

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(2)	19/01672/FUL Newbury Town Council	30 th July 2019 ¹	Refurbishment, partial demolition and extension of existing Community Youth Centre to modernise and enhance the facilities together with hard landscaping, boundary treatment and external lighting. Waterside Youth and Community Centre, Waldegrave Place, Northbrook Street, Newbury Berkshire Youth
¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 20 December 2019			

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=19/01672/FUL>

Recommendation Summary: Approve

Ward Member(s): Councillor Andy Moore
Councillor Martha Vickers

Reason for Committee Determination: West Berkshire Council ownership

Committee Site Visit: 16 December 2019

Contact Officer Details

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the refurbishment, partial demolition and extension of the existing Community Youth Centre to modernise and enhance the facilities together with hard landscaping, boundary treatment and external lighting.
- 1.2 The application site is located in Newbury west of the A339. A public car park and the Camp Hopson Furniture Store is to the north, the River Kennet and Avon Canal is to the south and Victoria Park is to the north-east.
- 1.3 The planning constraints of the site are:
- it is within the settlement boundary of Newbury;
 - a public right of way NEWB/28/6 and national cycle route runs to the south of the site along the River Kennet and Kennet and Avon canal;
 - the River Kennet is a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
 - it is within the Conservation Area;
 - it is within an area of potential archaeological interest;
 - it is adjacent to Marsh Cottage Waldegrave, Grade II Listed Building;
 - it is within flood zones 2 and 3.
- 1.4 The existing Youth Centre building was constructed in the 1960 and until recently provided multi-purpose facilities for the West Berkshire community. The building is in a poor condition and as such is currently vacant.
- 1.5 The application is seeking planning permission to refurbish the building, partial demolition and extension of existing centre to modernise and enhance the facilities. The proposal would be implemented in three phases:-

Phase 1 proposal includes internal alterations to provide a new entrance lobby, counselling rooms and disabled toilet facilities. The proposal also includes new changing room facilities on the ground floor with a viewing gallery and café seating area on the first floor.

Phase 2 proposes a single storey extension to the east to provide a shop on the ground floor with an outdoor terraced area above and external staircase.

Phase 3 comprises of a new climbing tower located west of the existing hall. The ridge height of the climbing tower extends to 14.5 metres to match the existing ridge line of the main hall. The tower has been designed to taper as the height increases.

Overall the proposal would result in an increase of 165 sq.m. Once all three phases of the proposal have been completed the youth centre would have a total gross internal floor area of 944 sq.m.

The materials to be used in the construction and refurbishment of the proposal include composite cladding, render and existing brickwork. These materials are considered to be in keeping with the adjacent buildings and neighbouring developments.

2. Planning History

- 2.1 There is no recent planning history for the application site.

3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 The proposed development and constraints of the site are such that screening is not required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
- 3.2 The application has been published in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 by way of a site notice. The deadline for representations expired on 30 July 2019. The application was also published in the Newbury Weekly News on 11 July 2019. The application has been referred to committee and therefore an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant.
- 3.3 Under the community Infrastructure levy charging schedule adopted by West Berkshire Council and Government Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations new retail development may be liable for CIL charges.

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

Newbury Town Council:	Support
WBC Highways:	No objection raised
SUDS:	No objection, refer to EA requests.
Environmental Health:	Support, subject to conditions
Conservation:	No objection in principle.
Newbury Society:	The proposal would result in extra facilities which are welcomed. An archaeology condition recommended as the area is rich in tannery remains.
Public Right of Way:	No objection, subject to informatives
Ramblers:	No comments received
Environment Agency:	No objections, subject to conditions
Canal & River Trust:	No objections, subject to conditions
Trees:	No objections, subject to conditions
Archaeology:	No objections, subject to conditions

Natural England:	Objection raised, concerns raised regarding the risk to the SSSI and the impact of the development during and after construction. Ecology assessment required consideration should be given to noise and light disturbances. Mitigation measures to counter any adverse ecological impacts and consideration to enhance the benefit of wildlife and habitats.
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Public representations

- 4.2 42 letters of representations have been received from contributors, 38 of which support the proposal and 4 of which object to the proposal.
- 4.3 The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following points have been raised by the objectors:

Objections:

- Unacceptable mass, scale and positioning of climbing tower
- incongruous feature (climbing tower)
- inappropriate lighting – flood lighting
- Camp Hopson would be dramatically affected
- detrimental effect on neighbouring occupiers
- additional parking and traffic concerns
- blocking of access for emergency vehicles
- limited access for construction vehicles
- flood risk

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

- Policies ADPP1, ADPP2, CS13, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies P1 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (HSA DPD).
- Policies OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

- 5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- West Berkshire Council Quality Design SPD (2006)
- Sustainable Drainage SPD (2018)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:-

Principle of development

- 6.2 The spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy for development in the District is set out in Core Strategy policy ADPP1. It directs development to within the settlements and Newbury is listed as an urban area. This policy is supportive of developments which provide leisure uses and support services and facilities in the town centre. These developments should provide maximum social, environmental and economic benefits to the wider community.
- 6.3 With regard to the proposed redevelopment of the Waterside Youth Centre, policy ADPP2 identifies that the landscape and recreational role of the Kennet and Avon Canal, which makes a positive contribution to the character and heritage of the town centre, will be strengthened.
- 6.4 The existing building is in need of repair and has a poor energy performance. In addition the building's fabric is outdated and has limited functionality which has resulted in a decline in usage. The improved facilities would offer an opportunity to modernise the building, improved energy efficiency and provide facilities which would meet the needs of existing and new communities. The proposal would also strengthen the link between the building, canal and the surrounding footpaths.
- 6.5 The proposed extensions are not considered to result in a significant increase in the footprint of the building and the development would be undertaken in three phases. The proposal would enable the building to be improved visually, structurally and would provide access for disabled people. In addition the proposed development would ensure that the facilities would be widely supported by the local community and members of the public.
- 6.6 The NPPF clearly emphasises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Paragraph 91 (a) promotes social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – strong neighbourhood centres. Paragraph 92 further states that planning policies should provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and service the community needs. Sub-paragraph (d) emphasises that established facilities and services should develop and modernise and be retained for the benefit of the community. The proposal would allow for a community building which would provide a variety of services and would have a positive impact on the local community. The improvement to the building would result in recreational and cultural opportunities which would make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of local residents and the wider community.
- 6.7 As such the proposed development would be acceptable in principle as it is considered to comply with policy ADPP1, ADPP2 and the NPPF.

Design and impact on character and appearance of the conservation area

- 6.8 There are a number of policies which relate to the impact of the development on the character of the area. Policy ADPP1 requires the scale of the development to be well related to the site's character and surroundings.
- 6.9 Policy CS14 states that new development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the

area. It further states that development shall contribute positively to the local distinctiveness and sense of place.

- 6.10 Policy CS19 relates to the historic environment including conservation areas, and seeks to conserve and enhance the functional components of the landscape character and environment. Particular regard will be given to the sensitivity of the area to change, and ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.
- 6.11 The Council's Conservation Officer was consulted on the application. On reviewing the plans he raised concerns regarding the climbing tower. Overall, the Conservation Officer raised no objections in principle to the refurbishment and modernisation of the facilities, however, he was of the opinion that the climbing tower would have an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area in which it is situated.
- 6.12 The climbing tower would be located on the north-east side of the building and would make use of a small area of land (open grass land) adjacent to the existing building. The climbing tower (phase III development) would be 14.5m in height and would match the height of the adjacent commercial building which is currently within the ownership of Camp Hopson. There is a separation distance of approximately 6 metres (at its nearest point) between the proposal and this building. Once built the climbing tower would have a close and immediate relationship with this building and it is likely to result in a partial loss of light into the first floor windows. An existing row of trees, within the ownership of Camp Hopson, partly screens the building from the canal footpath and results in a reduction of lighting into the building. Whilst it is acknowledged that the climbing tower is likely to result in a loss of some light, the benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the harm which would be caused to the commercial building.
- 6.13 The proposed development, particularly the climbing tower, would be visible from a number of public view points, including the public right of way (28 Newbury) and the River Kennet Canal. Glances of the climbing tower would be visible from the Wharf Road car park and the Wharf Road Bridge. It is accepted that there would be a slight level of visual harm from the viewpoints such as Wharf Bridge, however, these views would be limited. The climbing tower would also be visible from within the canal when approaching the site, however, long distances would be obscured by the bridge ensuring that the views of the structure would be localised.
- 6.14 The two-storey extension and climbing tower have been set back from the canal and would have a close and immediate relationship with the existing built form. It is accepted that the climbing tower would be a prominent feature when compared to the existing youth centre, however, the use of appropriate materials such as wooden cladding would ensure that it is in keeping with the surrounding buildings. Furthermore, when viewed from a distance the climbing tower would blend in with the existing skyline tapestry and would not be substantially harmful.
- 6.15 The scale and mass of the proposal is considered to be in keeping with the existing buildings and those within the immediate vicinity. Appropriate landscaping could be introduced to soften the overall appearance of the new extensions. The proposal is considered to be in keeping with policies CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Listed Buildings

- 6.16 The application site is situated within the Newbury Conservation Area and the nearest listed building is a Grade II property known as Marsh Cottage which is located immediately to the north west of the youth centre, adjacent to the main entrance. The proposal is not considered to affect the character and appearance of this building, as only minor changes are proposed to the north western elevations of the building. These

include the construction of an improved entrance into the youth centre as well as the refurbishment of the building.

- 6.17 Other nearby historic buildings include the main Camp Hopson building and 1 Toomers Wharf which is situated north-west and west of the site respectively. The impact of the proposed development on these historic buildings have been assessed and it is considered that the proposed development would not impact on the character and setting of these buildings.

Amenity

- 6.18 Planning policy CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy relate to the impact upon neighbouring properties amenities. Policy CS14 requires new development to make a positive contribution to the quality of the life in West Berkshire and saved policies OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the Local Plan relate to noise and pollution.
- 6.19 The proposed development would be located near to existing residential properties and would have an impact on the residential amenities of these occupiers, however, the use of the building would remain unchanged and the proposed improvements (installation of insulation and cladding) could result in reduced noise levels.
- 6.20 The Council's environmental health officer raised concerns regarding noise, light and dust pollution. Following further considerations the applicant submitted a construction management plan prepared by Calco Construction (dated September 2019). The document has been reviewed by the environmental health officer and it has been concluded that the report is acceptable. As such it would be necessary to impose a planning condition which requires compliance with this document. The proposed development would not result in a loss of light or overshadowing to any of the residential properties within the vicinity and would therefore not have an unduly impact on the residential occupiers amenities. The proposal would therefore comply with policy CS14.

Ecology and biodiversity

- 6.21 Natural England (NE) have raised an objection to the proposal for failing to provide an ecological assessment and a construction management plan. The main concerns raised by NE relate to the impact the proposal would have on the River Kennet (SSSI) during and after construction works. NE have also raised concerns regarding the ecological impacts through light and noise disturbances.
- 6.22 NE have also stated that all construction works must implement controls to ensure that there will be no impact on the SSSI from construction activities. They have requested that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be provided. The document should include information such as dust control and location of machinery. The applicant has already provided a construction management plan, as requested by Environmental Health, which provides information about dust management. A suitable planning condition has been imposed to ensure that the construction works are carried out in accordance with this document. Further measures such as tree protection measures will be put in place to prevent harm to the trees as well as encroachment on to the SSSI. Details of these measures can be provided by the applicant, prior to the commencement of development. It is therefore recommended that a suitably worded planning condition be imposed on the decision notice to allow for the submission of a CEMP.
- 6.23 Although NE are continuing to object to the proposal, the Council is continuing to liaise with them in order to overcome the concerns raised. Their objection and the legislation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 have been considered, however, after

careful consideration and continued discussions with NE the Authority is of the opinion that suitable planning conditions could mitigate any harm to the SSSI. Furthermore, a restriction on the installation of external lighting and noise disturbances could be mitigated by a planning condition which would restrict the installation of external lighting and plant equipment. Discussions with NE are ongoing and a further update will be available on Wednesday 18th December 2019.

- 6.24 Although a recommendation to approve the application has been submitted, it must be noted that NE continue to object to the proposal. As such, under Section 281(6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the decision maker must notify NE of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, the Authority has taken account of NE's advice. NE would require a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.
- 6.25 To encourage biodiversity opportunities within the immediate and wider area, a suitable landscaping scheme would be sufficient. These measures can be secured by a planning condition requiring the planting of native plant species, additional bird boxes and other enhancements.

Flooding and sustainable drainage

- 6.26 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy requires that a flood risk assessment be undertaken in flood zones 2 and 3. As the site is located within a flood zones 2 and 3 a flood risk assessment has been carried out and the Environment Agency and the Local Lead Flood Authority have been consulted.
- 6.27 The Environment Agency (EA) initially objected to the proposal for failing to provide an adequate Flood Risk Assessment, however, following the submission of additional information the EA reviewed their response and have now removed the objection. Therefore the EA are satisfied that the proposed development would not cause a risk of flooding. A suitably worded planning condition has been suggested in order to ensure that the proposal is carried out in accordance with the approved FRA submitted by Archibald Shaw (Issue 4) dated 28 November 2019. The Council's drainage engineer has also been consulted on the application and is in agreement with the EA. As such the proposal would comply with policy CS16.

Highways and Parking

- 6.28 Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy and TRANS.1 of the saved policies of the Local Plan relate to highways. The Council's highways officer was consulted on the application and has raised no objections to the proposal. The application site is located near to the town centre and is easily accessible by various modes of transport. A public car park (Wharf Road) is located within walking distance from the site and a private car park, owned by Camp Hopson, is situated to the north-west. The site is also close to the bus and train station. The proposal would therefore comply with policy CS13 and TRANS.1.

Trees

- 6.29 The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the application and raised no objections subject to the provision of protective tree measures and a suitable landscaping proposal. The submission of a suitable landscaping scheme which enhances biodiversity has been recommended. To ensure that adequate provisions are provided a planning condition has been recommended.

Archaeology

6.30 The Council's Archaeologist was consulted on the application and advised that the site has a high archaeology potential, dating back to Paleolithic and Mesolithic period. The Archaeologist has recommended that further investigations be undertaken during the phased development. The Archaeologist has requested that a schedule of works be provided and this can be secured via a planning condition.

Green Infrastructure

6.31 Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy requires green infrastructure such as public rights of ways to be conserved by development. Footpath 28 Newbury forms the canal towpath and runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. The proposed development has been set back from the canal and does not appear to intrude on the canal nor would it tower over the footpath. The towpath is considered to be fundamental to the operation of this facility and any improvement should be funded by CIL contributions. The public rights of way officer has been consulted and raised no objection to the proposal subject to the inclusion of informatives.

6.32 The Canal & River Trust were also consulted and raised concerns regarding the visual impact of the proposal on the canal corridor as well as the impact on the ecology of the canal corridor. Following their consultation, no objections were raised subject to the inclusion of suitable planning conditions in relation to external lighting, external surfaces and soft and hard landscaping. A pre-commencement condition has also been suggested by the Canal & River Trust requiring a survey of the condition of the waterway and a method statement / schedule of works for the protection of the River during the construction works. Subject to the proposed planning conditions the proposal would comply with policy CS18 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

7.1 The principle of the development is considered to be acceptable and would result in the modernisation of the existing building as well as improvements to the community facilities.

7.2 Overall, the proposed development would enable the building to be brought back to use for the benefit of the local community, providing community services and youth benefits. Although the phase III development (climbing tower) would result in a loss of some light into the adjacent building (Camp Hopson), it is considered that the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the harm caused. It is also considered that the impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area would be limited.

7.3 The planning practice guidance 'Health and wellbeing' stresses that local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing and health infrastructure are considered in planning decision making.

7.4 It is therefore considered that the proposal would seek to support and play an important role in creating healthy and active communities within the west Berkshire district as required by planning policy, NPPF and NPPG.

8. Full Recommendation

8.1 To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to 21 day consultation from Natural England

9. Conditions

- 9.1 A full list of the planning conditions will be provided on the update sheet on Wednesday 18th December 2019.

DC