
2022/0294

Applicant: Mr Tony Hughes

Removal of existing container and erection of a larger replacement container in new location for storage of machinery and tools

Playmania, Building 17, Elsecar Heritage Centre, Elsecar, Barnsley, S74 8HJ

Site Description

The application site relates to Building 17 within Elsecar Heritage Centre complex, currently occupied by Playmania which is an indoor children's play centre. Elsecar Heritage Centre is the former Elsecar Ironworks Site which contains numerous individually-listed buildings including Building 17 which has recently been upgraded from grade-II to grade-II* status. Elsecar Heritage Centre is a named Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Building 17 is part-two and part-single storey, constructed from stone and largely rectangular in shape with a high eaves and the main entrance through an historic arched doorway facing South-West. To the front of the building is a courtyard area with benches bounded by a mid height wall with iron wrought toppers and to the Eastern side of the building is a toilet block, which also faces onto a separate courtyard area with seating.

As part of the HAZ, there have been 6 new listings on the site and 9 existing grade-II listings (including building 17) have been upgrade to grade-II* status, which puts them into the top 10% of England's most important historic buildings. The Former Elsecar Ironworks Site, the boundary of which sits behind Building 15, was also recently given Scheduled Monument status, which further adds to the historic value of the wider site and the village of Elsecar. Building 17 is the former fitting shop for the historic workshops. Several buildings and areas within the Heritage Complex (including building 17) were partially and fully rebuilt in the 1990s, which is somewhat reflected in the Planning History.





Relevant Planning History

B/91/1556/HN/C – Conservation Area Consent granted by the Department of the Environment for the demolition of sections of Buildings 17 and 22 (Historic)

B/91/1557/HN/LB – Planning permission granted by the Department of the Environment for the demolition of sections of Buildings 17 and 22 (Historic)

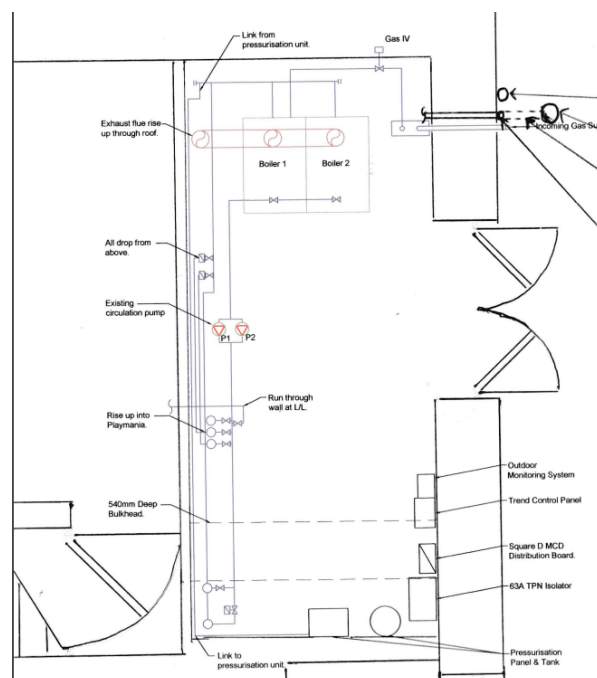
B/02/1177/HN – Change of use of science education centre to antiques (Historic)

B/05/1320/H – Change of use from retail to indoor children's adventure (Historic)

2007/0112 – Installation of a ventilation and extractor fan and security light to Listed Building (Approved with conditions)

Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking listed building consent for replacement boilers and new condensate drain to the building. There are 2 x boilers which will replace the existing in a like-for-like positions but will replace the old non-condensing type to be replaced by more modern, high efficiency low NOx condensing type boilers. The new type of boilers requires an outlet for the condensate which requires a pipe to lead externally into the local soakaway under the adjacent pavement. The only visible evidence of this will be an approximate 400mm length of black 32mm diameter condensate drainpipe. The pipe will largely be screened by an existing cast iron down pipe and existing black painted gas main.



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 development plan consists of the adopted Local Plan and Joint Waste Plan. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents, which are other material considerations.

Local Plan

The Local Plan (adopted January 2019), alongside the Joint Waste Plan and relevant neighbourhood plans, form the statutory development plan for Barnsley. It establishes policies and proposals for the development and use of land up to the year 2033 and will be used when considering planning applications and to coordinate investment decisions that affect the towns, villages and countryside of Barnsley. The Local Plan supersedes the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011). In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

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 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 HE2: Heritage Statements – Proposals that are likely to affect known heritage assets or sites where it comes to light there is potential for the discovery of unrecorded heritage assets will be expected to include a description of the heritage significance of the site and its setting.

Policy HE3: Developments affecting historic buildings – Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings should seek to conserve and where appropriate, enhance that building's significance.

Policy HE6: Archaeology – Applications for development on sites where archaeological remains may be present must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment (including a field evaluation if necessary) that must include the following:

Information identifying the likely location and extent of the remains, and the nature of the remains;
An assessment of the significance of the remains; and

Consideration of how the remains would be affected by the proposed development. Where preservations of the remains are not justified, permission will be conditional upon:-

Archaeological recording of the evidence (including evidence that might be destroyed), whether buried remains or part of a standing structure or building;
Analysis of the information gathered;
Interpretation of the results gained; Public dissemination of the results; and Deposition of the resulting archive with an appropriate museum or archive service.

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. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In respect of this application, the policies above are considered to reflect the 4th Core Principle in the NPPF, which relates to high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. They also reflect the advice in paragraph 124 (general design considerations) and paragraph 130, which state that 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.

In relation to proposals affecting heritage assets, the following paragraphs are of particular relevance:

Paragraph 94 – In determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 97 - In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 101 - Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 102 – Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In relation to proposals affecting Green Belt land:

Paragraph 149 - A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Consultations

Conservation Officer – The boilers have reached the end of their lifecycle and require replacement with new condensing style boilers. This particular element of the proposal is of little (heritage) concern as the existing boilers are not part of the special interest of the listed building and are modern. Building 17 was recently upgraded from grade II to Grade-II* which followed a listed building review which formed part of the recent Elsecar Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) partnership. The building was upgraded for its special architectural and historic value as well as its group value and association to the other highly graded LB's adjacent that form part of the Elsecar Workshops. The plans and details submitted as part of the application are rudimentary but show the location of the plant room and the requirement for a 32mm diameter condensate pipe to exit through the exterior wall at the southwestern corner of the building. The pipe will exit the building close to the corner where there are other existing pipes (gas and rainwater downpipe). Clearly this will require some intrusion and loss of a small amount of historic fabric of the building. Furthermore, I note the plan to connect the condensate drain to a below ground vertical soakaway of 110mm to a depth of 300mm via a drain under the York Stone slabs at circa 100mm depth. Consequently, there are some matters of obvious concern. The first relates to the plastic pipe (required to resist the acidic nature of condensate) that will require a core through the wall. On balance I would say there is some minor here but accept the need and agree this justified. I also agree this is the best location but would request the pipe is located as far as is possible at a junction of the joints in the stone utilising the mortar thus reducing the loss and damage to stonework. A further issue relates to the potential for archaeology. The proposed location for the soakaway is not within the scheduled area at the workshops but is in an area where archaeology may be encountered. Given the groundworks proposed and in discussion with the SYAS, I would suggest that the works are carried out with the benefit of a watching brief by a suitably qualified Archaeologist who can monitor the excavation and advise accordingly. I would also suggest we ensure SYAS are formally consulted who can advise if they agree and if there is a requirement for a Written Scheme of Investigation.

Historic England – Suggest that the LPA speaks with the Council's specialist Conservation and archaeological advisers. No comment.

