

Unrestricted Report

ITEM NO: 8

Application No.
14/00206/3

Site Address:

Ward:
Wildridings And Central

Date Registered:
6 March 2014

Target Decision Date:
5 June 2014

Bracknell Bus Station Station Road Bracknell Berkshire

Proposal:

Refurbishment of Bracknell Bus Station to include alterations to roads, footways and circulation routes for public and passenger vehicles, replacement waiting shelters, landscaping and Real Time Information signing.

Applicant:

Bracknell Forest Council

Agent:

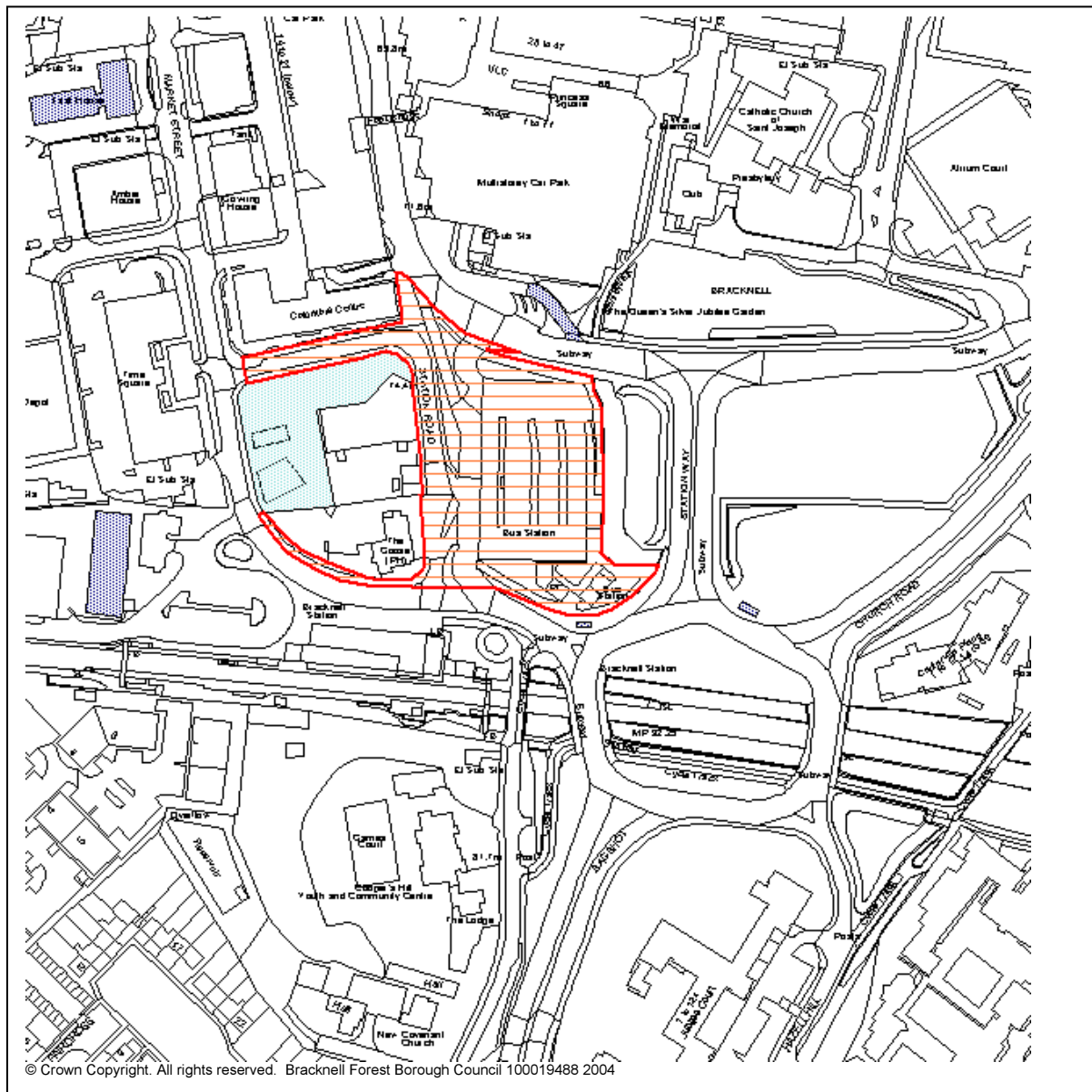
(There is no agent for this application)

