

LOCATION:	The Camberley Theatre, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3SY,
PROPOSAL:	Removal of existing canopy and replace with aluminium canopy and external fenestration alterations.
TYPE:	Full Planning Application
APPLICANT:	Mr Keith Rann
OFFICER:	Mr Ross Cahalane

This application is for determination by the Planning Applications Committee as the applicant is Surrey Heath Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks planning application for the removal of the existing front canopy of The Camberley Theatre to be replaced with a new aluminium canopy, along with external fenestration alterations to the front elevation.
- 1.2 The principle of the improvement works to the theatre is supported. The design and scale is considered to be appropriate for this location, as it recognises the importance of the site as a civic building within one of the focal points of the town centre, and would complement the urban regeneration of the town centre. The proposal benefits from the support from the Theatres Trust and the Council's Urban Design Consultant. No material impacts would arise in terms of the amenity of surrounding neighbours or parking and highway arrangements. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site relates to The Camberley Theatre, a two storey civic building originally constructed in 1966. The building has subsequently been extended to the side and rear to provide the Ian Goodchild Centre, and the existing theatre frontage was redeveloped in the 1990s to include the existing ornate steel and glass front canopy feature. However, the building still retains its original fenestration design behind the canopy, along with its original front elevation grey tiles.
- 2.2 The site lies on the eastern side of Knoll Road within an area comprising a number of different civic and amenity uses, including Camberley Library to the north and the later additions of the High Cross Church to the south and Knoll Road public multi-storey car park to the east. The opposite side of Knoll Road was also redeveloped in the 1980s/90s to provide office buildings, one of which is now converted to flats. Despite the level of surrounding redevelopment, the application site still benefits from a spacious setting and a prominent position, with public amenity space retained to the front including mature trees. The site also commands a key focal point location, as it faces towards the Knoll Walk pedestrian walkway linking Knoll Road to Camberley High Street.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 94/0972 Refurbishment of existing civic hall including new chiller plant, bin stores, new fire escapes, new canopy and alterations to entrance doors and fenestration and the siting of eight extract fan units on the roof.
Decision: Granted (1995 - implemented)
- 3.2 97/0140 Display of a free-standing illuminated matrix sign [at front of building]
Decision: Granted (1997 - implemented)
- 3.3 13/0291 Erection of a new entrance including ramp access and exterior landscaping.
Decision: Granted (2013 - implemented)

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application proposed is for the removal of the existing canopy to be replaced with an aluminium canopy, along with external fenestration alterations to the front elevation.
- 4.2 The proposed replacement canopy would have an irregular curved shape, with a flat roof supported by pillars. The proposed canopy would have a maximum depth of approx. 2.4m, maximum width of approx. 10.8m, and flat roof height of approx. 5m. 3D illuminated sign lettering for Camberley Theatre would project above the roof.
- 4.3 The proposed external fenestration alterations to the front elevation would include off-white scraped texture render to replace the existing defective tiles, retention of existing front glazing areas with replacement aluminium door and window frames (to match the material of the proposed canopy), and two areas for wall signage at either side of the entrance and external light fittings.
- 4.4 The proposal does not involve any alterations to the internal layout, or to the entrance ramp access and exterior landscaping.
- 4.5 Amended plans were received following collaboration with the Council's Urban Design Consultant. The changes involve:
- Removing the proposed first floor wood cladding and signage within, with retention of existing glazed fenestration instead;
 - Replacement of proposed off-white smooth render walls with off-white scraped texture render;
 - Redesign of proposed entrance canopy to provide a curved structure, with illuminated 3D letter signing attached above, and;
 - Redesign of wall signage at each side of entrance – to provide variation in size and to be externally illuminated from above.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The Theatres Trust No objection [*See Section 7.2*]
- 5.2 Council Urban Design Consultant No objection, subject to conditions [*See Section 7.3*]

6.0 REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 At the time of preparation of this report, no representations have been received.

7.0 PLANNING ISSUES

7.1 This application site falls within Camberley Town Centre, as defined in the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP). The proposal is considered against the principles of Policies CP10 (Camberley Town Centre), DM9 (Design Principles) and DM14 (Community & Cultural Facilities) of the CSDMP. Policies TC1, TC6, TC11 and TC18 of the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan 2014 (AAP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also material considerations. The main issues to be determined are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on character;
- Impact on residential amenity, and;
- Impact on parking and highway safety.

7.2 Principle of development

7.2.1 Policy CP10 of the CSDMP supports development which enhances the role of Camberley Town Centre as a centre for cultural activity in the Borough and this is consistent with the objective of paragraph 92 of the NPPF. Policies TC1 and TC6 also support proposals that enhance the town centre's appearance, its function and vitality and supports regeneration opportunities. The site lies within the Land East of Knoll Road Opportunity Area as identified by TC18 of the AAP, which seeks improvements to the public realm and enhancements to the Theatre.

7.2.2 The site has an existing theatre use with ancillary café/bar facilities, and there are no proposed changes to this use as part of this application. The proposal benefits from the Theatres Trust as the national advisory body for theatres, commenting that the works would give the theatre a bolder and more contemporary appearance, which will help draw more people in to the building and support the theatre's overall viability and role as a cultural asset. The Theatres Trust has been reconsulted on the amended scheme, and an addendum update will be provided should an additional response be provided.

7.2.3 In light of all the above, it is considered that the proposed external works would not conflict with the relevant objectives of the Council's CDSMP and AAP, or the NPPF, as quoted above. The principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable. The scale and quality of the proposal is assessed under Section 7.3 below.

7.3 Impact on character

7.3.1 Paragraph 122 of the NPPF identifies the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. Paragraph 127 of NPPF seeks to ensure that developments function well, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places and places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

7.3.2 Policy DM14 of the CSDMP is reflective of the NPPF, as it states that the Council will seek to identify opportunities to enhance and improve community and cultural facilities in the Borough. Policy DM9 of the CSDMP states that development should respect and enhance the local, natural and historic character of the environment, paying particular regard to scale, materials, massing and bulk.

7.3.3 Policy TC11 of the AAP states that new development will be required to make a positive contribution toward improving the quality of the built environment. Where appropriate new development should respect its local context, including use of materials sympathetic with local character. In addition, new development should:

(i) Give consideration to the introduction of contemporary materials that respect or enhance existing built form;

(ii) Include a level of architectural detail that gives the building visual interest for views both near and far;

(iii) Make a positive contribution to the public realm – facing the street, animating it and ensuring that all adjacent open space is positively used, and;

(iv) Accommodate the delivery of new civic spaces and improved movement corridors as identified in the Public Realm Strategy.

7.3.4 The Council's Urban Design Consultant has negotiated improvements to the design of the scheme and has raised no objection, commenting that the current amended scheme works with the key attributes of the existing building. It retains the grand opening to the front, including the original first floor fenestration, to provide a sense of lightness to the composition and to accentuate the entrance to the theatre. The retention of the first floor front fenestration is also vitally important for the usefulness, adaptability and quality of the building's interior. The entrance fenestration will be carried out in a high quality charcoal grey metal framework, which will provide a pleasing contrast to the off-white walls. The exterior walls will be finished in an interesting, raw texture, which would work well with the character of the original concrete base. Although the existing grey tiled cladding has lasted for half a century, it has started to show evidence of wear and tear and now requires replacement.

7.3.5 The replacement canopy with its curved design would be lower in height and smaller in span. However, it is considered that the curved design would add sufficient animation and interest to the theatre entrance as a key focal point location, whilst also achieving a crisp and contemporary appearance for the building as a whole. The building will also be enhanced by the display of 3D internally-lit signage above the entrance, in combination with additional wall lighting, some of which would be set within the underside of the soffit. Program adverts will be placed to the sides of the entrance, in a varied size sequence, both attached with steel rods.

7.3.6 The proposed design and scale is considered to be appropriate for this location, as it recognises the importance of the site as a civic building within one of the focal points of the town centre, and would complement the urban regeneration of the town centre. The Council's Urban Design Consultant has recommended two planning conditions requiring: small-scale drawings of the replacement fenestration, entrance doors, canopy and signage, and samples of the proposed external materials, including an on-site meeting once the existing tiles have been removed.

7.3.7 In light of all the above, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with the design requirements of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP and the relevant supporting guidance of the RDG and the WUAC.

7.4 Impact on residential amenity

7.4.1 Policy DM9 (Design Principles) of the CSDMP requires that the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties and uses are respected.

7.4.2 The nearest residential properties would be the converted flats of Bradley Court, on the opposite side of Knoll Road to the west. Given the separation distance of approx. 45m, at an angle and bisected by the highway, it is considered that no adverse impact would arise in terms of visual impact or general noise and disturbance. The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with the amenity requirements of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

7.5 Impact on parking and highway safety

7.5.1 Policy DM11 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety) states that development which would adversely impact the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be supported by the Council, unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented.

7.5.2 No alterations to access points are proposed and the proposal does not involve any change to the existing theatre and café/bar capacity. As such, it is considered that this proposal would not have any detrimental impacts on movement, parking or highway safety.

8.0 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

8.1 In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive, proactive and creative manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 38-41 of the NPPF. This included:

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.
- c) Have suggested/accepted/negotiated amendments to the scheme to resolve identified problems with the proposal and to seek to foster sustainable development.
- d) Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise progress, timescale or recommendation.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The principle of the improvement works to the theatre supported. The design and scale is considered to be appropriate for this location, as it recognises the importance of the site as a civic building within one of the focal points of the town centre, and would complement the urban regeneration of the town centre. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall be built in accordance with the following approved plans:

Proposed ground floor plan (Drawing No. P.07 A); Proposed roof plan (Drawing No. P.08 B); Proposed front elevation (Drawing No. P.09 B); Proposed side elevations (Drawing No. P.10 B) - all received on 14 August 2020;
Proposed site layout (Drawing No. P.02 A) - received on 19 August 2020 , unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

3. No development shall take place until detailed sample drawings in the scale of 1:5 and 1:20, showing the replacement fenestration, entrance doors, canopy and signage, are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall be carried out using only the agreed materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

4. No development shall take place until samples and details of the steel construction of the replacement fenestration, entrance doors and canopy (including dimensions, colour and finish) are submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Samples of the wall treatment (raw finish) in off-white shall be provided on site and agreed upon in writing by the Local Planning Authority, once existing tiles have been removed prior to the commencement of all other construction works.

Once approved, the development shall be carried out using only the agreed materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.