
2022/1310

Applicant: Fiona O'Brien (BMBC Urban Centre Projects Manager)

Proposal: Erection of 'Long bench sheep sculpture'

Site address: Library, High Street, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 6BR

Site Description & Location



Penistone Library is BMBC owned public library located on High Street in Penistone. The library is a post war building positioned in a large plot between residential dwellings to the left and St. Andrews Church to the right. The plot is quite large and features a single disabled parking bay outside the front elevation. Additional space between the front elevation and the highways appears to be utilised as an informal parking area. There is additional parking at the rear of the library. To the left side of the library is a large Cherry Blossom tree. Further behind the tree is an empty setback within the library's front elevation, it is protected from vehicular traffic by two large black bollards and two small yellow bollards.

The library is situated approximately midway along High Street, which starts at the junction of Park Road and Market Street. Progressing beyond Park Road, High Street progresses into a busy road dominated by residential dwellings, interspersed by small retail, commercial, and community premises such as the library and church. High Street ends at the Junction of The Green and Green Road.

Planning History

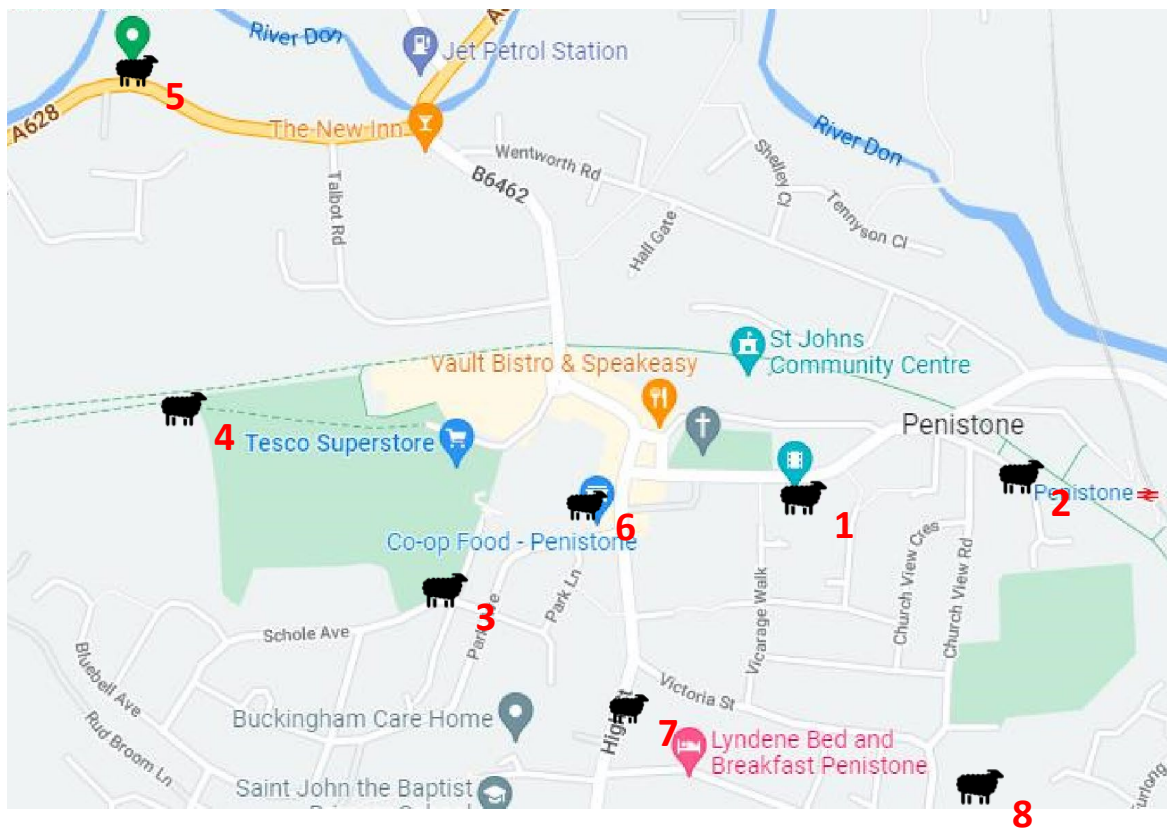
Historical maps indicate that a library has been situated on the site since at least 1960. The only planning record is shown below.

B/04/1537/PU: Alterations to entrance facade and erection of security fencing - Approved
7th September 2004

Proposed Development

The proposal is part of a wider scheme arranged by the BMBC Urban projects team to install eight pieces of new public artwork within the town of Penistone. Information from supporting documentation provided by the applicant, illustrate how the principle of such public artwork has been in place since 2019. The idea arose in collaboration with school children, taking inspiration from the temporary public art installation titled 'The Herd of Sheffield', which saw 58 large, brightly coloured elephant sculptures located citywide in 2016.

The proposal subject to this particular application is to install a functional piece of public artwork on the left-hand side of the library's front elevation. The proposed artwork is the seventh of a collection of eight sheep sculptures proposed to be located around the town of Penistone, indicatively shown as number 7 on the map below.



The proposed artwork is a stone sculpture with the additional practical use of being a bench. Called 'Reading' the artwork would feature a sheep reading a book, which would reflect the purpose of the building it would reside next too. Constructed of granite and coloured in muted tones, it would be similar in colour to some of the nearby properties described as being constructed of 'black industrial brick' by the conservation team.

Bench – 500 × 500mm × 1000mm (Height 0.5m × Width 0.5m × Length 1m)

The sculpture would have the potential to fulfil multiple purposes from its practicality as a bench for seating, a need noted in the 2019 Urban Projects report, to providing public art for residents and tourist.

The proposal will be located along the front of the wall to the left-hand side of the Library. This would be within the current setback of the front elevation. Currently this space appears to be an underused void.

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Penistone Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 – 2033

LE1: Increase the vitality of Penistone town centre

LE4: Increase tourism and the local visitor economy

Visitor attractions and facilities that offer opportunities to interpret, conserve and enhance the area's local heritage and landscapes.

Local Plan

Policy GD1: General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making – Development is expected to be of a high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy E5: Promoting Tourism and encouraging Cultural Provision - We will promote tourism and encourage the growth and development of cultural provision

Policy HE1: The Historic Environment- We will positively encourage developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment, especially for those assets which are at risk

Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Consultations

Highways DC - As the proposed artwork would be erected on land outside of the highway, "it does not adversely affect any sight lines/visibility nor does the location appear to impede any pedestrian movements". As such Highways had no objection and do not require any specific conditions to be added.

Forestry Officer – No objection subject to condition

Conservation Team – Because of the proposed location, and subtle colours of the proposed artwork, there is no objection regarding its placement within a conservation area.

Penistone Town Council – Have objected to all the sculptures on the following grounds:

- Their view is that the sculptures are "hideous" and in their opinion fear they may cause Penistone to become a "laughing stock"
- There is an allegation of no consultation was made with the community regarding the design or suitability of the proposed statues.
- Following on from lack of alleged lack of community involvement, the council believe the Penistone Sheep were imposed upon them.
- There is concern about potential graffiti appearing on the structures and ultimate responsibility for maintenance.
- There is a concern about public liability insurance, if for instance a child hurts themselves.
- They believe the Principle Towns Funding could have been better spent.

The above comments were passed on to the applicant to respond to. The issue of the appearance of the structures will be addressed in the main body of the report. The applicant has provided evidence that community consultation, including with children of the community was undertaken in or prior to 2019. The concern over graffiti and public liability

are genuine concerns but beyond believing the statues would be solidly constructed and installed correctly, as the plans suggest, ongoing maintenance and liability is not a planning consideration. Finally, again the allocation of finance is not a planning issue, but whilst there will be a cost to the installation of the structures, artwork such as the Penistone sheep may also have potential to boost the local economy

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties, a site notice placed nearby and a press notice published. One comment was received from a consulted neighbour. Overall, their opinion of the proposal was positive, they are in favour of good street art and mentioned this piece looked fun.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposed development would not materially alter the appearance or use of the library or inflict harm within the conservation area. In relation to Policy GD1, the proposal is both small and subtle enough to be installed adjacent to the library in an underused location without causing any significant harm to the living conditions or residential amity of current or future residents of the area

Visual Amenity

The artwork appears to have been considerably designed and constructed in subtle and sympathetic colour tones, which not only reflect its subject but helps ease the structure within the sensitive location of a historic market town, particularly in this location where stricter guidance is imposed due to its status as a conservation area

It is recognised not everybody would appreciate the design or obtain pleasure from the artwork but hopefully the principle of providing public artwork or the reflection of Penistone's agricultural history within the artwork may help appease those who do not instantaneously appreciate the works.

In comparison to both the elephant artworks which inspired the Penistone Sheep and other recent art installations across Barnsley, the sheep artworks are smaller, more subtle and in the case of this specific sculpture doubles up as a practical piece of much needed seating within the area. Additionally, as the proposed artwork incorporates an important part of Penistone's History and reflects specifically to its proposed siting, the proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making and Policy HE1: The Historic Environment.

Tourism & Town Centre Vitality

Although not providing a direct or immediate economic boost, the proposal as part of the collective Penistone Sheep has the potential to encourage both residents and tourists alike

to explore Penistone and its cultural and retail assets whilst appreciating or at least viewing the artwork.

Although in commonplace with any initiative to increase the vitality of a town centre or to attract increased numbers of tourists, results are not guaranteed, the proposals do support Penistone Neighbourhood Development Plan policies LE1: Increase the vitality of Penistone town centre, LE4: Increase tourism and the local visitor economy and Local Plan Policy E5.

Impact on Highways Safety

The location of the proposed artwork is situated a significant way from the highway and as confirmed by Highways would not interfere with the sightlines or visibility of vehicular traffic or impede pedestrian access. Having considered these comments, the proposal is in compliance with Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety.

Impact on Trees

The location of the proposal would have no detrimental impact on the nearby Cherry Blossom Tree subject to a condition on appropriate details of how the sculpture is attached to the ground.

Impact on Residential Amenity

As outlined in the principle of development, there is no impact on residential amenity.

Conclusion

As has been documented above, the proposal is considerably designed and sited to minimise its impact within a conservation area, whilst providing both a piece of public artwork and a functional piece of seating. It is not considered to be of detriment to highway safety, neighbouring amenities, the Conservation Area or the neighbouring tree. The scheme is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions: