

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021

Time: 6.30pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Simon Speller (Chair), Maureen McKay (Vice Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Myla Arceno, Adrian Brown, Teresa Callaghan, Matt Creasey, Michael Downing, Jody Hanafin, Graham Lawrence, Joan Lloyd, Adam Mitchell, Graham Snell and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 6.30 pm
Time: End Time: 8.15 pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 31 MARCH 2021**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

4 **21/00148/FP - MISYA MEZE & GRILL, 125 HIGH STREET, STEVENAGE**

Application	21/00148/FP
Location	Misya Meze and Grill, 123 -125 High Street Stevenage
Proposal	Change of use from parking bays to highways forecourt and use for ancillary seating area associated with Misya Restaurant
Applicant	Misya Restaurant

Recommendation	Grant Planning Permission
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The Principal Planning Officer presented the application seeking permission in change of use from parking bays to forecourt with the use of the ancillary seating area for the Misya Restaurant. During the presentation, the Principal Planning Officer displayed maps, plans and photographs to demonstrate the location and character of the site.

The application site was a Grade II Listed Building location on the eastern side of the high street, which fell within the Old Town Conservation Area. The site was located at the southern end of the high street, and close to the roundabout junction with Letchmore Road. Residential properties were situated in close proximity, and there were also residential properties above some of the high street properties. The high street was served by the parking bays along both sides of the highway. The bays allowed for parking of vehicles perpendicular to the footpath.

The three bays had been temporarily closed and decking put in place to allow for tables and chairs to be provided in line with the temporary relaxation for Covid-19 restrictions.

Janet Atkins, a registered speaker, spoke in opposition to the planning application highlighting the access for disabled people.

The key issues in the determination of the application were as outlined in the report.

The Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the level of parking available were enough for shoppers and the proposal would not affect parking in the area nor would have any impact on the local businesses in the future. The Local Highway Authority had not objected on the application.

The Officer report contained detail of an objection made on behalf of the Stevenage Old Town Businesses and Community Partnership (SOTBCP) clarifying that the objection was made on the principle that granting the application would set a precedent in favour of the change of use from public parking to public realm space to a commercial use benefiting a business.

Members debated the application, taking into account the presentation from the Principal Planning Officer, the statement from the public speaker and the officer report. The key issues for Members consideration included the loss of parking bays and heritage of the high street, safety of pedestrians and cyclists and the access for disabled people.

There were also concerns raised that this could be the start of a change in high street layout, and would be premature to approve the application without consulting businesses in the area to provide them with a more permanent solution.

It was **RESOLVED** that application 21/00148/FP be refused planning permission for the following reasons:

The proposed change of use of the parking bays to create a forecourt in order to facilitate the provision of outdoor seating if approved, would create an unacceptable precedent whereby resulting in significant loss of key parking facilities which would as a result, cause significant harm to the vitality and viability of established businesses in the Old Town. The proposal is premature in the absence of an agreed outdoor seating approach, which provides for outdoor seating areas for businesses which does not result in any significant harm being caused to the vitality and viability of other businesses within the Old Town, and which would not result in an unacceptable level of key parking facilities being lost within and for which serve the Old Town.

The proposed retention of the single space between the existing built-out kerb line and the new one requires a full Highways Safety Impact Assessment to ensure pedestrian and road safety is not compromised by the proposed works.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy TC10 and IT5 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2019), the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Planning Practice Guidance.

5 21/00260/FPM - UNIT 5, ROARING MEG RETAIL PARK

Application	21/00260/FPM
Location	Unit 5 Roaring Meg Retail Park, London Road
Proposal	Variation of Condition 1 (Approved Plans) and removal of Condition 8 (Food Sales Restriction) of Planning Permission 14/00111/FPM to allow for minor external alterations to the building and the sale of the food not associated with a café or restaurant use in store.
Applicant	Stevenage Retail Ltd
Recommendation	Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Planning Officer presented the application seeking variation on the Condition 1 and removal of Condition 8 (Food Sales Restriction) of Planning Permission granted under reference 14/00111/FPM. The proposal would allow for minor external alteration to the building and was classed as a major application.

