

16-058 Cat Adoption Centre, Bradley Road

Demolition of former Fire Station and construction of new single storey buildings and cat pens

For Cats Protection National Cat Centre Haywards Heath

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement accompanies and supports the proposal for the demolition of the now redundant Fire Station and construction of a new Cats Adoption Centre on the site located off Bradley Road, Wrexham, within the Town Centre.

Forming part of the full planning application submitted on behalf of our Client, Cats Protection, this statement has been prepared as required by Planning Policy Wales / Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Wales) Order 2012 and sets out the scope of proposed works with appropriate illustrations and supporting text, intended to provide description, explanation and justification for this application.

PROJECT TEAM

Applicant:

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APPLICABLE & RELEVANT NATIONAL & LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

National Planning Policy reinforces the importance of regenerating town centres and recognises that their role needs to be based on creating destinations for retail and shopping based activity but also a wide range of services and leisure facilities to support the surrounding community.

Wrexham Town Centre Master Plan

This identifies the former Fire Station site as one of five key development opportunities which has the potential to contribute to creating a new town centre destination. The Cats Protection Adoption Centre will add to that diversity to attract visitors to the Town Centre.

Wrexham UDP Key Relevant Policies

Policy PS1

New development... for employment and community services will be directed to within defined settlements...

The Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy PS2

Development must not materially (or) detrimentally affect... Townscape character.

The Proposal complies with this policy. Further narrative is provided within the 'Design' section of this statement.

Policy PS3

Development should use previously developed brownfield land....

The proposed site is brownfield land.

Policy PS4

Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern... and be integrated with the existing transport network.

The Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy PS11

Biodiversity... Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites.

The Proposal proposes an extensive planting scheme to the rear courtyard and site perimeter to improve the biodiversity of the existing site.

Policy PS12

Renewable Energy... Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources will be supported.

Photovoltaics are proposed as part of the scheme.

Policy GDP1

a).... Built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

The Proposal complies and this is demonstrated within the 'Design' section of this statement.

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APPLICABLE & RELEVANT NATIONAL & LOCAL PLANNING POLICY *(cont.)*

Policy EC7

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces... and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to existing building in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area, as a whole, and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

Policy EC7 is addressed within the 'Design' section of this statement.

Policy EC9

Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment, within the curtilage of buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest, must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

The site is not within the curtilage of any listed buildings. The setting is addressed within the 'Design' section of this statement.

Policy EC12

Flood Risk.

The site is in Flood Zone A, and is therefore, highly unlikely to be affected by flooding.

Policy EC13

Surface Water Run Off... Development which would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment, due to additional surface water run-off, will not be permitted.

The vast majority of the existing site is covered in hard landscaping, which is reduced in the proposal and therefore, there will be no increase in surface water run-off arising from the proposed development.

Policy EC15

Small scale neglected sites... Action will be taken to protect and enhance general amenity... through the improvement of untidy sites, dilapidated buildings and other eyesores, particularly those in sensitive locations.

The site contains a disused fire station and is now the scene for much anti-social behaviour. The development proposal will tidy up the site and improve it visually, as well as addressing some of the current anti-social behaviour issues.

Policy E4

Employment... Employment development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to Policy GDP1.

The project, whilst essentially a re-provision of the existing Cats Protection facility in the town centre, will have the potential to generate additional jobs.

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APPLICABLE & RELEVANT NATIONAL & LOCAL PLANNING POLICY *(cont.)*

Local Planning Guidance

Various guidance notes have been referred to and utilised to assist in the development of the scheme which reflect National Planning Policy and the policies of The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Core Strategy and retained policies from the Local Plan, including:-

- LPG Note 1 Advertisements
- LPG Note 7 Landscape and Development
- LPG Note 15 Cycling
- LPG Note 16 Parking Standards
- LPG Note 24 Designing Out Crime

LPG Note 1 Advertisements

Limited bilingual signage will be provided to inform the opening hours and contact details for the Centre in addition to an un-illuminated Cats Protection logo fascia sign.

LPG Note 7 Landscape and Development

The external environment and landscape is an important element in the scheme for the well-being of staff, visitors and the feline population and the information requirements of the note have been followed.

LPG Note 15 Cycling

Facilities include a shower to encourage journeys by staff to be made by bicycle.

LPG Note 16 Parking Standards

The Adoption Centre Planning Use Class is 'sue generis'. The type B1 Use Class has been referred to as a comparator and the advice of our Highways Engineer considered in determining the number of spaces provided for cars, cycles and motor cycles. An area for deliveries etc. within the site is provided with a turning head.

LPG Note 24 Designing Out Crime

North Wales Police have been consulted and Secure by Design principles will be adopted with regard to boundary treatment.

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SUPPORTING STUDIES REPORTS & INFORMATION

The following supporting information forms part of the Planning Application, refer to separate documents for:-

- Brownfield Solutions Geo-Environmental Assessment
Ref 1328 23 Mar 17
- Coal Authority Property Report Ref -51001272508001-
28th Oct 2016
- Drainage Report JN26371
- Ecology Report 31 August 2017
- SCP Highways Transport Assessment Ref
SS/17010/TS/0 August 2017

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1. SITE ASSESSMENT

Site and Surroundings

The former Fire Station is located toward the south western fringe of the town centre and is identified as an opportunity site within the town centre masterplan. It is adjacent the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area which occupies an elevated position to the north of the site. To the east lies a multi storey car park and to the south retail units. To the west is the Arts College.

The application seeks full planning consent.

The former Fire Station is now redundant and is to be demolished to make way for the new development.

Developable Area

The existing site is approximately 0.377 hectares in size, including land which provides shared access to the garage and retail premises to the south. The site is owned by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service



Fig 1: View of site from existing multi-storey car park.

Constraints

The site is outside but adjacent to the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area including the listed buildings; St Mary's RC Cathedral and Wrexham Museum to the north. The Arts College is to the west. These adjacencies are considered and addressed within the design section of this document. Access and egress is constrained by the one way road system on Bradley Road and the shared access to the south. It is proposed to use the existing vehicular access arrangements as outlined in the design section and Transport Assessment. There are no trees within the site.

Sustainable Location

The site adjoins Island Green Shopping Park and a multi-storey car park in addition to the Cathedral and Museum. Adjacent to the west is the Central Retail Park.

The site is in close proximity to the town centre, hospital and public transport links by both bus and train .

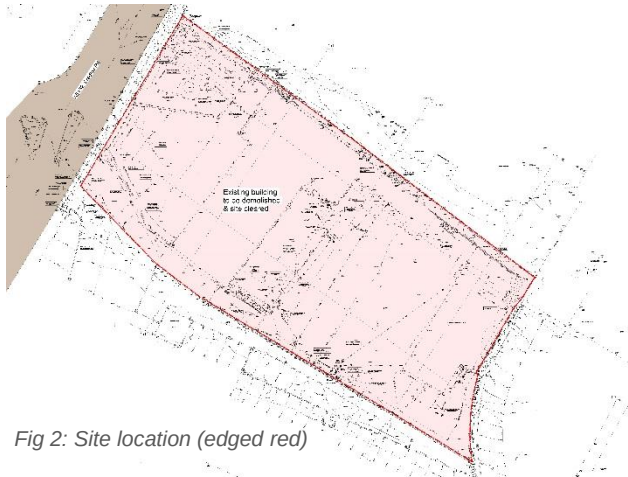


Fig 2: Site location (edged red)

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2. INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION

The planning department have been approached and agreement reached on the validation requirements. The principle of the development has been discussed with the Council.

Though not a Major Development, Cats Protection have undertaken a wide ranging consultation exercise including a drop in event on the 22nd June 2017 at Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre where the project received 25 messages of support from attendees. There were no objections.

3. EVALUATION

The site is surrounded by 2 storey height buildings and is at a lower level than the adjacent buildings in the conservation area and the multi-storey car park.

Social & Economic

Cats Protection's existing premises on Madeira Hill is limiting the ability of the charity to deliver the scope and quality of service to which it aspires.

The redevelopment of the site will provide the opportunity to increase activity and provide an improved quality of delivery to the towns population with improved visibility for the organisation.



Fig 3: View of site from Island Green Shopping Park.



Fig 4: View of access to rear of site.



Fig 5: View of Island Green Shopping Park to south.

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4. DESIGN

Site Layout

The proposal is to construct a single storey building with a gross internal area of 380m². This will provide public, staff and back of house facilities to support the feline population which will be housed in a series of cat pens located to the rear of the main building within the site. A specialist isolation unit for new arrivals to be assessed and treated is also included.

The building will enclose a landscaped courtyard which will provide a therapeutic environment for the cat population. The building will also serve to act as a visual screen to protect and provide privacy to this area.

The site is within Flood Zone A with a very low risk of flooding (Natural Resources Wales Development Advice Map).

Scale, Mass and Storey Height

The existing fire station will be removed and replaced with the proposed new Cats Protection facility, as described above. The existing building comprises a part two and a half storey simple flat roofed, monolithic rectangular block in brickwork, attached to a traditional pitched roof two storey dwelling. To the rear, a brick tower rises above the skyline, visually competing with the cathedral in the background (see photos).

Wrexham UDP Policy EC7 states that within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees and open spaces... and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area.

The proposed site is in close proximity to the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area, however, it is clearly detached from it, being lower in level and separated by a continuous boundary wall. There are no interconnecting public open spaces or walkways between the site and the conservation area. The site reads more as part of the adjacent retail park, together with the multi storey car park to the rear, which wraps around it on two sides.



Fig 6: Fire station yard with tower to north boundary and mechanic's shop to east boundary with Cathedral, Museum and Multi storey car park beyond.

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4. DESIGN *(cont.)*

In redeveloping the site, however, consideration needs to be given to Policy EC7. The proposal addresses the policy as follows:

The removal of the existing two, to two and a half storey building will reveal more of the conservation area and listed buildings within it, when viewed from Bradley Road. The projecting brick hose reel tower to the rear, visually interferes with the skyline, competing with the cathedral spire beyond. This will be removed.

By replacing the existing fire station with a single storey building, we are preserving and enhancing the view onto the conservation area from Bradley Road, through lessening the visual impact and obstruction presented by the existing fire station and tower. In addition, the building is sited, set back from the road, and in a similar position to the existing fire station, such that the visual connection with the adjacent church building is preserved, i.e. the elevation remains on view for its length.



Fig 7: Fire station viewed from Bradley Road.

Given the lessening of visual impact and reduction of height and volume of the proposed building relative to the existing, we believe the proposal preserves and improves the current situation and is, therefore, compliant with policy.

Design and Character

The existing site context is varied and eclectic in styles, varying from arts and crafts and historic church architecture to the more brutalist multi storey car park and modern simple retail units to the south.

The conservation area contains listed buildings and careful consideration has been given to avoiding any harm, on both the conservation area and setting of the listed buildings. This is predominantly achieved by the removal of a larger mass and competing tower element and replacing it with a much lower building, which incorporates a generally shallow mono pitched roof scape and simple 'L' shaped linear form on plan. The materials proposed are contemporary and an essential part of the corporate identity of Cats Protection, and whilst the design as a whole does not draw on a pastiche of its more senior and historical neighbours, given its siting, scale and massing, does not impart any more 'harm', and in actual fact, mitigates that presented by the existing fire station.

This is further supported by the physical and spatial separation from the conservation area, including the site being at a lower level, and sense of openness, which tends to associate the site more with its contemporary neighbours to the south and east, than the historical quarter to the north.

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4. DESIGN *(cont.)*

Aesthetical Approach

The superstructure design approach is of simple trapezoidal spaces juxtaposed to create functional spaces and an identifiable entrance utilising contemporary materials.

The roof scape provides interest to address the street scene and provide emphasis to the entrance. Part has a southerly aspect required for the proposed PV array.

The building will sit on a blue engineering facing brick plinth of varying height with light coloured render panels above topped by a fibre cement timber cladding. Doors and windows will generally be PPC aluminium to front and UPVC to rear elevations to Secured by Design accreditation. The roof covering will be a grey standing seam with concealed gutters and aluminium trims and flashings.

The proposal seeks to achieve excellence through adopting a contemporary approach to the design of the Centre while recognising its proximity to adjacent Listed Buildings and the Grosvenor Conservation Area.

Waste Management

All refuse and re-cycling storage and collection arrangements will be in line with Wrexham County Borough Council's Environmental services requirements.



Fig 8: Proposed south west elevation.

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5. LANDSCAPING OF THE SITE

The existing fire station was for functional reasons surrounded by hard landscape with modest soft landscape screening to the north west corner by Bradley Road.

The west boundary to Bradley Road will again have low level planting but the new adoption centre will provide the opportunity to create a much greater biodiversity with a soft landscaped courtyard to surround the cats pens and provide a therapeutic environment for the feline population.



Fig 9: View of fire station yard with tower to north boundary.

6. ACCESS

All access points into the site will remain as present arrangements.

By vehicle and cycles:

This remains from Bradley Road to the front and rear.

By pedestrians:

This remains from Bradley Road to the front.



Fig 10: View of site access from Bradley Road.

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7. PARKING

Parking provision on the site is proposed in accordance with Local Planning Guidance Note No 16. While the use class of the site is considered to be 'sue generis' the standard adopted is that of a Type B1 Business use which is considered sufficient and acceptable for a development in a sustainable town centre location.

The front site will provide a parking area for cars, and visitors cycles and motor cycles. Deliveries, refuse collection and maintenance vehicles will utilise the former fire engine return route to the rear of the site.



Fig 11: View of proposed building from Bradley Road.

8. SUMMARY

The former Fire Station site occupies a prominent position on the approach to the town centre from the south west

The scheme has been developed to provide a building of quality which reflects the ethos of Cats Protection and fitting for such a location.

The layout, flow and materials of the design and buildings have been carefully prescribed by Cats Protection in such a way as to maximise cat welfare and operational efficiency

The single storey solution, massing and siting improves the setting of the listed buildings and will impart no harm to either these or the integrity of the adjacent conservation area.

We therefore respectfully advise that the proposal complies with current planning policy and should be supported.