Case Officer:

Margaret McEvit, 01344 352000

Development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Site Location Plan (for identification purposes only, not to scale)



OFFICER REPORT

This application is reported to the Committee because Bracknell Forest Council has an ownership interest in the land and/or is the applicant.

1. REASON FOR REPORTING APPLICATION TO COMMITTEE

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because it was submitted by the Head of Town Centre Implementation.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site includes the existing bus station within Bracknell town centre and Station Road from its junction with Market Street taking in the feeder taxi ranks in front of the Columbia Centre and the footpath on the section of Station Road south of The Goose PH. The site includes the bus station buildings south of the bus-waiting shelters containing the bus station café, public conveniences, a retail unit, a bus/taxi office and the taxi rank within the bus station west of the bus-waiting shelters.

The existing road layout permits buses, taxis and cars to enter the bus station from both the north and the south. Pedestrians can enter the bus station from the subway in the north-eastern corner when arriving from the town centre and from Station Road when arriving from the north and south. Pedestrians from the railway station are directed to the subways into the town centre but can also cross Market Street using the 'puffin' crossing in front of the railway station and enter the bus station in the south using the bus circulation areas to cross to the bus bays.

Bus-waiting shelters are positioned in three rows running from north to south. Shelters currently provide numerous entry points permitting pedestrians to cross the bus circulation areas at various places.

3. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

The current bus station was approved and built in the mid-1970s.

4. THE PROPOSAL

This application under Regulation 3 proposes the refurbishment of Bracknell Bus Station to include alterations to roads, footways and circulation routes for public and passenger vehicles, replacement waiting shelters, landscaping and the provision of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) signing.

Part of Station Road is proposed to be removed to provide space for the new footpath route between the railway station and the town centre. Removing this part of Station Road will mean the removal of 10 on-street parking spaces but these served mainly customers of the Late Shop which is now closed as part of wider regeneration plans and the car-hire yard which is also due to be demolished. A short-term parking bay for five cars will be provided on the northern section of Station Road in front of the Columbia Centre.

The layout of the bus-stands will be largely unchanged with the existing shelters replaced by aluminium framed shelters with full-height safety glass walls. Shelters will include seating, lighting and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) will be displayed at both ends of the path linking the waiting shelters. New kerb build-outs will eliminate the gap between bus and kerb when parked.

In addition to the nine bus-bays to be provided, a coach lay-by will be provided on the main station access and a school-bus bay provided in the south of the bus station.

A landscaped area will be provided along the western boundary of the site where it adjoins the future 'Pocket Park' to be provided as part of the town centre regeneration.

A pedestrian path will be provided from the 'puffin' crossing in front of the railway station up to the northern section of Station Road. Two new zebra crossings will be provided from this pedestrian path to enable pedestrians to cross the main bus circulation area safely to reach the bus-waiting area and bus-stands. This footpath continues along the western boundary of the bus station to the subway in the north-eastern part of the site that gives access to the town centre, and around the eastern boundary of the bus station to the bus station café and shop. The retaining wall where the footpath meets the subway will be reduced in height to approx. 600mm and the bank re-graded to open up this part of the bus station.

The vehicle circulation routes will be simplified by permitting public vehicle entry from the south only, with buses able to enter from the north and south. Vehicle routes will be one-way only through the bus station.

A no-waiting "drop-off and pick-up" lay-by will be provided in the north-west part of the site with space for two vehicles.

The recycling facility currently in the northern part of the site will be removed.

