Borough of Pendle

REPORT FROM:	**PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL AND LICENSING SERVICES MANAGER**
TO:	**COLNE AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE**
DATE:	**7th MARCH 2019**

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Telephone Kiosks outside XLCR House, Albert Road, Colne

PURPOSE OF REPORT

As requested by the Committee with regard to the possibility of adding the site to the Problem Buildings list.

RECOMMENDATION

That the kiosks are not added to the Problem Buildings list at present.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The kiosks are not considered to be in a sufficiently poor condition to justify inclusion on the list, and BT have been requested to attend to the current maintenance issues.

Planning History

No relevant planning history

Issues

The two telephone kiosks were listed at Grade II in 1988. They are cast iron boxes of Type K6, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. With a streamlined design in keeping with the 'moderne' aesthetics of the 1930's, the type K6 has become a British icon. The boxes are prominently located outside the former Post Office building, and make a positive contribution to the varied townscape and traditional character of the Albert Road Conservation Area.

The kiosks still have payphones, though usage is now very low. BT last repaired the kiosks in 2017 following concerns raised about their condition at that time. The works comprised replacement of one door and adjustment to the other, replacement of damaged perspex panes, and repainting of both kiosks. In common with many other kiosks the glass panes have been replaced with perspex over the years for safety reasons. The kiosks currently appear to be in good overall structural condition, and the repainting in particular has improved their appearance since 2016. There is currently one cracked pane, however the current issue seems to be more with the discoloured appearance of some of the perspex panes and the general overall cleanliness of the boxes rather than any inherent structural problem. Their heritage significance as listed buildings remains intact. They do not constitute an eyesore, or detract from the overall character and appearance of the conservation area.

These issues have been referred to BT for attention. BT have previously enquired whether either the Borough or Town Council would be prepared to adopt the boxes under their Adopt a Kiosk Scheme. The scheme has been successful in transforming unused boxes, and preserves the heritage of the red kiosks. Since the scheme was launched more than 5000 communities have taken them on for other uses, such as for defibrillators, miniature art galleries and book exchanges, pop-up shops, information points and for floral displays. The boxes are bought for the nominal sum of £1 and BT remove the phones. Kiosks are 'adopted as seen' and BT will not normally make improvements to them ahead of adoption. The new owners assume responsibility for ongoing repair and maintenance.
https://business.bt.com/content/dam/bt/business/PDFs/payphones/Adopt-a-Kiosk-Brochure-Oct18.pdf

It is understood that Colne in Bloom has expressed interest in using the boxes for floral displays, and it is considered that this could give the boxes a new lease of life, and create an attractive feature within the Conservation Area, whilst deterring vandalism and preserving the listed kiosks for the future. Removal of window panes to facilitate this would not present any listed building issues as the material is not the original fabric, and the basic form and structure of the box would remain unchanged.
In the longer term their adoption and re-use may be a means of preserving the listed kiosks and enabling them to become more of a feature within the Conservation Area.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the kiosks are not added to the Problems Buildings List at present, as they do not constitute an eyesore and are not considered to be in sufficiently poor condition. BT have been asked to attend to the current maintenance problems.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None arising directly from the report.

Financial: None arising directly from the report.

Legal: None arising directly from the report.

Risk Management: None arising directly from the report.

Health and Safety: A cracked pane requires repair.

Sustainability: None arising directly from the report.

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from the report.