

Regulatory Committee - 5 November 2019

Alterations and Extensions to Existing Fire Training Tower

**Stratford-upon-Avon Fire Station, Masons Road,
Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 9NA**

SDC/19CC011

Application No.: SDC/19CC011

Advertised date: 13 September 2019

Applicant(s) Warwickshire County Council
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Warwick
CV34 4SA

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Registered by: The Strategic Director for Communities on 02
September 2019

Proposal: Alterations and Extensions To Existing Fire Training
Tower

Site & location: Stratford-upon-Avon Fire Station, Masons Road,
Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 9NA. [Grid ref:
419306.255255].

See plan in Appendix A

Recommendation

That the Regulatory Committee authorises the grant of planning permission for alterations and extensions to existing fire training tower subject to the conditions and for the reasons contained within Appendix B of the report of the Strategic Director for Communities.

1. Application details

- 1.1 This full planning application proposed alterations and extensions to the existing fire training tower located in the yard to the rear of Stratford Fire Station. The alterations are proposed in order to enable a wider range of training exercises to be carried out by member of the Fire and Rescue Service at the site.
- 1.2 The existing training tower covers 3.8m x 4m in area and measures 17.5m in height. The structure is brick built and has 5 window type openings at various heights on one elevation to allow various training scenarios. A single storey building measuring approximately 8.1m x 8.4m forms a 'T' shaped structure around the base of the tower itself. This building is used to house a drill room, hose repair area, boiler house and oil tank.
- 1.3 The application proposes alterations to the existing tower consisting of the formation of new window openings to match the existing on an additional elevation, a first floor open balcony type area, a first floor covered area incorporating a pitched galvanised roof and the construction of a 2 storey imitation house complete with pitched roof. The new structure would occupy the same floor area with the highest element being the pitch of the training house measuring 7m. Internal configuration at ground floor level would remain similar to present with the relocation of the fuel store, removal of the oil tank and addition of a compressor room.
- 1.4 The training house would be constructed from brick masonry walls and a tile roof, complete with chimney to provide realistic training scenarios. Windows and doors are also proposed. The domestic style property would be used for search and find training, there would be limited use of water on occasions, but not frequent use. There are to be no live fires as part of the training exercises. The tower itself would remain largely unchanged internally, expect for the provision of additional ladders.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 Stratford District Council Planning – No objection.
- 2.2 Stratford District Council Environmental Health – No objection.
- 2.3 Councillor Dominic Skinner – No comments received at time of writing.
- 2.4 Highway Authority – No objection.
- 2.5 Environment Agency – No objection.
- 2.6 Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council – No representations to make.
- 2.7 Ecology – requested initial bat survey and subsequent mitigation if necessary.
- 2.8 Site notices posted – 13 September 2019
- 2.9 5 nearest residential/business properties individually notified on

3. Representations

- 3.1 No representation received from members of the public.

4. Previous Planning History

- 4.1 The application site has been occupied by the Fire and Rescue Service as far as records date back and has previously been subject to an application to extend the main building to improve facilities in 1985. Since that time the only other application made has been for the erection of 1 radio dish and 6 antennae that was approved in 2011.

5. Assessment and Observations

Location and Impact

- 5.1 The applications site is the existing Fire Station located on Mason Road to the west of Stratford town centre. Access is via a gate to the south of main station building and there are no proposed alterations. The immediate locality is occupied by a mix of residential and industrial premises. Residential properties are located to the south and opposite the frontage of the site. While industrial units occupied by businesses are located to the north, closest to the training tower. To the east of the site, there is a large car park and the associated super market it serves.

- 5.2 The training tower itself is located within the rear yard of the fire station and despite its height is well screened from view. The large industrial units to the north provide a setting which ensures the structure does not look out of place or dominate the area. The proposed alterations do not increase the maximum height, and the extensions will be smaller than the existing fire and ambulance station building so as not to cause an adverse impact on the street scene.

Amenity Issues

- 5.3 The proposed alterations are not expected to have an adverse impact upon amenity given that training exercises will not include the use of smoke or live fires. There may be some intermittent impact by way of noise during training activities that may occur during the day and during the evening. However, this impact would be sporadic and is not considered to be significant enough to warrant refusal of the application given the background noise levels in the urban environment.

Environmental Issues

- 5.4 The proposals are within a previously developed site surfaced with a concrete hardstanding and as such are not expected to give rise to adverse effects on biodiversity. A tributary of the River Avon passes beneath the site at the northern boundary but it is culverted so unaffected by the proposals.
- 5.5 The application site is wholly within Flood Zone 3 and partly within Flood Zone 2 as defined by the Environment Agency's flood maps. The development is not considered sensitive given that it is an unoccupied training facility and is to be built on pre-existing hard surface, thus not reducing permeability and creating additional flood risk. The existing oil storage tank is proposed to be removed, and only small quantities of fuel will be stored on site within handheld containers. As such, no further protection in case of a flood risk event is deemed necessary.
- 5.6 The County Ecologist requested a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) of the site as records show a pond to the North of the application site where a GCN had been recorded. Further investigation revealed that the pond no longer existed and the area in question was now occupied by a large industrial building. As such, it has been agreed that a PEA will not be required.
- 5.7 A condition would be appended to any approval that may be granted requiring the assessment of the suitability of the training tower to support bats. Should potential be found, further survey work would be required to be carried out in the appropriate season, and subsequent mitigation measures implemented if necessary.

Heritage

- 5.8 There are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the application site and the Stratford-upon-Avon conservation area is over 330m to the East. The proposed development is not visible from the conservation area, nor does it impact upon its setting.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan

- 5.9 The development plan is as follows:
- Stratford-On-Avon Core Strategy 2011 - 2031
- 5.10 Other relevant policy documents are:
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

Stratford-On-Avon Core Strategy

- 5.11 Policy CS.1: Sustainable Development – the policy states that developments that contribute towards the principles of sustainability; economic, environmental and social, will be supported. Where developments comply with the policies in the core strategy and relevant sections of the NPPF, they will also be supported.
- 5.12 The proposed extension and alterations to the training tower would allow for enhanced training to be provided to local Fire and rescue Officers based in Stratford and surrounding auxiliary stations. This would prevent the need for said officers to travel to facilities that are further afield, negating the need for additional travel. The proposal also complies with relevant policies in the Core Strategy and the NPPF, and as such is in accordance with this policy.
- 5.13 Policy CS.4: Water Environment and Flood Risk - States that *'Development within the Environment Agency's flood risk zones 2 and 3a will only be acceptable when the sequential test and, where applicable, the exception test has been satisfied, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Land use in High Probability Flood Zone 3b should be restricted to water compatible or, with the exception test, essential infrastructure.'*
- 5.14 The application site falls within Flood Zone 2 and partly within Flood Zone 3 and as such must be judged against the relevant sections of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The proposed development does not seek an increase in floor space and is set upon existing hard standing so does not create an increased flood risk by adversely affecting permeability.

- 5.15 The proposed development would be unoccupied and used for training purposes only and is considered a low risk use in terms of flooding. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the policy.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.16 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that *'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development.'* Paragraph 11 states that *'...For decision-taking this means: c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay...'* It has been demonstrated above that this proposal complies with the relevant policies of the current adopted Core Strategy.
- 5.17 Paragraph 92 states: *'To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: ...c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.'*
- 5.18 The proposed development would improve the existing training facilities available at the fire station contributing to its continued viability and offering training for firefighters in their local area. As such, it is considered that the proposal contributes to the protection of a valued community facility and service.
- 5.19 Paragraph 163 of the NPPF states that: *'When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that: a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient; c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate; d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.'*
- 5.20 The development proposal satisfies the requirements of the NPPF given that it is supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment which states: *'The proposal will not create any additional floor space at ground floor level and the additional floorspace is at first floor level. The space created is for fire service training only.'* As such it is considered that the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient given it creates no additional floor space and would be unoccupied and used for training purposes only.

- 5.21 In addition, the building is located on existing hardstanding which is not proposed to be increased, and as such does not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere. The site has existing drainage infrastructure that would continue to be utilised for the improved training facilities. Given that the structure is not proposed to be occupied, and would not be used during a flood event, it is not considered necessary to require an emergency plan.
- 5.22 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF goes on to state: '*Applications for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments set out in footnote 50.*'
- 5.23 Given that the development proposal constitutes 'minor development' and is a small non-residential extension with a footprint of less than 250m², it is not necessary to apply the sequential or exception tests that are required to be applied to major developments proposed within Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3.

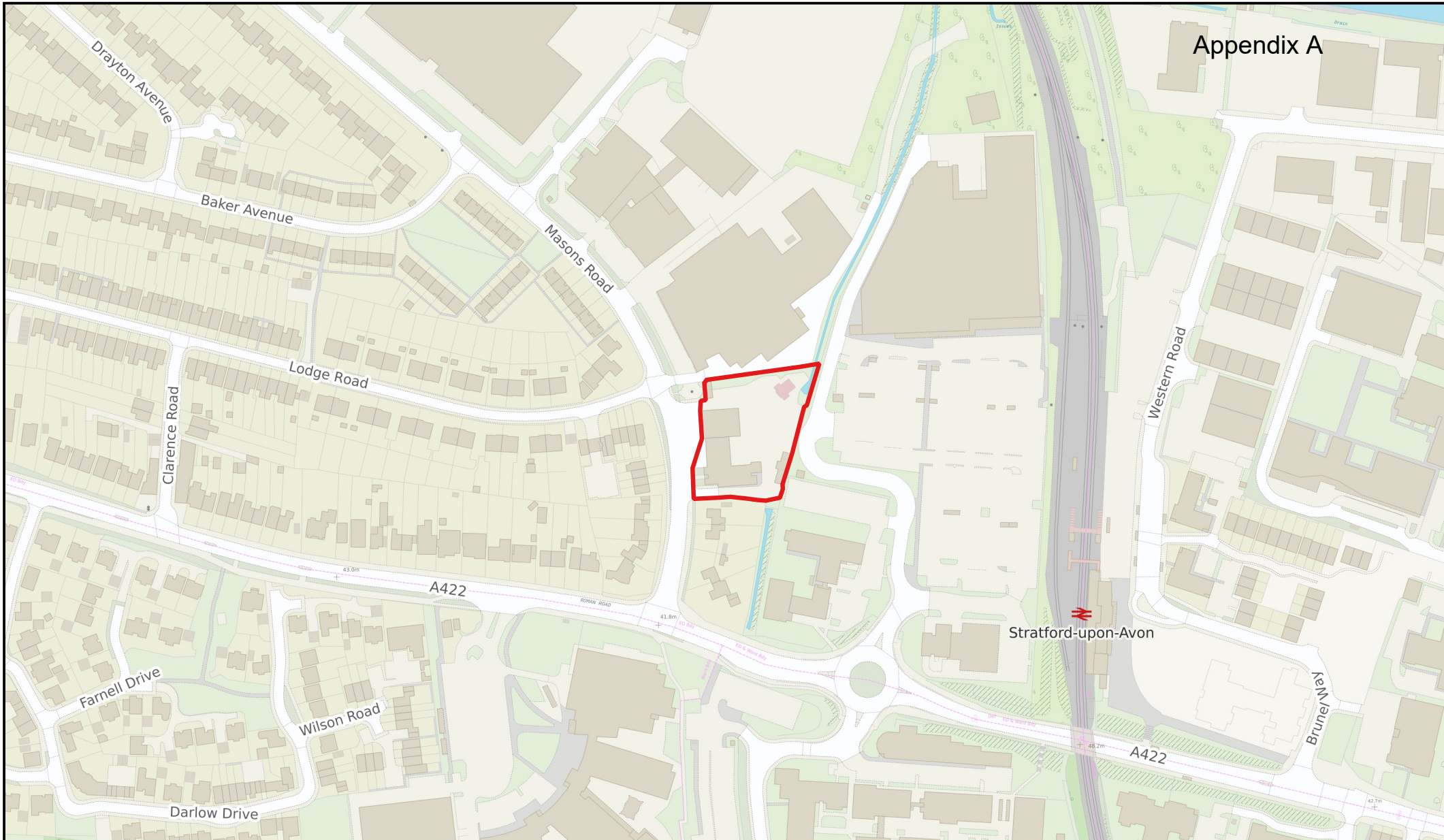
6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The application proposes the alteration and extension of the existing training tower at Stratford-On-Avon Fire Station in order to improve the training facilities available on site. Should Members be minded to grant approval, it would allow for members of the Fire and Rescue Service to be trained at their local station, negating the need to travel to alternative facilities. As such, the proposal is considered sustainable in terms of protecting the environment and socially, as it would ensure the ongoing viability of the Fire Station within the town.
- 6.2 The application has not received any objections from statutory or non-statutory consultees and complies with National and Local planning policies as demonstrated above. It is for these reasons that the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions listed below.

7. Supporting Documents

- 7.1 Submitted Planning Application – Planning reference SDC/19CC011
- 7.2 Appendix A – Map of site and location.
- 7.3 Appendix B – Planning Conditions.

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Application No: SDC/19CC010
Stratford Fire Station, Masons Road, Stratford-upon-Avon
Alterations and Extensions to Existing Fire Training Tower

Regulatory Committee 5 November 2019
 Scale 1:2500 Drawn by: TE Dept: Communities



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Appendix B

Alterations and Extensions to Existing Fire Training Tower

Stratford-upon-Avon Fire Station, Masons Road,
Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 9NA

SDC/19CC011

Planning Conditions.

1. The development hereby approved shall be commenced no later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the application forms, Planning & Flood Risk Statement (Revision A) dated August 2019 and drawings numbered: 4727-007D - Proposed Drill Tower, 4727-007C - Proposed Drill Tower, 4727-006B - Existing Drill Tower, 4727-001-Location Plan and any samples or details approved in accordance with the conditions attached to this permission, except to the extent that any modification is required or allowed by or pursuant to these conditions.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory standard of development.

3. Prior to the commencement of development an initial bat survey of the training tower will be conducted. Should it be concluded that the tower has the potential to support bats, an evening/dawn activity survey will be undertaken during the appropriate months. Should the survey conclude that bats are occupying the tower, appropriate mitigation measures will be put in place and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved mitigation measures shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the development.

Reason: In the interest of biodiversity.

Development Plan Policies Relevant to the Decision.

Stratford-On-Avon Core Strategy

Policy CS.1

Policy CS.4

Compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

In considering this application, the County Council has complied with paragraph 38 contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.