



JUDITH DOUGLAS TOWN PLANNING LIMITED

The Palace Cinema, Market Place, Longridge PR3 3RR.

Proposed change of use from vacant cinema (sui generis) to children's role play centre Use Class E (d) with ancillary café Use Class E(b) and external alterations to the building.

Planning, Design and Access Statement JDTP0575
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning design and access statement has been prepared by Judith Douglas Town Planning Ltd in support of a full planning application for the change of use from vacant cinema to children's role play centre Use Class E(d) with ancillary café Use Class E(b) and external alterations to the building.

1.2 This statement provides a description of the site and the proposed development, its compliance with the development plan and an assessment of other material considerations.

The application should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Location plan 1:1250
- 2529-01A Existing Lower Ground and Ground Floor Plans 1:50
- 2529-02A Existing First Floor Plan 1:50
- 2529-03A Proposed Lower Ground and Ground Floor Plans 1:50
- 2529-04A Proposed First Floor Plan 1:50
- 2529-05C Existing and Proposed Elevations and Site plan
- Heritage Assessment
- Business Plan

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The site comprises The Palace Cinema which fronts Market Place Longridge. It is a two-storey building comprising a large hall with a stage. Opposite the stage at first floor on a balcony is a projector room. There are two pairs of double doors from the auditorium which open outwards onto the street. The entrance to the building is on the southwest side of the auditorium. This leads into an entrance area which comprises a ticket desk and bar area with seating. There are toilets and other ancillary accommodation on this ground floor level.

2.2 At the rear of the property is a lower ground floor with ancillary rooms and access to the void beneath the stage. There is access to the yard area at the rear of the property. At first floor there is access to the projection room, a kitchenette and staff areas.

2.3 The site slopes down to the west. At the rear of the cinema is a yard area with access from Brewery Street.

2.4 On either side of the cinema are terraced houses. There is a passageway between the cinema and 26 Market Street. Market Place is a classified B-road and Brewery Street is an adopted highway as far as 4 Brewery Street. There is a bus stop close by on Berry Lane with services 1, 5, 45. Service 1 is PRESTON - LONGRIDGE via Gamull Lane, Red Scar 4 per hour, service 5 CLITHEROE - CHIPPING via Barrow Brook, Hurst Green is hourly and service 45 PRESTON

- BLACKBURN via Fulwood, Royal Preston Hospital, Goosnargh, Whittingham, Salesbury, Wilpshire is hourly. The site is well-served by public transport. It is also easily accessible on foot from the surrounding area.

2.5 The site is within flood zone 1 an area least likely to flood. It is not prone to surface water flooding as shown on GOV.UK flood map for planning.

2.6 The site is within the settlement boundary of Longridge in the adopted Housing and Economic Development, Development Plan Document Proposals Map. It is also within the Conservation Area and the Main centre boundary. See figure 1.

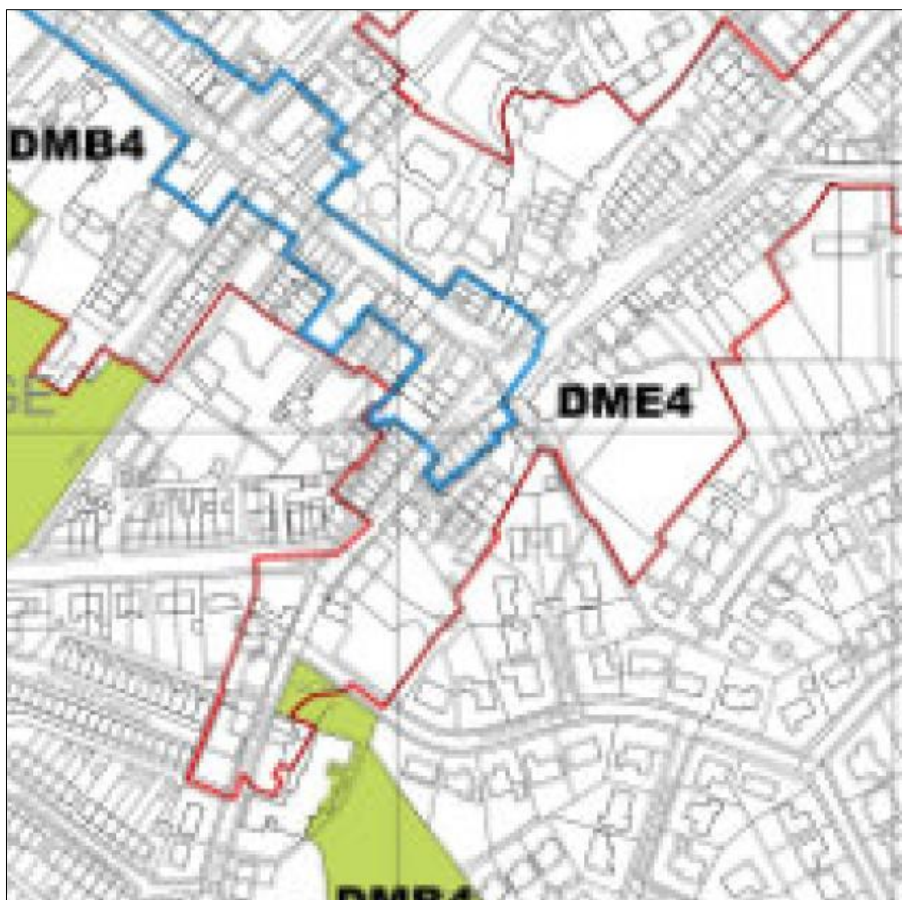


Figure 1. Extract from Inset 8-Longridge of the adopted Proposals Map.

3.0 SITE HISTORY

3.1 The recent planning application history of the site available on the Council's website is shown in the table below. This is not the full planning history of the site.

Reference	Address	Proposal	Decision
3/1989/0618	Palace Cinema, Market Place, Longridge, Preston	Conversion of existing cinema to ground/lower ground - retail, restaurant and ancillary first floor - two screen cinema, lounge bar and ancillary	Planning permission approved with conditions date : 24/05/1990
3/1991/0145	Palace Cinema, Market Place, Longridge, Preston	Conversion of existing cinema to twin cinema, bar area, refurbishment of bar area, provision of office and storage areas	Planning permission approved no conditions date : 30/04/1991
3/1992/0002	Palace Cinema, Market Place, Longridge, Preston	Rear extension to form increased bowling centre area, bar and fire escape	Planning permission approved no conditions date : 13/02/1992
3/1996/0665	28 Market Place, Longridge, Preston	Change of use to provide ancillary accommodation to existing cinema/bowling alley complex	Planning approved with conditions date : 18/12/1996
3/2019/0416	The Palace Cinema Market Place Longridge PR3 3RR	Installation of ground-mounted satellite dish to rear.	Planning permission approved with conditions date : 12/03/2020

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposal is to adapt the vacant part of the building to create a role play centre for children aged up to 7 years. The main play centre area will occupy the former auditorium of the cinema and will be equipped for play suitable for children aged 2-7 years. A seating area for adults accompanying the children with tables and chairs at the side of the play area. The existing entrance area doors from the street into the auditorium are to be altered to allow light into the building.

4.2 The main entrance into the building is retained in its current position to create a reception area with seating. A kitchen is retained to provide refreshments. Towards the rear of the building is a separate room to be used as a soft play area for children aged 0-2 years. On the first floor, the existing projection room is to be removed, and the balcony reinstated to provide

a seating area where it will be possible to observe the children play in the main area below. The existing first floor window is to be enlarged to its original size. The balcony area is accessed through another play area which can be hired separately to host a children's party. A small kitchen/food preparation area is provided. The existing staff area at the first floor is a series of small rooms. This is to be amalgamated to create a single staff room. The lower ground floor at the rear of the building is to be used for storage. Toilets are provided on each level of the building.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that the main activity at the role play centre will occur at weekends and school holidays. The proposed operating hours are 9.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.30 am to 5.00pm on Saturday and Sunday. The sessions will be booked in advance via a website. The sessions last for 90 minutes and there is an interval of 45 minutes between sessions for staff to clear and clean the play areas, re-set props and costumes and take a break. The number of children in each session will be limited to ensure a positive experience for the children. The maximum number of children in each session is 40. The adults attending the venue will be limited to those accompanying the children. The café will have seating for 40-45 adults and children. The role play centre will not operate as a café open to everyone. Please refer to the submitted Business Plan.
- 4.4 During the week in term time, it is anticipated that the role play area and soft play area will host community sessions for a parent and toddler group. The centre will provide sessions for nursery schools to hire and provide sessions suitable for children with sensory difficulties.
- 4.5 Role play is supported by providing scaled down stage sets, buildings and rooms decorated to evoke a particular setting such as a shop, stables, restaurant, or construction workshop. The play leaders will be in costume to encourage imaginative play. Lighting effects will be used but there is no amplified music or speech. Children are encouraged to express themselves and communication between children and the play leaders is encouraged.
- 4.6 The alterations to the exterior of the building are limited and low key. The double doors into the auditorium from Market Street would be replaced by fixed glazing and a pair of glazed doors and the window above re-instated to the original full size. The first-floor window above the shop front is to be replaced and an escape window is proposed on the rear elevation.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant parts of the development plan comprise the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

5.2 The following policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy ('the Core Strategy') are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) – outlines the Council's development strategy with regard to housing, employment, retail and leisure. Longridge is considered to be a principle settlement where new retail and leisure development will be directed.
- Key Statement DS2 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) – confirms that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Wherever possible, it will aim to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- Key Statement EN5 (Heritage Assets) – seeks to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings within the Borough.
- Key Statement EC1 (Business and employment development)- development that promotes town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle.
- Key Statement EC2 (Development of retail, shop and community facilities and services) -seeks to protect existing community facilities.
- Key Statement DM12 (Transport Considerations) development should be located to minimise the need to travel. Also it should incorporate good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car.
- Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) - sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications, including the proposed development being sympathetic to existing land uses, highway safety and not adversely affecting the amenities of the area.
- Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations)- expects development to be in accordance with the Development Strategy and support the spatial vision. Policy DMG3 (Transport and mobility) – considers the availability and adequacy of public transport the relationship to the primary road network and access to the development on foot or by cycle.

- Policy DMG3 (Transport and Mobility) Access to public transport and the highway network will be considered in decision taking
- Policy DME2 (Landscape & townscape protection) - requires development to protect the landscape and townscape including elements such as scale, form and materials that contribute to the characteristic townscapes of the area.
- Policy DME4 (Protecting Heritage Assets) – expands on the requirements of Policy EN5 with regard to heritage assets. The Council will make a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.
- Policy DMB1 (Supporting Business and the Local Economy)- seeks to protect existing employment generating sites.

5.3 The following policies of the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan are relevant to the determination of this application:

- POLICY LNPD5 – LONGRIDGE DESIGN PRINCIPLES All new development proposals will only be supported when they are of good design that responds positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the surroundings.
- POLICY LNPD6 – CONSERVING AND ENHANCING OUR DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the town's heritage assets, including the three Conservation Areas.
- POLICY LNPD10 - LONGRIDGE MAIN CENTRE Within Longridge main centre, development for town centre uses, including the following will be supported: a) Retail (A1) development in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DMR2; b) Financial and professional services (A2); c) Restaurants and cafes (A3); d) Drinking establishments (A4); e) Community facilities and services; f) Leisure, entertainment, arts and culture; g) Recreation and tourism; and h) Hot food takeaways (A5)
- POLICY LNPD12 – PROTECTING EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES The community facilities listed below, are considered fundamental to developing and maintaining Longridge as an attractive place for residents and visitors alike. They will be protected for community use.
 - Community Buildings
 - 1. Longridge Civic Hall
 - 2. Longridge Library
 - 3. Station Building / Heritage Centre
 - 4. The Palace Cinema
 - 5. Longridge Community Hospital

- 6. Berry Lane toilets Churches:Development leading to an adverse impact on these facilities will only be permitted as an exception as set out in Core Strategy Policy EC2 and where the proposal would bring defined and demonstrable benefits, including equivalent, or better, provision is made elsewhere within the town.
- POLICY LNDP13 – DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES. Development of new or improvements to existing community facilities will be supported when they conserve local character and distinctiveness, and do not harm the landscape or residential amenity of existing and future occupiers.