The application site was the former Debenhams Site located to the south of the Roaring Meg Retail Park. The application site was redeveloped and extended as a Debenhams flagship store following permission being granted in 2014. The partial redevelopment and extension of Unit 5 provided additional floor space including ancillary care and amendments to car park and landscaping. The site was accessible by vehicles and pedestrians from the south west off London Road and via the northern car park.

Judy Crook, a registered speaker, spoke in support of the application, explaining that approval would support the local economy, bring in variety of food quality and promote growth in the Borough.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the proposed external alteration include replacement of existing glazed entrance doors at both entrances with bi-parking doors and new glazed screens to side, removal of existing glazed doors associated with ground floor restaurants and replacement with glazed curtain walling, new light weight screen to loading bay area, and new louvres at first floor height within existing cladding to rear. The removal of condition 8 would allow part of the unit 5 to be utilised for food and drink goods.

There had been 132 third party observations to date, all in support of the application, and the Highway Authority had made no objections.

Members debated the application, taking into account the presentation from the Principal Planning Officer, the statement from the public speaker and the officer report.

Members were supportive of the application and the benefits and improvement it would bring to the local economy. It would also provide additional employment and met a number of key Economic Growth aims for Stevenage.

It was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as per the recommendations below:

That permission is granted subject to the conditions listed in section 9.2, and, any minor changes to the conditions listed in 9.2 to be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation and the Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee

1. The proposal be subject to the following conditions:-

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2264-U5-L01; 2264-U5-P01; 2264-U5-P02; 2264-U5-P03; 2264-U5-X01; 2264-U5-X02; 2264-U5-X03; 2264-U5-X04.

REASON:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Travel Plan R07-ADM-Travel Plan dated May 2021. The Plan shall be implemented in full thereafter.

REASON:- To promote sustainable travel measures to the development, in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policies SP6 and IT4 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019) and Hertfordshire County Council's LTP4 Policies 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

3. No more than 1,647 square metres of floor space (net sales area) shall be used for the sale of convenience goods within the total 9,475 square metre (gross) within Unit 5 without the written agreement of the Local Planning Authority by way of submitting a planning application for consideration of the impact of the increased area of food sales on retail and highways.

REASON: - The impact of the provision of convenience goods sales has been assessed on the basis of 1,647 square metres of floor space only.

6 **21/00130/S106 85 - 103 QUEENSWAY, TOWN CENTRE, STEVENAGE**

Application	21/00130/S106
Location	85 – 103 Queensway, Town Centre
Proposal	Modification of section 106 agreement to facilitate change of affordable housing tenure (from affordable rent to affordable build to rent) approved under planning permission reference 18/00268/FPM.
Applicant	Reef Group
Recommendation	Agree variation of S106 Agreement

The Planning Officer presented the application seeking permission to modify the Section 106 agreement to facilitate a change of affordable housing tenure from affordable rent to affordable build to rent. The application was originally approved under reference 18/00268/FPM.

The Planning Officer explained that the application was focused on the changes in tenure of the affordable houses. She confirmed that the number of houses remained unchanged at 24 units.

The Planning Officer further clarified that the affordable build to rent houses are generally defined as low cost and usually at a discounted price. The application sought to modify Schedule 3 by way of replacing ‘affordable rented units’ to ‘affordable build to rent units’. She explained that overall, the changes were acceptable in planning terms and constituted sustainable development which could be granted planning permission.

The key issues in the determination of the application were as outlined in the report.

Members debated the application, taking into account the presentation from the Planning Officer and the officer report.

Members were supportive of the application and considered that the changes were acceptable in terms of planning regulations.

It was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as per the recommendations below:

That the Committee agree to the variation to Schedule 3 (affordable rented units) of the S106 agreement, to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in conjunction with the Council's appointed Solicitor, to agree the precise wording of the variation to the S106 agreement.

7 INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS

Noted.

8 INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

Noted.

9 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

11 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR