DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL: : Proposed installation of Community Public Access Defibrillator

ADDRESS : Maude Institute, Clerk Bank, Leek **APPLICANT : David Swarbrook**

DATE : 1st September 2022

DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Assessment Area

The application proposes the installation of a yellow polycarbonate defibrillator cabinet and associated foam-board sponsor board on the exterior face of the North facing wall to the side entrance of the building, overlooking the existing car park area. The site lies within a small group of existing or former religious/community buildings on the fringes of the town centre and within the Leek Conservation Area. Given the nature of the proposal, it is considered that the appropriate Assessment Area should consist of the Maude institute and its closest neighbouring buildings.

Physical

The application building and neighbouring buildings are located on elevated land on the north side of the A523. Buildings within the Assessment Area consist of two and three storeys, generally 18*“, 19"‘ and early 20"‘ Century mainly former religious or community buildings, some of which have been converted into other uses.

The application building is a Grade ll Listed Building. It is a Victorian two storey building with later additions and constructed with a dark red brick with stone quoins and details over the windows. The roof is hipped on all sides and tiled.

The adjoining building is used as a Scout Headquarters but was formerly a Church Grammar School. it is older than the application building and has been built of stone on the ground floorwith a dark red brick above. To the east of this is Clerk Bank House, a three storey office building. To the rear of the application building is Mount House and Mount Pleasant, a modern two storey brick building used as sheltered accommodation.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Conservation Area and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. The Local Plan shows the premises located within the Leek Conservation Area. There are no ‘saved’ Conservation Area and Listed Building Local Plan policies. Policy B13 encourages good quality design in proposals.

Paragraph 3.2 of PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment confirms that listed building consent is required for all works, both external and internal, that would affect a building's special interest. Paragraph 3.3 states that local planning authorities should ‘have special regard to the desirability of presenting the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses‘. Paragraph 3.4 states that applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, and that if the works would affect the character of a listed building, they must show why these are desirable or necessary.

Paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 confirm that planning decisions in respect of development proposed to be carried out in Conservation Areas must give high priority to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Planning policy guides the proposed scheme towards one that avoids changes to the historic quality and character of the building, and seeks to enhance the character of the Conservation Area. .

Any planning application for development which will affect a listed building or its setting must be assessed in accordance with the requirements of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires a local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which is possesses. 2. A similar duty exists where the proposed development will be within a conservation area where section 72 of the same Act requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF applies where the harm is assessed as less than substantial. This requires that in determining the planning application the less than substantial harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The NPPF itself does not define what public benefits are for this purpose. Further guidance is given in the Historic Environment Chapter of the PPG. This refers to anything which delivers the economic, social or environmental objectives of sustainable development described in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Those objectives are defined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF as follows:-

(a) Economic - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy

(b) Social - to support, vibrant and healthy communities

(c) Environmental - to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

The PPG makes clear that the public benefits must flow from the development and must be of a nature or scale that would benefit the public at large but these benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public or to all sections of the public to be genuine public benefits.

EVALUATION AND DESIGN

With respect to the installation of life saving defibrillator cabinets, unfortunately there has been uncertainty due to a lack of clarity under planning law, which has seen local authorities across the UK adopting different stances on the issue. The applicant has been unable to locate any clear policy statements on the SMDC website with respect to defibrillator cabinets but many local authorities have classified the installation of defibrillators in buildings as "de minimis", or minor works in planning terms.

Following informal guidance from an SMDC Councillor, with a planning qualification, we have sought to minimise the visual impact of the installation whilst maximising the public benefit both to the occupants of the Maude and the wider Community. We have considered alternative locations, subject to maintaining close proximity to the Maude as the defibrillator is currently available internally, and found all nearby commercial locations to either be Grade II listed, or be inaccessible and difficult to describe and access following a 999 emergency call by a member of the public.

CONCLUSION

A community public access defibrillator is there for anyone to use when in an emergency. This installation would provide peace of mind of mind to hundreds of people in the local community.

A defibrillator can make the difference between life and death.

We believe that, in line with SMDC planning policy, the public benefit of a community public access defibrillator cabinet located at The Maude would outweigh the less than substantive harm of the proposed installation.