extensions have been appropriately and thoughtfully designed, with regard to the historic character of the building. The proposed infill extension would be a lightweight structure that would enable the historic use of the building, as stables to Vale House, to be understood. As such, it would not have any significant impact on the curtilage listed building and only a limited visual impact outside the site. The Conservation officer is satisfied that, subject to the use of high quality materials, the extension is acceptable and Officers have suggested a condition to ensure that suitable materials can be agreed prior to any work commencing on the extension.

10.4 The proposed rear extension is of a traditional and simple design which would reflect the form, character and appearance of the existing building. It would be finished externally in brickwork with a natural slate roof to match the existing building and Officers are satisfied that it would not have a detrimental impact on either the building itself or the surrounding Conservation Area. The extension would be visible from within the adjacent car park and also from Port Vale where there is a

pedestrian link to the car park. However, its scale, form and design are considered to be acceptable and it is considered that it would appropriately preserve the character of the wider Conservation Area. Again, the use of appropriate materials can be controlled by planning condition. The proposals cause no harm then in relation to these matters.

Impact on mature trees

- 10.5 The proposed rear extension would be sited in close proximity to two mature lime trees located within the car park. This was raised as a concern at the pre-application stage, and the applicants commissioned an arboricultural report as a result, in order to properly assess the impact that the proposal would have on the trees.
- 10.6 The report concluded that the excavation needed for the extension would be sufficiently distant from the stem of the trees as to avoid damage to the structural roots. It also recommends that excavation should be undertaken by hand and that the timber access ramp should be supported by a mini pile system rather than strip foundation.
- 10.7 The Council's Landscape officer has assessed this report and is satisfied that, provided the construction methodology contained within the report is followed, the amount of tree damage will be minimised to an acceptable degree. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure that the construction method is followed. Again, there is no harmful impact as a result.

Impact on parking provision

- 10.8 The public car park adjacent to the site currently provides parking for 42 car spaces – however, 6 of these are currently designated for use by the Courtyard Arts Centre and the Council is legally required to designate 15 of the spaces for use by nearby local residents. This leaves 21 public spaces currently available within the car park, including one disabled space.
- 10.9 The proposal would result in the loss of 7 of these public parking spaces to the rear of the building. However, the Council's Asset and Estates Manager has confirmed that if planning permission is granted for this development, the 6 parking spaces currently allocated to the Courtyard Arts Centre would be made open to general public use and, instead, 4 parking permits would be made available for use by the Arts Centre within any of the general public parking spaces – subject to

availability. There would therefore remain 20 publicly available spaces within the car park following the development.

10.10 The increase in floorspace proposed would, in itself, require a maximum provision of 4 additional spaces in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards but no additional parking provision has been proposed within this application. Officers acknowledge therefore that the proposal would result in the loss of some public parking provision at the site and also has the potential to generate some additional parking demand. However, given the sustainable location of the site, close to the town centre, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant adverse impacts in terms of parking and only limited weight is given to this matter.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 The proposed development is acceptable in principle and the form, scale and design of the proposed extensions is considered to appropriately reflect the historic character and appearance of this curtilage listed building. The proposal would have limited visual impact on the street scene and would preserve the character of the Conservation Area. The Landscape officer is also satisfied that the rear extension can be constructed without significant harm to the two lime trees on the adjacent car park.
- 11.2 The proposal would result in a limited loss of public parking provision and potentially generate additional parking demand.
- 11.3 On balance, Officers consider that the benefits of the proposed development, in providing additional floorspace for a valuable community use, outweigh the harm caused by the additional pressure on public parking provision at the site. It is therefore recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be granted.

Conditions

- a) **3/15/1607/FUL**
1. Three year time limit (1T12)
 2. Approved plans (2E10)
 3. Samples of materials (2E12)

4. Tree /hedge retention (4P05)
5. Landscape Design proposals (4P12)
6. Landscape Works Implementation (4P13)
7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the construction methods recommended in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 2nd June 2015.

Reason: To avoid damage to the health of existing trees adjacent to the site in accordance with policy ENV11 of the East Herts local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Informative:

1. Relationship with Listed building Consent (26LB)

b) 3/15/1608/LBC

1. Listed Building Three Year Time Limit (1T14)
2. Prior to any building works commencing, detailed drawings of the new roof fenestration which it is proposed to install shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the historic and architectural character of the building is properly maintained in accordance with national planning policy guidance set out in section 12 of the NPPF.

3. Samples of materials (2E12)

Informative:

1. Listed building advice (25LB)

KEY DATA

Non-Residential Development

	Floorspace (sqm)
Non-residential institution	291

Non-residential Vehicle Parking Provision

(In both the current (EHLP 2007) and the emerging (Local Plan Panel Report 19 March 2015) parking standards)

Use Type	Maximum parking standard
Non-residential institution	1 space per 30sqm 291 sqm = 10 spaces