

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

Date: Tuesday 18 August 2015

Time: 18.30 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

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

Started at: 18.30pm

Ended at: 19.41pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Fraser, G Snell and P Stuart.

There were no declarations of interests.

The Development Manager introduced Mr Zayd Al-Jawad, the new Head of Planning and Engineering to the meeting.

2. MINUTES – 21 JULY 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on Tuesday 21 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. APP REF; 14/00559/OPM – MATALAN RETAIL PARK, DANESTRETE STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application for outline planning permission for residential development of up to 526 residential apartments and commercial units Class A1 (retail) A2 (professional and financial) A3 (restaurant) and A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take away) with associated access, parking and landscaping following demolition of existing buildings.

The Development Manager gave an oral and visual presentation to the Committee and advised that the issues for consideration were the acceptability of the proposed development in land use policy terms; its compliance with the Council's policies for housing developments; the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the locality; the impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties; the suitability of the proposed residential environment; the impact of the surrounding highway network and the adequacy of the proposed parking provision.

The Chair invited Mr John Davis of Pinetree Court, an objector to address the Committee. Mr Davis informed Members that two petitions and an objection letter from Peverel Management on behalf of the landlord and residents had been submitted to planning officers. Mr Davis was concerned with the level of parking being provided, that the 109 parking spaces being allocated for the scheme was inadequate for 526 dwellings. Mr Davis compared it to the level of parking within Pinewood Court which had fewer residents and suggested 200 parking spaces as being a number suitable for the scheme. He also noted that the scheme had no parking provision for retail outlets such as public house and hot food takeaway considering that nearby Council car parks were being lost as a result of the scheme.

Mr Davis was concerned that the scheme was likely to generate more vehicular movement and suggested that as most residents in Pinewood Court were over 70, if the Committee were minded to grant planning permission could they consider the possibility of providing a pedestrian crossing across Danestrete to ensure the safety of residents.

The Chair thanked Mr Davis and invited Mr Patterson, the agent to address the Committee. Mr Patterson informed the Committee that his client had previously submitted an application for the site but could not proceed as a result of the economic decline over the last 10 years. Mr Patterson advised that the scheme would enhance the town centre especially as it is in the process of being regenerated. In response to traffic concerns, Mr Patterson informed Members that any increase in traffic would only arise during peak times in the morning and evening, so the scheme would not generate more traffic.

With regards to land use policy, the Development Manager informed the meeting that the scheme was acceptable as it comprises a mixed use of retail and residential components. He also stated that considering the site is located in the town centre with established public transport facilities, the application fulfils the objectives of government guidance as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and accords with policy TR1 of the adopted plan.

On concerns with the overdevelopment of the site, Members were advised that the proposal accords with the advice contained within the NPPF as it encourages the effective use of land that has been previously developed. The Development Manager acknowledged that the application density is well in excess of that stated in the adopted plan, its location and proximity to town centre facilities public transport and non-car modes of transport allows this scheme to be accommodated in this location. He also indicated that as the Council is unable to provide a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, this is a strong material consideration for this proposal.

With regards to the provision of affordable housing, the Officer indicated that the applicant had provided a detailed financial viability assessment, independently assessed by the Council's own viability consultant which confirms that the scheme would be unviable if the full requirement for onsite affordable housing is requested and following negotiation, only 24 social rented units would be secured by way of S106 legal agreement.

On the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the area, Members were advised that although the application is in outline form with all other matters reserved, the submitted plans and elevations have demonstrated that a high quality

development would provide a statement building with gateway features onto Danestrete and Lytton Way. He also noted that it could provide an attractive residential environment in a sustainable location.

On the impact of the scheme on neighbouring amenities, the Officer reiterated that as the application is in outline form, matters such as privacy, daylight and sunlight, relationship between properties and the residential amenity would need to be assessed at the detail/reserved matters stage. He noted however that illustrative plans and elevations submitted do show higher elements being created away from the existing McCarthy and Stone residential premises and closer to the existing commercial buildings namely the Council Offices and the Plaza

With regard to the impact of the scheme on the highway network, the Officer advised that a transport assessment had been submitted by the applicant, and that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority have indicated that the proposal would not significantly change the traffic generation over and above the present scale of the site, therefore indicating that the scheme will not have any impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways subject to the imposition of conditions , including the submission of a commercial and residential travel plan.

On the parking provisions for the scheme, Members were informed that 109 spaces is to be provided, a shortfall of 64 spaces, however given its central location and the fact that the site is highly accessible in relation to the town's bus and rail stations this is considered acceptable.

In response to concerns about the number of affordable homes being provided on site, Mr Richard Bloomfield, the independent Viability consultant advised Members of the process that he undertook in assessing the application. He informed Members that following a thorough scrutiny of the application, he has been able to negotiate the applicant's previous position of providing no affordable homes on site to 24 homes.

On concerns that the site was being overdeveloped and that the buildings being proposed would be out of scale in relation to the existing neighbouring buildings, the Development Manager reminded Members that this was an outline application and only indicative at this stage, which would be assessed when more details are provided at the reserved matters stage. He also reaffirmed that the proposal would enhance the town centre as part of the future plans to regenerate the town centre.

Members were concerned that the insufficient number of parking spaces on the site, as it would result in parking problems for neighbouring streets with the Council being required to address residents concern later on in the future.

With regard to the request for a pedestrian crossing across Danestrete, the Officer advised that alongside issues around the removal of the mini roundabout at the entrance to Matalan, this could be considered at the reserved matters stage when more details have been provided, subject to an assessment of any proposals being undertaken by the Highway Authority.

During the debate Members raised a number of questions with the proposal; that it was out of proportion especially in its present location; that the site was over developed and that as this was still an outline application, the information being provided was insufficient.

Members expressed concerns with the level of affordable homes being offered; with the parking provision, how the development would fit in with the wider regeneration proposals for the town centre; that the height, number of units, scale and style of development be reviewed and requested that the item be deferred to another meeting so as to enable Officers and the applicant to provide a response to these queries.

It was **RESOLVED** that Item be DEFERRED for further consideration at another meeting to enable Officers and the applicant to provide further clarity on how the affordable housing provision was arrived at; how the proposal would relate to the wider regeneration proposals for the town centre; further clarification on the car parking proposals to serve the new residential units and a review of the height, numbers, scale and style of the development.

4. APP REF; 15/00323/FPM – GLAXO SMITHKLINE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD, GUNNELS WOOD ROAD, STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application involving the construction of a 7,287sqm research and manufacturing building (Use Class B1), car parking, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works.

The 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; the effect on the appearance of the area; impact on neighbouring amenities; the effect of the proposals on the highway network and the adequacy of the proposed parking provision.

The Committee were advised that the site is within the designated Gunnels Wood Employment Area and forms a site which is allocated for employment purposes under Policy E3 of the adopted local plan. She acknowledged that the proposal for research and development purposes within the class B1 is in accordance with the land use policy.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on the visual amenities of the area, Members were advised that the prominence of the building, the contemporary design and proposed materials will be of high standard and complement the existing buildings and innovative design associated with GSK.

The Officer advised that the proposal would not affect the operation or working environment of adjoining premises as the site is separated from other sites in particular the Arlington development to the north by Broadhall Way, the railway line to the east and Knebworth Lane to the south. She indicated that the nearest buildings within the GSK site are the catalyst buildings to the south, and externally from the site, the offices to the north within the Arlington complex and the Novotel Hotel located to the western side of the A1(M)

Members were informed that a Traffic Statement (TS) had been submitted as part of the application process, which had been subject to consultation with the local highways authority and that both HCC and Highway England had no objections to the application as the proposal would not have a significant impact on the local highway network.

With regards to parking provision, the Officer informed Members that the scheme provides 142 car parking spaces which is below the required Council's car parking

standard, however as the site is in a relatively sustainable location and well served by public transport and close to both footpath and cycleway network, this was acceptable. She also noted that with the existing parking restrictions on Gunnels Wood Road and Broadhall Way the level of parking being proposed is acceptable.

The Officer informed the meeting of changes to landscape plans in relation to conditions 1, 4 and 6 to reflect most recent plan submitted.

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: 7271_08_10 Rev A Site location plan; 7271_08_11 Rev A Block Plan; 7271_08_01 Rev D Ground Floor GA Layout; 7271_08_02 Rev D Interstitial Ceiling and Mezzanine Level; 7271_08_03 Rev D Level 1 Production; 7271_08_04 Rev D Interstitial Ceiling – Admin Roof; 7271_08_05 Rev E Roof Plan; 7271_08_06 Rev G Section AA; 7271_08_07 Rev G Section BB; 7271_08_08 Rev F Elevations; 7271_08_09 Rev B External Visual; 7271_55_07 Site Logistic Plan; 7271_55_01 Rev I Hard Landscaping Plan; 7271_55_02 Rev F Soft Landscaping Plan.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
3. The development hereby approved shall be constructed of the external materials as submitted and as listed on drawing no: 7271_08_08 Rev F Elevations, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. The hard and soft landscaping approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans, drawing numbers 7271_55_01 Rev I Hard Landscaping Plan and 7271_55_02 Rev F Soft Landscaping Plan, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All hard surfacing comprised in the details of approved landscaping shall be carried out within three months of the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.
5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner.
6. No tree shown on the approved soft landscaping plan 7271_55_02 Rev F, 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. Any trees or plants comprised within the scheme of landscaping, which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
8. No part of the development shall be occupied until the relevant access, car parking and turning areas have been constructed, surfaced and permanently marked out in accordance with the approved plan 7271_55_01 Rev I. The car parking and turning

areas so provided shall be maintained as a permanent ancillary to the development and shall be used for no other purpose at any time.

9.The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Ground Investigation Report and Remediation Report dated May 2015 submitted in support of this application and in accordance with the Site Investigation Factual and Interpretative (Ground Contamination) Final Report written by Ramboll Whitbybird dated March 2009 and approved under reference 10/00136/COND in respect of condition 20 of planning permission 09/00314/FPM, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

10.If following the commencement of the development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, no further works shall be carried out, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, until the developer has submitted to and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

11.No development shall commence until a Code of Construction Practice has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Environmental Health Authority. This shall include measures during the construction process to minimise the amount of dust generated, minimise the amount of noise generated, to prevent mud, soil and other materials from the site being deposited on the highway, detailed construction methods and a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to detail how waste materials generated as a result of the proposed demolition and/or construction methods shall be disposed of, and detail the level and type of soil to be imported to site as part of the development. The approved Code of Construction Practice shall be implemented in full for the full duration of the construction activity relating to this permission at this site.

12.Prior to occupation of the building, details of the proposed enclosures for the gas bottle store, generator compound and refuse store shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

13.Prior to commencement of development, the clear site working area for mobile cranes; main contractors accommodation; subcontractors cabins/storage; contractor parking; site storage and laydown area; and hardstanding access with wheel wash shall be provided on site in accordance with drawing no: 7271_55_07 Site Logistic Plan, and shall be removed prior to first occupation of the building, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

5. APP REF 15/00397/S106 – VINCENT COURT, FISHERS GREEN ROAD, STEVENAGE

The Committee considered a variation of a S106 Agreement (dated 13th November 2014) to reduce the number of proposed dwellings from 41 to 37 as approved under planning permission reference number 14/00178/OPM.

The Planning Officer gave an oral and visual presentation to the Committee and advised that the main issue for consideration is if the proposed variation of Clause 1 and the definitions of “Development” and “Dwelling” attached to the S106 agreement of outline planning permission 14/00178/OPM were acceptable in policy terms.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. That clause 1 (definition of terms “Development” and “Dwelling”) of the S106 agreement be varied.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Transport and the Head of Legal Services, or their successors to agree the deed of variation submitted by the applicant.

6. INFORMATION REPORT – APPEALS

None

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