App 26/ 03324/ful. South Hawksworth St Car Park public toilets rebuild, Ilkley

Demolition and rebuild of car park public toilets

Ilkley Civic Society accepts the need to eventually demolish the current building for both structural and visual reasons and will be pleased to see the disappearance of the PVCu windows and ugly roller shutter. We are however disappointed that the solution proposed both visually and looking at conservation issues is a poor solution replacing a flat roofed box with a pitched roof box.

Architecturally

- This building could, and should, be the catalyst for an analysis of the wider area - leading to a well-thought-out holistic design that provides a legible route between the car park and the Grove.
- As proposed, the form of the proposed building is utilitarian - a stone shed with a pitched roof (most of which is hidden by PV panels). This may help it to blend in with its surroundings, but it could offer so much more: it has the opportunity to be a positive contribution to the space, an attractive eye-catching feature that signals arrival in Ilkley (and something that Ilkley could be proud of!)
- While the current toilet block is non-descript, it does at least present a clear and welcoming entrance, and a sheltered daylit 'transition space' while people look for their mobiles, money, toiletries etc. We note that the glazed panels have been infilled with artwork - this may be to provide privacy for waiting customers. The proposed block ignores this need for a welcoming transition space: a series of doors open directly on a main thoroughfare without offering any privacy. This is highly undignified and inappropriate. The doors opening into the public space could be dangerous, as well as awkward for users. We can also foresee problems with wind making the doors difficult to open and close on the western side.
- The lack of natural light in the toilets is depressing (the small portholes are meaningless) - the PV panels preclude the potential for rooflights.
- The Changing Places 'shed' is not ideal as a separate facility – why could it not have been included in the new toilet building? Instead we have a horrible juxtaposition of textures, with an awkward gap between them.

A Negative space – the current toilet block sits in the centre of the Ilkley Conservation Area, the town centre and the car park and is a blot on all three. No consideration/analysis has taken place of the area around the existing toilets to look at the needs of pedestrians, locals and visitors and how they move from and around the poorly laid out car park to the town centre. Placing opening doors of toilets on a public thoroughfare, with potential conflict and partially facing a café outdoor seating area is not good design. The use of spaces and how they could be improved is ignored and no attempt has been made to incorporate the adjacent changing places toilet or ameliorate the negative effect of the other areas/ structures around the current building (ie the bin store/pocket park/cycle storage and cargo bicycle box). The seating areas shown on the visuals do not appear on the site plans so are not part of the application?

Planning application-Conservation – Visually the proposal is for the walls 'weathered stone to match existing '. As the existing stonework is totally different to its surroundings the new build should match the surrounding buildings and be coursed or a totally contemporary finish. The roof as grey slate may be appropriate but the doors in stainless steel are not a traditional material and we suggest not necessary in this location as it is more populated than the Riverside location. The Green colour (not specified) shown for the doors gives the building a 'institutional' appearance. The landscape features shown on the pictorials do not appear on any plans and are yet another piecemeal proposal in this area. Hardstanding suggests' stone flags to match existing 'when the area is paved in low quality concrete slabs currently.

The application D & A & Heritage statement accepts the building is within the Ilkley Conservation Area but has clearly taken no account of the documentation that supported this statutory designation. The conservation area appraisal notes the area is currently designated as 'providing a negative contribution 'which is not mentioned in the D&A statement. Nor are achieving the management proposals to enhance the area. The Assessment notes specifically mention the 'large featureless void' that is the central car park and the views for the 'large numbers of car park users. This statement also ignores the history of the area and what may lie below the current building and caused its foundations to partially fail?

Other issues –

Very concerned that the App form notes no pre application consultation with Bradford council has taken place on planning issues when they own the building.

The new bin store, a proposal that has existed for many months and has now been constructed by CBMC to the western side of the building but does not appear on any of the plans and will screen one of the new toilets on this side.

ICS has always had concerns for security issues caused by the creation of a screened area adjacent the west elevation between the toilet block, changing places portacabin and the new bin store.

Sustainability- whilst good to seen solar panels are to be installed, they need to be conditioned to be 'integrated', within the roof thickness and of a matt colour. The D&A documents refer to two other issues, reduced footprint (but is this a sustainable measure?) and efficient servicing and maintenance (is this a sustainable measure?). Other sustainability issues are ignored in terms of materials (use of, reuse and recycling). No mention of grey water recycling for the toilets. We conclude a paragraph lacking in substance.

Waste – noted as 'as existing 'but with no identification as to how. We would not wish to see any more bins in the current sea of wheely bins. No mention of recycling waste either.

Trees and Hedges- app form notes ‘no’ and ‘no’ for existing and within falling distance both incorrect. The site plan does not even show the existing trees

Gross floor area- proposed has been miscalculated.

Ventilation – a key issue in public toilets does not get a mention

The proposals do not improve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area and we feel this is a missed opportunity, created in many ways by the transfer of the toilets to a town council from a district council. The proposed building does not have a welcoming appearance to draw people to it and the town centre more the appearance of a cell block.

On the basis of the information provided Ilkley Civic Society suggest the proposal fails to meet policy EN3 of the local plan recommend refusal of this application

ICS 12.10.26 Rev B 28.10.26