Ward Councillors – No comment

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposal affects a grade-II* listed building within Elsecar Heritage Centre complex which can be somewhat described as a group listing. As such, the proposed development affects the listed building itself (Building 17) as well as the setting of the Heritage Centre complex as a whole and the numerous other listed buildings within very close proximity. That being said, the proposed works are to support the continuing use and operationality of the building, replacing the existing boilers with more modern, high efficiency boilers with associated drainage. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle but is in a sensitive

location which places a greater emphasis on high quality design and compliance with Local Plan Policies HE2 and HE3. Subject to relevant Local and National Planning Policies being complied with, the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity and Impact on Historic Environment

The existing boilers are internal with the replacements being like-for-like in terms of their overall size and positioning. The boilers cannot be seen from the outside of the building and are entirely enclosed within an independent boiler room with doors leading into it. As such, the replacement boilers themselves have a very little impact on the listed building or setting of other listed buildings nearby. Likewise, they have little impact on the external appearance of the building from a general design perspective. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has not raised any objection to this aspect of the proposal, reiterating the above comments.

That being said, there are a couple of minor concerns with other elements of the proposal raised by the Conservation Officer. The first of which relates to the fact that the proposed development requires an opening being made in the wall to facilitate a plastic pipe being placed through to allow for condensate to be removed as a byproduct of the new boilers. This will cause some harm given that it will effectively cause loss and damage to the stonework. The Conservation Officer has not raised any direct concerns to the development based around the potential damage to the stonework but recommended two conditions which requires the developer to protect and repair the stonework where necessary. Additionally, the Conservation Officer requested that the resultant hole for the pipe is drilled through a section of the wall which is predominantly mortar. Both of these are covered under a condition. The second of which is the potential for archaeology, which will be covered in more detail in the below section.

It is considered that, despite the very sensitive location, the proposed development is a relatively minor addition/change to the existing building and despite there being some minor potential harm caused to the stonework and the external fabric of the building, this is less than substantial harm. NPPF paragraph 102 states that where there is less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, the harm should be assessed against the public benefits of the scheme. There are no direct public benefits of this scheme as such, however it will allow for the continuity and operationality of what is an historic building. The scheme achieves this goal without significantly impacting the character or appearance of the building, historic environment or surrounding area. It is considered that the proposed development will allow for the building to be used by current and future occupiers and supports a local business in the process. It is therefore considered that the benefits from the development outweighs the very minor harm caused to the external fabric of the building, subject to conditions protecting and requiring the developer to repair the stonework. The proposed development is in compliance with Local Plan Policies D1, HE2 and HE3 and is considered to be acceptable in terms of visual amenity and the impact on the Historic Environment.

Archeological Impacts

The proposed location for the soakaway is not within the scheduled area at the workshops but is in an area where archaeology may be encountered. It is recommended that the works are monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist who can monitor the excavation and advise accordingly. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) is recommended subject to SYAS agreeing with this measure. SYAS agreed that this was suitable and recommended a condition is attached to any forthcoming approval notice which requires the submission of a WSI and approved by the LPA prior to works commencing.

Impact on Residential Amenity:

No impact on residential amenity.

Impact on Highways Safety:

No impact on highways safety.

Conclusion

The proposed development includes the replaced of 3 x boilers in the existing boiler room to the North-West of the building. The boilers will effectively be replace like-for-like in terms of their size and general position within the building, but will be updated to more modern, high efficiency boilers with associated pipes leading out to the existing soakaway. This will require the wall to be opened up to facilitate a plastic pipe connecting

the internal of the building to the outside. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has not objected to the development but raised slight concerns with two elements:

1. The potential damage to the external stonework from the need to open it and place a plastic pipe to connect to the soakaway,
2. The potential for archaeological interests to be unintendedly uncovered through the excavation work.

The first slight concern was considered to represent less than substantial harm to the fabric of the building and conditions were recommended which requires the developer to protect the stone placing the pipe in an area that is predominantly mortar and also repairing the disturbed masonry and York Stone on the pavement, wherever necessary. The second of which can be reasonably covered through a watching brief by a suitably qualified archaeologist and the submission of a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which will be approved by the LPA prior to development commencing.

It is considered that both of these slight concerns can be reasonably covered by planning conditions and whilst there is less than substantial harm to the Listed Building, the development is relatively minor and the benefits from modernizing the boiler system are considered to outweigh this very minor harm. The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policies HE1, HE2, HE3 and D1 and it is recommended that Listed Building Consent is granted.

Recommendation

Grant Listed Building Consent with conditions