

3/21/1917/LBC | Single storey rear extension and single storey partially glazed infill extension. Alterations to fenestration | Courtyard Arts Centre Port Vale Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 3AA

1. Courtyard Arts is within the Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan Area. It is mentioned in the plan on page 31 section 4.49 under the heading of "Cultural Facilities in the Plan Area" Courtyard Arts is also one of the community facilities listed in Appendix E of the plan.
2. Plan Policy HBC4 states that *"Proposals for the development and expansion of cultural facilities will be supported, subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan"*. Section 4.52 states: *"Proposals to improve or increase cultural facilities within the Plan Area, and to promote parts of the area as a regional cultural centre, will be supported where consideration is given to the amenity of nearby residents, where the benefits to the community outweigh any disadvantages, and when the proposals are consistent with Neighbourhood Plan policies."*
Policy HBC1 of the plan states: *"II. Proposals to improve or enhance community facilities will be supported when they improve the range, quality, suitability and accessibility of facilities for residents, and when the benefits of development outweigh any disadvantages."*
3. We note the objection from Conservation still stands but that they have stated that *"under the circumstances, we will leave it to DM to consider whether drawing 11184-P002-Rev D - Proposed Plans, Elevations and Location is acceptable"* (28th October 2021).
4. The neighbourhood plan addresses Listed Buildings and Structures in Policy HBC2. The plan states that *"Development proposals which affect the designated heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Plan Area including listed buildings and structures, will be permitted providing that they preserve or enhance the significance of the asset and its setting."*
In this instance it is our judgement that the proposed extension would do this.
5. We note that the proposal will lead to the loss of 6 parking spaces from the car park adjacent to Courtyard Arts, this is regrettable considering the lack of parking in the immediate area. We recommend that Courtyard Arts consider the provision of cycle parking to help encourage cycling in Bengeo.
6. In line with paragraph 4.31 of the neighbourhood plan - opportunities to enhance biodiversity - we suggest that Courtyard Arts may consider the erection of swift boxes as Port Vale is an important swift hotspot.
7. Taking account of the points raised above the Neighbourhood Plan strongly supports the extension to Courtyard Arts as it will enhance and expand the cultural facilities in the area which is consistent with the policies mentioned. We believe that it is a significant and important development for Courtyard Arts allowing the construction of a clay studio and reception/cafe as mentioned in the Designs and Access/Heritage Statement.