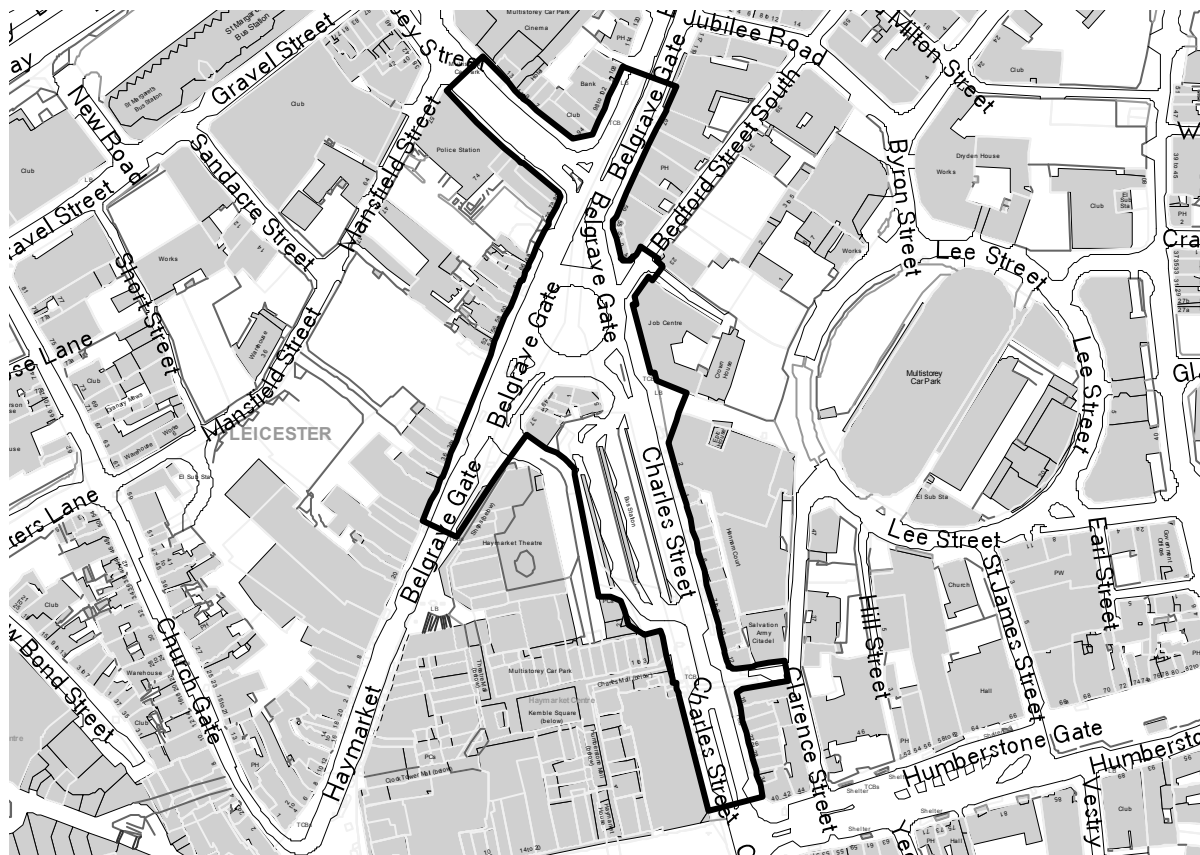


<b>Recommendation: Conditional approval</b>	
<b>20131962</b>	<b>CHARLES STREET, HAYMARKET BUS STATION</b>
Proposal:	REDEVELOPMENT OF BUS STATION INCLUDING ENCLOSED CONCOURSE, DEMOLITION OF 1, 3 AND 5 CHARLES STREET; 37, 49 AND 49 BELGRAVE GATE; ASSOCIATED HIGHWAY WORKS
Applicant:	LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL
App type:	City Council Regulation 3
Status:	Smallscale Major Development
Expiry Date:	31 January 2014
DW1	WARD: Castle



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**Summary**

- Application brought to committee as it a significant proposal by the City Council
- One objection received. Objection relates to a number of issues but in particular that the scheme has failed to take consultation responses into account.
- Main issues are the principle of the proposed development, its effect on the character and appearance of the area, traffic and road safety.
- Proposal would deliver significant improvements for bus users and generally improve this part of the city centre particularly for pedestrians.
- Recommendation is for approval

## **Introduction**

The application site is within the city centre and central shopping core as defined by the Local Plan and Core Strategy, and a small part is within the Mansfield Street Potential Development Area. It incorporates the existing bus station on Charles Street and extends up to the building frontages on its east side. It also includes a section of Charles Street to the south of the bus station, a section of Belgrave Gate between 20 and 108 and a section of Abbey Street between its junctions with Mansfield Street and Belgrave Gate. The properties at 37, 47 and 49 Belgrave Gate and 1, 3 and 5 Charles Street which form a small group of buildings at the junction of the two roads are also within the site. These properties are in commercial use occupied by food/drink uses, a jewellers and a rest room for bus drivers. The majority of the site is adjoined by buildings in commercial use with some residential above at Hannam Court on Charles Street and some on the upper floors of properties on Belgrave Gate.

The west side of the existing bus station adjoins the vehicle access ramp to the Haymarket multi-storey car park. The Shop Mobility unit occupies a space under the ramp.

The bus station currently comprises three long rows of shelters each serving a number of services. There are a number of individual shelters opposite on the east side of Charles Street.

## **Background**

Planning permission 19930538 for the bus station in its current form was granted in May 1994.

The existing bus station has 12 stands with no scope to increase capacity. Thirteen services use it for pick up and drop off. The Design & Access Statement states that 50 buses arrive per hour and the facility is used by 20,000 people daily. There are limited passenger waiting and other facilities.

## **The Proposal**

The existing bus station would be remodelled and extended northwards to provide 23 drive in and reverse out bays/stands. Eleven of these would be additional which would allow for the relocation of 6 bus stops on the east side of Charles Street and 2 on its west side into the bus station. Buses would enter the bus station at its south end and exit either on to Belgrave Gate or to Charles Street to travel southwards. In addition to the 23 stands there would be five bus waiting bays. These would not be used for alighting or disembarking.

There would be a new concourse building on the west side of Charles Street, part of which would adjoin the ramp to the multi storey car park with a section beyond extending up to Belgrave Gate. It would have a width of about 8 metres. Its east elevation and the sides facing Belgrave Gate would include large areas of glazing between smooth red brick piers.

The main entrance would be from Belgrave Gate with a further entrance at the south end of the concourse. It would have a gently sloping roof which would project beyond the east elevation to provide a protective canopy over the bus stand. The roof would step down to reflect the slight change in level along the site.

The Shop Mobility unit, travel desk and a kiosk would be included within the concourse. There would be waiting facilities and an electronic passenger information system. The existing public toilets would be refurbished.

The proposal includes the demolition of the buildings at the junction of Charles Street and Belgrave Gate. Negotiations to acquire these are taking place separately.

There would be no footway along the west side of Charles Street between the entrance and exit points to the bus station for buses. There would be a glazed screen about 2.4m high to segregate the bus station from Charles Street between these points to deter pedestrians entering the bus reversing area. Pedestrians on the west side of Charles Street would be able to use the concourse as a through route during opening hours. Outside of these times they would need to use the east side of Charles Street. There would also be a short section of glazed screen at the north end of the bus station and around the exit lane on to Charles Street.

Areas of open space would be created and trees planted between the west side of the concourse building and Belgrave Gate and adjacent to the exit points from the bus station.

Associated highway works include the removal of the roundabout at the junction of Charles Street and Belgrave Gate. There would be alterations to the signalised junction of Belgrave Gate and Abbey Street. Changes to Traffic Regulations Orders and new orders relating to parking, loading unloading and traffic movements would be required.

#### Supporting Documents

Design & Access Statement

Transport Statement

Visuals

Ecological Assessment

Air Quality assessment

Noise Assessment

Archaeology and Heritage Assessment

Energy Statement

Ground Investigation Report

#### **Policy Considerations**

Development plan policies relevant to this application are listed at the end of this report.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012): has a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision making means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. It sets out 12 core planning principles. It states the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes

Leicester Local Transport Plan (LTP3 – 2012): although not a planning document, it is a material consideration and has a number of objectives relating to public transport as part of its overall strategy.

## **Consultations**

Highway Authority: no objections provided that the scheme is implemented in accordance with the approved plans. The scheme has been designed to rationalise traffic movements in the area and to address pedestrian safety issue

Leicestershire Police Counter Terrorism Security Adviser: has no particular recommendations or matters of concern, but suggests that the scheme is reviewed against current national guidance which aims to reduce the risk of terrorism and crime.

Noise Team: advise that any changes in noise levels at sensitive locations following the completion of the development would be insignificant. Conditions relating to demolition methods and hours of demolition/construction works are recommended.

## **Representations**

One representation received in response to press notice and a number of notices posted around the site.

The grounds of objection relate to the layout, design, access, disruption to the existing highway, pedestrian circulation, public realm, destruction of heritage assets, landscaping, the needs of bus users and the location. The proposal is such that the bus station could neither be expanded nor connected to the land formerly reserved for a bus station to the north east of the site. It is felt the scheme has failed to take consultation responses into account. The scheme is substantially the same as originally seen – a total redesign is necessary. The alternative design proposed to the council, would have overcome some of the problems is not included as part of the supporting information. Responses given to council officers at meetings of the Leicester City Local Access Forum about the original design have not been included with the planning application.

Public consultation was carried out during the development of the proposals. This included exhibitions, stakeholder meetings and leafleting. There was a formal public consultation earlier this year. The Design & Access Statement notes that 260 responses were received, the majority of which were positive. Responses from bus operators were also mainly positive.

## **Consideration**

The main issues are:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle;
- Its effect on the character and appearance of the area;
- Its effect on traffic movement and road safety

## Principle

The proposal is essentially an extension and improvement to the existing bus station. Although there have been draft proposals previously for a bus interchange within the Mansfield Street Potential Development Area (Local Plan policy PS09a), Core Strategy policy CS12 aims to promote the growth of the City Centre through amongst other things making it the focus of public transport initiatives including improving bus interchange facilities and new city centre bus termini. This is reflected in CS policy 14, the aims of which include developing a transport network to maximise

accessibility, manage congestion and air quality. I consider the proposal is fully in accordance with these policies and as such is not a departure from the development plan.

The need for Improved and more efficient facilities is also important in terms of the wider context of the need to accommodate further growth both within the city and the districts around it which would be served by the city centre, the need to enhance accessibility and manage congestion.

#### Character and appearance

The buildings that would be demolished have little architectural merit or in terms of their contribution to the townscape. The concourse building would have a contemporary sleek appearance which I consider would enhance the street scene in Belgrave Gate and Charles Street. It would create a much better arrival point into this part of the city which combined with the public realm works and landscaping would lift the appearance and perception of the area.

Some form of barrier to prevent pedestrians entering the bus manoeuvring area is considered necessary for safety reasons. Glazed screens as proposed should ensure this is as unobtrusive as possible within the streetscene and would still allow views across Charles Street. The details of its design submitted with the application are indicative and a condition is recommended requiring further details to be submitted.

I consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of CS policy 3.

#### Traffic movement and road safety

Current problems associated with the bus station include bus congestion on Charles Street, no segregation of buses from pedestrians who have to cross next to parked buses to reach stops, footways that are too narrow for the volume of pedestrians and poor conditions for cyclist using Charles Street due to on street bus stops. The roundabout at Charles Street is also poor for pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposals would rationalise bus movements on Charles Street which would also benefit pedestrian safety. Currently bus congestion on Charles Street can block visibility at pedestrian crossing points. They would also result in improved conditions and safety for cyclists using Charles Street.

Traffic modelling carried out for the Transport Statement shows that the proposed development would not materially affect traffic flows or junction capacity on surrounding roads.

I consider the proposal to be acceptable in respect of this issue.

### **Other Considerations**

#### Heritage assets

There are no above ground heritage assets within or immediately adjoining the site. The site is within an area of archaeological interest but any potential impact on this can be dealt with through standard archaeological conditions. The proposal is acceptable in terms of CS policy 18.

#### Living Conditions

The upper floors of some buildings adjoining the site are in residential use, most notably Hannam Court on the east side of Charles Street which overlook the existing bus station. The most likely effect on living conditions would be noise from bus movements (including engine idling and reversing alarms) within the bus station and general traffic. Existing noise levels within and adjacent to the site are already high. The Noise Assessment suggests that there would be a slight increase in noise levels at the Hannam Court flats and Pollution Control consider that changes in noise levels would be insignificant. The proposal is therefore unlikely to result in a significant adverse impact on living conditions and is acceptable in terms of Local Plan policy PS10.

There would be potential for more significant impacts during demolition and construction but this would only be short term and temporary. I therefore do not consider it is necessary to restrict hours of working by condition.

#### Air Quality

The Air Quality assessment suggests that changes in emissions from traffic associated with the development compared with the existing conditions would be imperceptible.

#### Renewable Energy

Other than the office and shop mobility unit, the concourse building would not be heated nor cooled. Other than that required for power and lighting the development would have minimal energy demands. A PV membrane is proposed as part of the roof of the building. Energy provided by this would be in excess of the 17% currently required by policy BE16 of the Local Plan and is therefore acceptable.

#### Ecology

The site has little if any ecological value. There is an area of amenity grass and some trees on the roundabout at the end of Charles Street that would be removed. Replacement tree planting elsewhere within the site is proposed and the use of native species would enhance the site's biodiversity value. I consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of CS policy 17.

#### Screening Opinion

The application has been screened in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. It was concluded that the proposal was not EIA development as it would not have significant environmental effects.

#### Security

Guidance has been produced by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office which has recommendations to ensure counter-terrorism design principles are incorporated into the design of development in crowded places. The comments from Leicestershire Police confirm there are no currently issues which require addressing in this respect. The applicants have confirmed that the Police will be invited to comment on the final, more detailed version of the proposals.

#### **Conclusion**

The proposed development would deliver much needed improvements to facilities for bus users in the city centre. It would enhance the appearance of the area generally

and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. There would be no adverse impacts on the surrounding road network and the proposal would no other significant harmful effects.

The proposal does not conflict with any relevant development plan policies. I recommend APPROVAL subject to the conditions below:

#### CONDITIONS

1. START WITHIN THREE YEARS
2. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the concourse building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS3.)
3. The proposed screen/s along the west side of Charles Street and at the northern end of the bus station shall not be erected other than in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. (To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS03)
4. PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
5. PRESERVATION OF ASSETS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST
6. No development shall take place until details of the trees to be planted in the areas indicated on drawing L101/E and a timetable for planting of them have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable. For a period of not less than five years from the date of planting, the applicant or owners of the land shall maintain all planted material. This material shall be replaced if it dies, is removed or becomes seriously diseased. The replacement planting shall be completed in the next planting season in accordance with the approved landscaping scheme. (In the interests of the appearance of the development and in accordance with policy UD06 of the City of Leicester Local Plan and Core Strategy policy CS3)
7. At least 17% of the concourse building's total estimated operational energy demand shall be generated from renewable sources in accordance with the details in the energy statement submitted with the application or in accordance with alternative details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be installed and operational before the first use of the building and be retained as operational thereafter. (To promote renewable energy and to reduce the effects of the development on climate change in accordance with the aims of policy BE16 of the City of Leicester Local plan and Core Strategy policy CS02)

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8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings: PL\_001, PL\_002, PL\_003, PL\_004, PL\_005, PL\_006 and L101E. Drawings 102 and L022B are indicative only. (For the avoidance of doubt.)

**Policies relating to this recommendation**

- 2006\_AM01 Planning permission will only be granted where the needs of pedestrians and people with disabilities are incorporated into the design and routes are as direct as possible to key destinations.
- 2006\_AM02 Planning permission will only be granted where the needs of cyclists have been incorporated into the design and new or improved cycling routes should link directly and safely to key destinations.
- 2010\_CS01 The overall objective of the Core Strategy is to ensure that Leicester develops as a sustainable city, with an improved quality of life for all its citizens. The policy includes guidelines for the location of housing and other development.
- 2010\_CS03 The Council will require high quality, well designed developments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the local natural and built environment. The policy sets out design objectives for urban form, connections and access, public spaces, the historic environment, and 'Building for Life'.
- 2010\_CS04 The Strategic Regeneration Area will be the focus of major housing development and physical change to provide the impetus for economic, environmental and social investment and provide benefits for existing communities. New development must be comprehensive and co-ordinated. The policy gives detailed requirements for various parts of the Area.
- 2010\_CS12 In recognition of the City Centre's role in the City's economy and wider regeneration, the policy sets out strategies and measures to promote its growth as a sub-regional shopping, leisure, historic and cultural destination, and the most accessible and sustainable location for main town centre uses.
- 2010\_CS14 The Council will seek to ensure that new development is easily accessible to all future users including by alternative means of travel to the car; and will aim to develop and maintain a Transport Network that will maximise accessibility, manage congestion and air quality, and accommodate the impacts of new development.