
2022/1309

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

Proposal: Erection of Sheep Sculpture

Site address: Penistone Leisure Centre, Thurlstone Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 9EF
Sheep Sculpture

Site Description and Location



Penistone Leisure Centre is a red brick, community led leisure centre which is predominantly run and managed by volunteers and a board of trustees, operating under the charity name 'Sporting Penistone'. The site is located on Thurlstone Road, the A628 just outside of Penistone town centre to the east and Thurstone to the West. There is an on-site car park, near by bus stops and due to its' location in a largely residential area, it is within reach of pedestrians.

Adjacent to the left of the Leisure Centre is a residential dwelling, whilst to the right is agricultural fields. Across the road is mainly residential dwellings.

Planning History

Relevant applications include

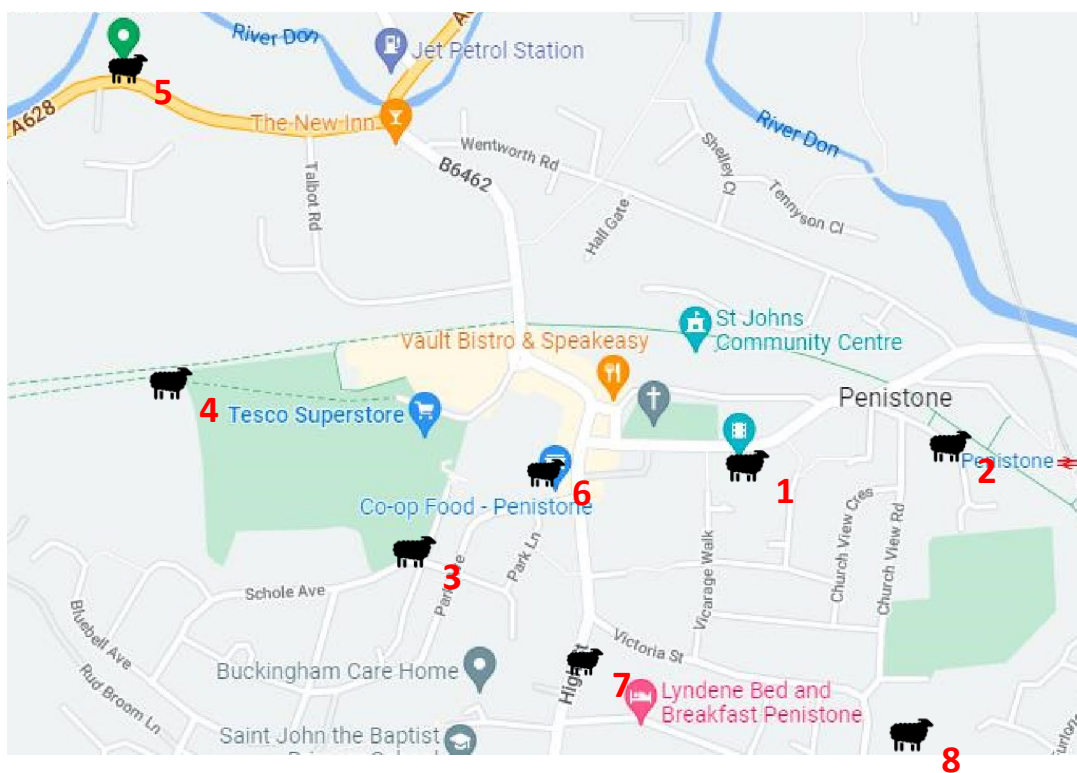
2018/1497: Extension to leisure centre including improved pedestrian access and fire escape – Approved 26th April 2019

B/80/1812/PU: Conversion of drill hall to sports/recreation hall - Approved 6^h November 1980

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 of this application is to install a piece of public artwork to the front of the leisure centre.. The proposed artwork is the fifth of a collection of eight sheep sculptures proposed to be located around the town of Penistone, indicatively shown as number 5 on the map below.



The proposed artwork is a depictive piece of sculpture, featuring a sheep on roller skates. Although unusual, the sheep reflects the former sheep farming of Penistone and the contemporary activity of roller-skating offered at the Leisure Centre. In keeping with the other proposed Penistone Sheep artwork, the statue, simply titled 'Roller Skating' would be completed in monochrome colouring.



Roller Skating Upright – 1200mm Tall

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 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 – Highways have stated that although the sculpture is in a visible location, it is partially shielded from traffic, especially those going east (towards Penistone). However, it is considered not so prominent as to cause a distraction and therefore highways have no objection and do not require any conditions to be added to any planning consent granted.

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 and a site notice placed nearby. Two objections were received from consulted neighbours. Overall, their objections were in relation to potential highway safety issues. One comment specifically mentioned the lack of connection between the sculpture's subject and Penistone and one comment mentioned pedestrian safety, particularly that of children crossing the busy road.

Assessment

Principle of development

The proposed development would not materially alter the appearance or use of Penistone Leisure Centre. In relation to Policy GD1, the proposal is both small and subtle enough to be installed at the proposed 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.

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 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 and more subtle and. 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.

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 away from the highway and although partially visible, Highways have confirmed that the statue would not cause a distraction for drivers. And would not be of detriment to pedestrian safety. As such the proposal meets Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety.

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 considerately designed to reflect the character of both Penistone and the Penistone Leisure Centre. The statue is in a visible position but not in such prominent position to affect highway safety. The objections from neighbours have been considered but have not been substantiated by any concern from Highways DC. As the proposal is additionally considered not to be of detriment to neighbouring amenities, the scheme is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions: