

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday 27 May 2015

Time: 18.30 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors D Cullen (Chair), M Downing (Vice Chair), R Broom, L Chester, J Fraser, M Gardner, E Harrington, G Lawrence, J Lloyd CC, M McKay and G Snell.

Started at: 18.30pm

Ended at: 19.20pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Bainbridge and P Stuart. There were no declarations of interests.

The Chair invited nominations for the post of the Vice Chair. It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor M Downing be appointed the Vice Chair of the Planning and Development Committee for the current Municipal year.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

3. MINUTES – 15 APRIL 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 15 April 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. APP REF; 14/00639/FPM – SIX HILLS HOUSE, STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application involving the construction of 17 no. three bed and 1 no. two bed duplex units on the roof area of floors 4 and 8, including external alterations to existing building and construction of refuse and cycle storage, pumping housing and new substation. Alterations to existing parking layout incorporating additional landscaping and a new footpath/cycleway.

The Senior Planning Officer gave an oral and visual presentation to the Committee and advised that the issues for consideration were the acceptability of the proposal in land use policy terms; compliance with the Council's housing policies; the impact on the character and appearance of the area; impact on neighbouring amenities and future residential amenity; the effect of the proposals on the highway network; the adequacy of the proposed parking provision; archaeological and impact on wildlife site and trees.

The Committee were advised that as the site is within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area Policy E4 of the Local Plan applies and this policy relates to B class developments in designated employment areas and confirms that, residential development is generally unacceptable. However, the Committee were informed that the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 under the prior determination process permits the change in use of a building and any land within its curtilage from Use Class B1 (offices) to uses falling within C3 (dwelling houses) subject to the application being acceptable in terms of:-:

- 1) Impact on the highway;
- 2) Land Contamination; and
- 3) Flood risk.

The Committee were advised that the Council had received an application to convert the existing vacant offices to 52 no. one bedroom and 80 no. two bedroom flats (planning reference: 14/00328/CPA), and having reviewed the proposal against the aforementioned three criterion granted prior approval for the conversion. In view of this, the principle of residential development has been accepted.

Members were informed that as the development site is unallocated for housing, it would be classed as a 'windfall site' in line with Policy H7. It was advised by the Officer that the scheme meets a number of criteria against which proposals for residential development on sites not allocated for such purposes is assessed, such as not resulting in the loss of any structural open space, nor any impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and amenity of neighbouring residential dwellings. The Officer advised that the site is located within close proximity to the town centre and has easy access to a range of retail, service, food and drink premises, thus sited within a highly sustainable location.

With regards to compliance with the housing policies, the meeting was informed that considering the Council is unable to meet the five year supply of deliverable housing, this is a significant material consideration in this application and also that the scheme meets the various criterion contained within Policy 1P01, such as delivering a continuing supply of homes, making good use of land and regenerating a building which is currently in a poor state.

With regards to the provision of affordable homes, Members were informed that the applicants have indicated that on site provision is not possible and that a financial contribution had been offered which accords with the Council's requirement for off-site provision. Also the Officer informed Members that financial contributions have also been agreed which is in line with the Hertfordshire County Council toolkit for commuted payments towards primary education.

The meeting was informed that the scheme would have no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area as it only proposes external alterations and recladding of the existing three to eight storey building as well as enlargements and alterations to the plant rooms. Members were also advised that the scale of the extended building is considered acceptable as it relates to the scale and form of the original building.

With regard to the impact on neighbouring amenity, the Officer advised that the proposal would not unduly affect the operation or amenity of any of the existing

neighbouring buildings nor would there be any significant loss of sunlight or daylight as the nearest residential building on London Road (Suffolk House) is 107m to the proposed development. The Officer also indicated that there were no overlooking issues that might affect amenity of residential dwellings as development looks out onto the railway line and the industrial premises.

On the impact of the proposal on the amenity of future residential occupiers, Members' were advised that the scheme would incorporate balconies to each of the individual flats along with small garden terraces on the fourth floor. The Officer also noted that the proposed development is located within walking distance to the Town Centre Gardens and King George V Playing Fields for residents.

Members were informed that as there were no planned alterations to the existing access road within the site, and the scheme being sited within a sustainable location with good access to public transports, the development would not significantly impact on the adjoining highway network. Furthermore the Officer advised that no objections to the proposed scheme by Hertfordshire County Council, the Highways Authority.

With regards to parking provision, the Officer informed Members that 157 car parking spaces allocated for the site was a sufficient amount to support the development and the 18 cycle parking spaces and 3 covered cycle shelters being provided was adequate.

In response to a question on the lack of affordable homes on site, the Development Manager advised the reason that there would be no provision on site was because no housing association would take on the units given as they would not own the freehold of the building.