5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) ('the NPPF') sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It requires local planning authorities to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means, as paragraph 11c explains, that development which accords with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

5.5 In determining planning applications, paragraph 39 of the Framework expects local planning authorities to approach decisions in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

5.6 In relation to heritage assets paragraph 210 and of the Framework states

"210 In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

5.7 The Framework paragraph 207 requires applicants to *"to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."*

5.8 Section 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities says:

“96. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*
a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other”

“98. *To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;”

“100 *It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:*

a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and

b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”

6.0 PLANNING EVALUATION

6.1 The main issues to be considered in this application is whether the development in principle is acceptable, and whether the change of use of the building from a cinema to a role play centre for children would have an impact on the provision of community facilities in Longridge.

6.2 If the proposal is considered acceptable under these in principle considerations, then other matters need to be taken into account. These include the impact on the character appearance and significance of the building, which is a building of townscape merit (a non-designated

heritage asset) and the effect of the development on the character of the conservation area (a designated heritage asset).

Development in principle

- 6.3 The property is currently a cinema which has been vacant since the Covid outbreak in 2020. The use of a building as a cinema is specifically identified as being Sui Generis in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended meaning that it is now no longer in a Use Class. Planning permission is required for the building to change to a new use. This change in the Use Classes order took place in 2020. Prior to 2020, cinemas were under Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure).
- 6.4 The use of the premises as a children's role play centre falls under use Class E- Commercial, Business and Service, particularly E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms or use as a swimming pool or skating rink). Before 2020, Indoor sport and recreation was also within use Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) in other words, prior to 2020 a cinema and a children's role play centre were in the same use class and planning permission might not have been required to move between these uses.
- 6.5 A cinema and a children's role play centre are both community facilities providing indoor recreational activities.
- 6.6 The development is in principle acceptable under the policies of the Core Strategy. The development supports the continued use of the site as a community facility which contributes positively to the vitality of the town centre, a stated aim of Key Statement EC1 (Business and Employment Development). It is located within the main centre of Longridge where shops and services are to be focused and protected. Key Statement EC2 (Development of retail, shops and community facilities and services, Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy, Policy LNDP12 – Protecting existing community facilities and Policy LNDP10 - Longridge Main Centre.
- 6.7 The site has a long history of use as a community facility being first converted to a music hall in the late 19th century or early 20th century and may have been used as a theatre or silent movie theatre and used afterwards as a cinema. See Heritage Statement. Later it may have been used as a bingo hall and as a cinema and bowling alley before returning to use as a cinema. More recently the owners believe the building had major renovations in 1997 and a complete refurbishment and re-opening after a five-month project in 2018.
- 6.8 The property ceased use in August 2021 due to the financial pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic. It was offered for sale from September 2021. The current owners bought the

building in 2023 and are currently ensuring that it is water-tight by carrying out repairs to the roof costing £50,000. The proposal marks a new chapter in the building's contribution to the social life of Longridge and the surrounding area. It also regenerates a vacant building which currently contributes nothing to the vitality of the town centre. The re-opening of the building will provide jobs for seven people as well as drawing people into the town centre encouraging linked trips which will support other local businesses.

- 6.9 The proposal will secure a development which has social and economic benefits which NPPF 39 states should receive support. It supports social interaction and opportunity for people to meet as encouraged by NPPF 96 and 98. The role play centre is to offer community, parent and toddler sessions during the week. It is also intended that the centre will be hired out to nursery schools and other early years care providers including those supporting children with sensory difficulties. It is well understood that children learn through play. The role play centre encourages children to express themselves, learn to interact with others, learn skills such as taking turns which all have educational development benefits. NPPF 100 supports the provision of early years education.

Heritage- Alteration to a building of townscape merit within the conservation area

- 6.10 Please refer to the accompanying Heritage Assessment. The impact of the proposal on the visual qualities of the conservation area is positive by reinstating the window opening on the first floor on the front elevation to its original size. The ground floor doors and window have been designed with the existing four-panel pattern as a model, while the first-floor window would be small-paned, in a more traditional style. Unlike a cinema which requires a dark internal environment the proposed use will benefit from a having a well-lit space. The proposed escape window in the rear elevation is very discretely placed. The Heritage Assessment concludes that the impact on significance, of the alterations is clearly of a minor scale and enhancement would accrue from the improvements to the front, first floor fenestration.
- 6.11 The alterations are justified on the basis of assisting the new community use within the building. The proposed use is considered to be the optimum viable one and will confer a public benefit. The proposal meets the requirements of Key Statement EN5 Heritage Assets and policy DME4 Protecting Heritage Assets of the Core Strategy, Policy LNDP6 – Conserving and Enhancing our Designated Heritage Assets, Policy LNDP13 – Development of new and improvement of existing community facilities and is in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF-Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

Design

- 6.12 It is proposed to replace the doors into the auditorium with fixed glazing and a pair of glazed doors. The design of the doors and fixed glazing reflect the existing six panel model. See image

1. The proposed first floor windows reflect the small multi-pane glazing pattern of the existing ground floor window and first floor window above it. The replacement of the solid auditorium doors and the reinstatement of the larger first floor window above will allow natural light into what is currently an unlit space. The development will have very limited impact on the appearance of the building, and it will enhance the visual character of the street. The application proposal is therefore compliant with Core Strategy Policy DME2 and Neighbourhood plan policy LNDP5 – Longridge Design Principles.



1. Existing doors into auditorium.

Highways and Parking

- 6.13 The site is within the main town centre boundary of Longridge, a highly accessible location. The site benefits from walkable access to a number of methods of sustainable public transport and walkable access to a wide range of services. The existing use as a cinema when it was last open had seating for 193 people. The activity associated with the cinema use would have concentrated around the showing times of films. The proposed use is unlikely to result in any undue impact upon the operation of the immediate highway network over and above the traffic characteristics of the existing use.
- 6.14 The site is within easy walking distance of a bus stop which has excellent and frequent services to the surrounding area for visitors to the role play centre and for staff working at the centre. There are parking restrictions outside the site to prevent inconsiderate on street parking. The

parking demand for the proposed use is likely to be less than the existing use. The proposal is compliant with Key Statement DMI2 Transport Considerations and Policy DMG3. Transport and Mobility

Residential Amenity

- 6.15 The existing use of the building as a cinema is likely to concentrate activity in the evenings on weekdays and in the daytime and evenings at weekends or holidays. The showing of films would have included amplified sound. The proposed use as a role play centre for children will operate between 9.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.30 am to 5.00pm on Saturday and Sunday. The sessions will be booked in advance via a website. The sessions last for 90 minutes and there is an interval of 45 minutes between sessions. The main play sessions will be at weekends and school holidays with some sessions during the week. The role play sessions do not include amplified music or speech. The proposed use is unlikely to have any greater impact on the neighbouring residential property than the existing use of the building. The building is separated from the neighbour 26 Market Place. The part of the building which is attached to 30 Market Place will be used as a staff room at first floor and a kitchen and seating area at ground floor. These ground floor areas are currently used as the reception area and bar to the cinema on the ground floor and staff areas on the first floor.
- 6.16 The proposal accords with the requirement of policy DMG1 General considerations in terms of the impact of noise and activity associated with the proposed use in the town centre. It also accords with Policy LNDP13 – Development of new and improvement of existing community facilities as it does not harm the amenity of existing occupiers.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for a full planning application for the change of use from vacant cinema to children's role play centre Use Class E(d) with ancillary café Use Class E(b) and external alterations to the building.
- 7.2 It demonstrates that the principle of development is wholly compliant with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Ribble Valley Core Strategy with regard to the type and nature of the proposed use.
- 7.3 In addition, no environmental or technical matters have been identified which would weigh against the development. In light of all the issues detailed within this Statement, the

presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and the application supported.