The taxi rank within the bus station will be reduced in size, but the taxi feeder ranks, currently provided in front of the Columbia Centre, will be moved to the south of Station Road opposite the Columbia Centre and the area enlarged.

Servicing bays for the bus station and local businesses will be provided:-

1. outside the Goose PH to serve the pub,
2. within the bus station site adjacent to the school-bus bay for vehicles servicing the bus station shops and café, and
3. in the northern part of Station Road adjacent to Columbia House.

Replacement lighting columns are to be provided throughout the site in line with the emerging Public Realm Design Strategy.

5. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No representations have been received.

6. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Bracknell Town Council

Considered - no objection.

Highway Officer

No objection. Comments included in report.

7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan includes the following:-

- Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan (May 2009)
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (February 2008) (CSDPD)
- Site Allocations Local Plan (July 2013) (SALP)
- Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (January 2002) (BFBLP)
- Bracknell Forest Borough Policies Map 2013

8. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, which is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF paras. 2 and 12). This is also reflected in SALP Policy CP1, which sets out that planning applications which accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy CP1 also sets out a positive approach to considering development proposed that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.

Policy CS1 of the CSDPD refers to the need to locate development in locations that make efficient use of land, buildings and infrastructure, reduce the need to travel and support the economic well being of the population.

Policy CS2 states that development will be permitted within defined settlements and on allocated sites. The site is within Bracknell town centre and therefore accords with the locational principles contained in this policy.

Policy CS3 focuses on Bracknell town centre as a main destination for those living and working in the area. In particular it refers to the need for development to contribute to the comprehensive delivery of the whole of the town centre and to contribute to its role as a transport hub. The refurbishment proposals are designed to enhance the public transport provision with Bracknell town centre and to encourage the use of public transport and ease of transfer between the bus and the railway stations. It will help deliver a competitive and viable town centre.

These policies are considered to be consistent with the aims of the NPPF, including the following core planning principles: to ensure that decisions are genuinely plan-led; to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and infrastructure that the country needs; to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed and to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling; and to seek positive improvements in the quality of the built and natural environment. The principle of the proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

9. IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF AREA

CSDPD Policy CS7 states that the Council will require high quality design for all development in the Borough and requires that developments aid movement through accessibility, connectivity, permeability and legibility. There is also a need to provide high quality public realm. BFBLP 'saved' Policy EN20 sets out that development should be in sympathy with the appearance and character of the local environment and be appropriate in scale, mass, design, materials, layout and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views.

These policies are considered to be consistent with the core planning principle of the NPPF to seek to secure high quality design. Section 7 of the NPPF contains policies requiring good

design. Paragraph 56 sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 57 also refers to the importance of high quality public spaces. Para. 58 refers to the need for planning decisions to ensure that development optimises the potential of a site to accommodate development and refers to the functioning and overall quality of the area.

Policy CS7 of the CSDPD is therefore considered to have significant weight in relation to para. 215 of the NPPF, as it is consistent with the NPPF.

The bus station is an important entrance to Bracknell town centre and currently looks dated, with bus shelters in poor condition and a layout that can be confusing to pedestrians. The change to the bus-shelters will result in a more modern and streamlined appearance to the bus station, and will provide more comfortable waiting areas and better visibility through the station for bus passengers. Reducing the number of entrances to bus shelters will improve the current draughty waiting areas and help to direct pedestrians to cross the station on the marked pedestrian path.

The provision of RTPI displays across the bus station will also give clearer information for passengers.

Provision has been made within the revised layout for public art or feature direction signing along the pedestrian path on the western boundary of the bus station and in the north-east of the site close to the subway to the town centre. These areas will be entrance points to the bus station and the enhancements, together with the reduction in height of the retaining wall adjacent to the subway, will help to make the bus station more welcoming to bus passengers.

The pedestrian footpath along the western boundary from the 'puffin' crossing from the railway station will continue around the northern and eastern boundaries to give a clear pedestrian route around the bus station. The footpath is to be paved with the same paving materials used on the railway station forecourt to give a co-ordinated appearance to these pedestrian areas. This use of paving materials will help the railway and bus stations to be read together as a transport interchange and entrance to the town centre to visitors arriving by public transport.

Landscaped areas along the western boundary and the north-east boundary will help to soften the appearance of the bus station. The western boundary will link in to the future Pocket Park to be provided between Market Street and the bus station and give a more attractive and open link from the railway station into the town centre.

The bus station shop and café/waiting room are to be retained and the area in front of the buildings widened and re-paved using the same paving materials as the pedestrian path around the bus station. An area of landscaping will be provided in front of the buildings. The enhancements around these buildings will make the shop and café environment more attractive.

New lighting is shown on 5m and 10m high timber-faced columns.

The refurbishment of the bus station, together with landscaping and re-paving proposals will update and visually enhance the current dated looking bus station.

10. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Policy M8 and Core Strategy Policy CS23 seek to facilitate and promote the use of public transport. This is consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.

The changes to the road layout of the bus station will give clearer transport routes through the bus station and allow for safer movement of pedestrians. Currently vehicles enter the bus station from the north and south and vehicles leaving the Princess Way car park can use the bus station as a short-cut. By removing a section of Station Road, the main route through the bus station will be clearer. Other than buses, vehicles can enter the bus station only from the south, travelling north and along the retained northern section of Station Road onto Market Street.

The main access road through the bus station will have two zebra crossings to allow pedestrians to cross into the bus-waiting areas and to cross to the subway to the town centre. These crossings will link to the pedestrian footpaths running around the bus station taking pedestrians clear of the bus-waiting areas and giving a clearer route through the bus station to the town centre and to the railway station. The clearer footpaths will assist in keeping pedestrians out of the bus-circulation areas.

The existing bus station does not provide any cycle parking. The proposed refurbishment includes parking for 78 cycles located centrally within the bus station and near to the footpath routes and a zebra crossing. The cycle parking area will include guard-railing around the stand to discourage cyclists from walking or cycling in the bus circulation area.

A hackney carriage rank is retained in the bus station in the new layout, which can also double as an extended feeder route for the railway station forecourt.

11. CONCLUSIONS

SALP Policy CP1 and paragraph 14 of the NPPF and set out the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires that development proposals should be approved that accord with the development plan or where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies out of date unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole or where specific policies indicate development should be restricted.

The proposals to refurbish Bracknell bus station are considered to be consistent with the aims of the NPPF in representing sustainable development, providing a high quality design that will enhance the bus station and in promoting the use of public transport by providing a safer and more welcoming bus station. The bus station will provide a more attractive entry point to the town centre to support the regeneration of the town centre now underway.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:-

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the following approved plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 27.03.14:-

4938/009 Rev A
4938/12
4938/13
4938/14
4938/15
1438/20A
1438/23
4939/25
4938/026
4938/27
4938/28

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

03. The development hereby permitted shall not be begun until a scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, to accommodate:

- (a) Parking of vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
- (b) Loading and unloading of plant and vehicles
- (c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- (d) Wheel cleaning facilities
- (e) Temporary portacabins and welfare for site operatives
- (f) Arrangements for the operation of the bus station during the construction period

and each facility shall be retained throughout the course of construction of the development, free from any impediment to its designated use. No other areas on the site, other than those in the approved scheme shall be used for the purposes listed (a) to (e) above without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and road safety.

04. The development shall not be occupied until details of public art and feature signing within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the first occupation of the bus station. The public art and signage shall thereafter be retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and the heritage of the Borough. [Relevant Plans and Policies: BFBLP EN20; Core Strategy DPD CS7]

Informative(s):

01. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Doc. Ref: Uniform 7/DC/Agenda

The application file to which this report relates can be viewed at the Council's Time Square office during office hours or online at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk