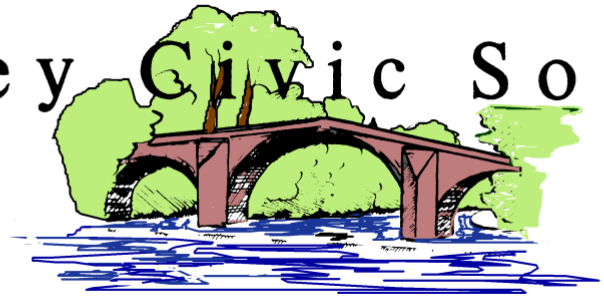
Ilkley Civic Society



Press Release
Proposed replacement of public toilets in the central car park.

Ilkley Civic Society is disappointed in the proposals recently submitted for planning approval to Bradford Council. We accept 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. The two main issues we believe are the visual effects of the proposal and the content of the planning application

Visually and 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 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). Should an alternative site be investigated, we must ask?

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. 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 'this is not mentioned in the D,A & H statement. Nor are achieving the management proposals to 'enhance the area'. The Assessment notes specifically the 'large featureless void' that is the central car park and the views for the 'large numbers of car park users.

Planning Application -Other issues –

There are many issues regarding the planning application that concern us. The Application form notes no pre-application consultation with Bradford council has taken place on planning issues when they own the building.

Other matters are included in full in our comments on the planning application that can be found on our website https://civicsociety.ilkley.org but listed in brief below

The new Bradford Council bin store, has now been constructed to the western side of the building but does not appear on any of the plans. This we suggest causes security issues by creating a screened area between the west elevation and the bin store.

Sustainability- whilst good to see solar panels are to be installed, the supporting documents refer to, reduced footprint and efficient servicing and maintenance being sustainable? Many other sustainability issues are ignored in terms of materials (use of, reuse and recycling). Also, no mention of grey water recycling for the toilets. We conclude a paragraph lacking in substance.

Information is either missing or in error for Waste & recycling, Trees and Hedges, Gross floor area and Ventilation.

The proposals do not improve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area and we feel this are a missed opportunity. 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 recommended refusal of this application

Some non- planning issues are also of concern in that it is proposed to spend almost £250k on a capital project when the building is only on a 50-year lease? We have information on current operational costs (ITC report to council August 2026) and that those for the future will be reduced but by how much, a question that needs answering? This would be the biggest capital project initiated by the town council a situation created in many ways by the transfer of the toilets to a town council from a district council when it is the district council who have the powers to provide (but not a duty to provide) certainly a much higher legal responsibility than the town council. The district council also have a much greater experience in planning and managing capital projects and we suggest a responsibility as they handed over a building apparently not now fit for purpose.

ICS 26.10.26