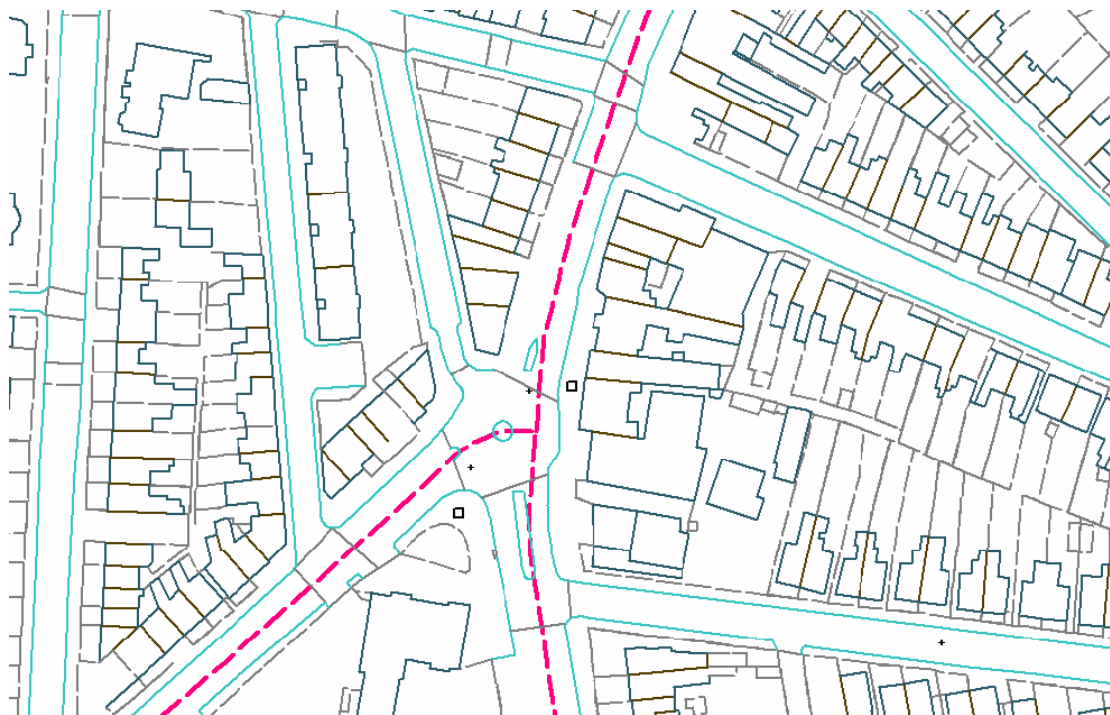


<b>APPLICATION NO:</b> 14/01171/FUL	<b>OFFICER:</b> Miss Chloe Smart
<b>DATE REGISTERED:</b> 2nd July 2014	<b>DATE OF EXPIRY:</b> 27th August 2014
<b>WARD:</b> College	<b>PARISH:</b>
<b>APPLICANT:</b> Mr Adrian Phillips	
<b>AGENT:</b>	
<b>LOCATION:</b> Roundabout, Bath Road, Cheltenham	
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed decoration of 19 utility boxes within the Bath Road area and decoration of existing roundabout (junction of Bath Road, Leckhampton Road and Shurdington Road).

**RECOMMENDATION:** Permit



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## 1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application relates to the Bath Road area and seeks planning permission for the decoration of 19 utility boxes and the decoration of the existing roundabout at the junction of Bath Road, Leckhampton Road and Shurdington Road.
- 1.2 The application has been made by the Cheltenham Connect subgroup 'Connect Streets' which is a community scheme to improve the Bath Road area and involves the Bath Road traders and local community groups.
- 1.3 The applicant has served the necessary notice on the owners of the utility boxes and roundabout which are Gloucestershire Highways, BT Open Reach and Virgin Media. Extensive discussions have also taken place between the applicant and the owners of the utility boxes and roundabouts to ensure the proposal would be feasible.
- 1.4 The site lies within the Bath Road Character Area of the Central Conservation Area.
- 1.5 The application is before planning committee as officers at the Council have been extensively involved with the preparation of the application. A committee decision is deemed appropriate to ensure a transparent determination of the application.

## 2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

### **Constraints:**

Conservation Area  
District Shopping Area

### **Relevant Planning History:**

N/A

## 3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

### Adopted Local Plan Policies

CP 4 Safe and sustainable living  
CP 7 Design

### Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Central conservation area: Bath Road Character Area and Management Plan (July 2008)

### National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### **GCC Highways Planning Liaison Officer**

*4th July 2014*

I refer to the above planning application received on 3rd July 2014. The application is for the decoration of 19 utility boxes and one roundabout as a community project for the enhancement of the local community, in the Bath Road Leckhampton Road and Shurdington Road area of Cheltenham.

The applicant will require the permission of the relevant authorities the local Highway authority who may be contacted on 0800514514, and also BT Open Reach.

I raise no highway objections to this application.

## **Heritage and Conservation**

*28th July 2014*

### Comments:

1. The main conservation issues for consideration with this proposal are the impact on the conservation area and in particular its character and whether the painted meter boxes will have an adverse impact on the setting of any listed buildings in the Bath Road area.
2. The intention of the project is to reinforce the identity and character of the commercial section of the Bath Road through creating a visual connection. The utility boxes were identified as potential canvases for artwork inspired by initiatives in other cities and countries: they come in a variety of sizes, materials and conditions.
3. Most of the boxes are located on the main road but despite the prominence of their location they are largely overlooked and unnoticed by the public, and in some instances their maintenance has been long neglected.
4. There are five design motifs for the utility boxes, which take inspiration from local and historic sources, and the roundabout artwork is an adaptation of a design detail from these motifs.
5. The positioning of each design and colourway has been carefully considered and is particularly notable with the use of the Cedar design near to the College and the repeated use of the Iris motif on the very small steel boxes that are regularly distributed along the road.
6. The key characteristics identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal are the area's vibrancy and unique character, largely derived from specialist shops and public houses: the proposed scheme will enhance this character by introducing a unified, colourful and well-designed scheme without adding extra physical elements to the already cluttered street scene.
7. Having considered each design in its proposed location and settings, no harm has been identified to the historic setting or to the views in and out of the area.
8. Additional benefits of this scheme are to the medium to long-term maintenance of the artwork and by extension to the meter boxes: they will remain the responsibility of their corporate owners but overseen by the community group. The Connect Streets group has undertaken in a Maintenance Statement submitted with this application to maintain/repair or replace the artwork should it deteriorate or become the target of tagging or graffiti, and will liaise with the owners regarding replacement and maintenance of the boxes as required.

Summary: this unusual scheme has been cleverly designed to augment the character of the Bath Road by using local and recognisable visual sources to distinguish and define the area. The artwork will not harm the conservation area and concerns regarding the maintenance of such a scheme have been addressed by the applicant.

### CONCLUSION:

Approve.

## 5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Number of letters sent	6
Total comments received	3
Number of objections	0
Number of supporting	3
General comment	0

5.1 Six site notices have been displayed at various locations along the Bath Road to draw attention to the application. Three comments have been received in support of the application.

### 5.2 Comments Received

Summary of representation comments:

- Will brighten up and enhance the environment
- Working hard to maintain the uniqueness of Bath Road and this goes a long way to make it feel special.
- Delighted with the work of Connect Streets. This will enhance the neighbourhood and be an attraction to visitors and shoppers on the Bath Road.

## 6. OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 The main consideration in relation to this application is whether the proposal will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

6.2 The Council's Conservation Officer has provided detailed comments on the application and considered each of the proposed designs set out in the submitted Schedule of Designs.

6.3 The applicant's intention is to reinforce the identity and character of the Bath Road district centre area which incorporates a range of commercial uses on a busy road. The utility boxes have been identified as a canvas on which to reinforce this identity and create a visual connection in the area.

6.4 The artwork includes five design motifs for the utility boxes which have all taken inspiration from local and historic sources. These include the Cedar design, the Iris and a motif from St Phillips and St James Church window.

6.5 The roundabout design is an adaptation of a design detail from the motifs and would reinforce the unique identity of the area by providing a feature on one of the primary routes into Bath Road.

6.6 The positioning of each design and colourway has been carefully considered and is particularly notable with the use of the Cedar design near to the College and the repeated use of the Iris motif on the very small steel boxes that are regularly distributed along the road. Officers felt the consistency of the design would be particularly important throughout the scheme and the use of the Iris is successful in achieving this.

6.7 The key characteristics identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal are the area's vibrancy and unique character, largely derived from specialist shops and public houses.

6.8 Most of the boxes are located on the main road but despite the prominence of their location they are largely overlooked and unnoticed by the public, and in some instances their maintenance has been long neglected.

- 6.9** The proposed scheme will enhance this character by introducing a unified, colourful and well-designed scheme without adding extra physical elements to the already cluttered street scene.
- 6.10** The proposal has been assessed on the basis of each design in its proposed location and setting. There has been no harm identified in relation to the historic setting of the area or the views into and out of the conservation area.
- 6.11** During pre-application discussions, officers raised the importance of the maintenance of the proposed artwork to ensure a strategy is in place should the artwork deteriorate or become the target of graffiti. Whilst the applicant does not own the boxes, a Maintenance Statement accompanies the application, which states Connect Streets will liaise with the owners to repair or replace the artwork. Furthermore, the utility boxes will be finished with an anti-graffiti protective coating.
- 6.12** Overall, officers consider the proposal has been well thought out by the applicant with the siting of the designs relating to specific characteristics of the area. Some of the utility boxes are in a poor state or repair and the proposal is a proactive way of improving the street scene, whilst fully respecting the character of the conservation area and making use of existing street features.
- 6.13** The applicant's have fully considered the potential for maintenance in the future and a satisfactory statement has been put forward which demonstrates this will be monitored.
- 6.14** The Conservation Officer summarises that, '*This unusual scheme has been cleverly designed to augment the character of the Bath Road by using local and recognisable visual sources to distinguish and define the area. The artwork will not harm the conservation area and concerns regarding the maintenance of such a scheme have been addressed by the applicant*'.
- 6.15** Finally, the applicant's have liaised with local community groups and three letters of support have been submitted, recognising the positive impact of the proposal within the area.
- 6.16** Given these positive comments from the Conservation Officer regarding the impact of the proposal on the conservation area, officers consider the proposal fully accords with Local Plan Policy CP7 in terms of achieving a high standard of design which will complement and respect the character of the locality.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1** The proposal fully accords with Local Plan Policy CP7 and will enhance the conservation area in line with the Bath Road Character Area Appraisal.
- 7.2** With the above in mind, the recommendation is to approve this application, subject to the conditions set out below.

## **8. CONDITIONS / INFORMATIVES**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers 1171:01 and 1171:02, together with the Schedule of Designs and Designs Lifted from Sources documents received 1st July 2014.  
Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in strict accordance with the approved drawings.

## **INFORMATIVES**

- 1 The applicant's attention is drawn to the details within the submitted Method and Maintenance Statement to ensure the utility boxes are maintained in a satisfactory manner.
- 2 In accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 and the provisions of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority adopts a positive and proactive approach to dealing with planning applications and where possible, will seek solutions to any problems that arise when dealing with a planning application with the aim of fostering the delivery of sustainable development.

At the heart of this positive and proactive approach is the authority's pre-application advice service for all types of development. Further to this however, the authority publishes guidance on the Council's website on how to submit planning applications and provides full and up-to-date information in relation to planning applications to enable the applicant, and other interested parties, to track progress.

In this instance, having had regard to all material considerations, the application constitutes sustainable development and has therefore been approved in a timely manner.