It was **RESOLVED** that Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the applicant having first entered into and completed a s106 legal agreement to secure/provide financial contributions towards:-

- The provision of an affordable housing financial contribution; and
- Primary education.

The detail of which would be designated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Transport in liaison with the Head of Legal Services and subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

3010 01B Location Plan; 3010 01B Site Layout and Location Plan; 3010 02A; 3010 03A; 3010 04A; 3010 05; 3010:06; 3010 07B; 3010 08A; 3010 09A; 3010 12B; 3010 13C; 3010 14B; 3010 15B; 3010 16B; 3010 17A; 3010: 20 B; Six Hills Perspective CGI.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
3. No development shall take place until a schedule and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension/alterations to the plant rooms and refurbishment of the existing building hereby permitted

have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

4. Notwithstanding the details shown in this application the treatment of all boundaries including details of any walls, fences, gates or other means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The approved boundary treatments shall be completed before the extensions/alterations to plant rooms hereby permitted is occupied.
5. No development shall commence until a scheme of soft and hard landscaping and details of the treatment of all hard surfaces has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of all new planting to take place including species, size and method of planting. The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented within the first available planting season following the first occupation of the extension/alterations to the plant rooms or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.
6. No tree shown retained on the approved plans, or subsequently approved landscaping scheme, shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped within five years of the completion of development without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
7. The extension/alterations to the plant rooms shall not be occupied until the external cycle storage facilities as detailed on drawing number 3010:17 have been implemented.
8. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the Local Planning Authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and received written approval from the Local Planning Authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.
9. The development hereby permitted shall not take place until a detailed acoustic report on the existing noise climate at the development site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
The report shall include a scheme of noise insulation measures for all residential accommodation. The noise insulation measures shall be designed to achieve noise insulation to a standard that nuisance will not be caused to the occupiers of residential accommodation from the following:-
 - Noise which generated from the nearby Gunnels Wood Business Park; and
 - The railway line.

- 10 Before any development commences, including any site clearance or demolition works, any trees on the site shall be protected by fencing or other means of enclosure in accordance with a detailed scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such protection as may be agreed shall be inspected and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the work and maintained until the conclusion of all site and building operations.
- 11 Within the areas to be fenced off in accordance with condition(s) 10 there shall be no alteration to the ground level and they shall be kept clear of vehicles, materials, surplus soil, temporary buildings, plant and machinery.
- 12 No demolition/development hereby permitted shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:
 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 2. The programme for post investigation assessment
 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 13 The demolition/development hereby permitted shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 12.

5. APP REF 15/00116/FP – 21 SYMONDS GREEN ROAD, STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application involving the change of use of public amenity land to private residential land and erection of close boarded fence, and erection of single storey front and side extensions to the main house.

The Development Manager gave an oral and visual presentation to the Committee and advised that issues for consideration were the impact of the loss of this piece of amenity land on the character and appearance of the area; acceptability of the design of the proposed front and side extensions and the impact on the visual amenity of the area.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, the meeting was advised that the application site is currently in the ownership of the Borough Council and constitutes a small informal piece of open space as defined by policy TW2 of the Local Plan.

Members were advised that the inclusion of the land within the curtilage and garden of 21 Symonds Green Road would enlarge the property's existing garden to the side of the property and that its loss would not impact the function and character of the structural open space within the estate.

The Officer informed Members that the odd shape and narrow width of the area of land subject to the change of use is such that its proposed use and enclosure is not considered to harm the visual amenity of the area and noted that other examples of boundary fencing to the rear gardens of nearby properties is not considered to harm the visual appearance and character of the area.

With regards to the design and appearance of proposed extensions, the Officer advised that the single front and side extensions are simple in design, incorporating lean-to roofs and materials to match the existing property.

In terms of the matters raised by the objector, Members were advised that concerns had been raised by the owner/occupier of No. 20 Southsea Road regarding the fence position beyond the front wall of the adjoining garages and that this would create an unacceptable view. The officer advised that due to the separation distance from the fence and the fact the outlook would be from a door it would be unlikely to have a detrimental impact on amenities of the occupiers of this property.

It was **RESOLVED** that Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in general accordance with the following approved plans: Site location plan; HM/01 Proposed floor plans; HM/02 Proposed elevations.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the single storey front and side extensions hereby permitted shall match the materials used in the construction of the original dwelling to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
4. The boundaries marked 'T' on the approved plan shall be constructed of timber fencing and gates where appropriate, similar in appearance to the existing fencing and shall be of a height of 1.8m, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
5. The proposed hardstanding shall be made of a porous material, or provision shall be made to direct surface water run-off water from the hardstanding to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.

6. INFORMATION REPORT – APPEALS

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

7. INFORMATION REPORT – DELEGATED DECISIONS

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

8. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not Required

PART II

10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair