

NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 JULY 2022

Present: Cllrs Sherry Jespersen (Chairman), Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman), Jon Andrews, Matthew Hall, Brian Heatley, Carole Jones, Val Potheary and Belinda Ridout

Apologies: Cllrs Tim Cook, Les Fry, Stella Jones and Emma Parker

Also present: Cllr David Walsh – Ward Member for Gillingham and Portfolio Holder for Planning

Matthew Holmes, agent – minute 111

Simon Fife, agent – minute 112

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting): Ross Cahalane (Lead Project Officer), Hannah Massey (Solicitor), Hannah Smith (Planning Area Manager), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and David Northover (Democratic Services Officer)

106. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Tim Cook, Les Fry, Stella Jones and Emma Parker.

107. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

108. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were confirmed and would be signed as soon as was practicable.

109. Public Participation

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

110. Planning Applications

Members considered written reports submitted on planning applications as set out below.

111. **P/FUL/2022/01062- Barnack Chambers 9-9A West Street Blandford Forum DT11 7AW**

The Committee considered application P/FUL/2022/0106 for the change of use of the first and second floors from offices (use class E(g)) to a house in multiple occupation at Barnack Chambers, 9-9A West Street, Blandford Forum DT11 7AW

With the aid of a visual presentation, and taking account the detail in the report, officers provided context of what the main proposals, principles and planning issues of the development were; how these were to be progressed; and what this entailed, taking into account the policies against which this application was being assessed.

Plans and photographs – interior and exterior - provided an illustration of how the conversion was to look – including its design and dimensions; access and parking considerations; building regulations and licencing requirements; how space would be used; what facilities there were and how these would be accessed; and the development's setting within that part of the Conservation Area of Blandford.

Officers showed the development's relationship with other adjacent residential and commercial development, with the characteristics of the site area being shown. Views around the development site were shown, which provided a satisfactory understanding of all that was necessary.

Officers confirmed the conversion would contribute towards much needed accommodation of this type identified within the town and although situated within the retail are of the town centre, the ground floor retail was not affected by the proposal. What assessment had been made in the officers coming to their recommendation were drawn to the attention of the Committee, with the proposal being considered to be acceptable by officers.

Matthew Holmes, agent, considered the conversion to be sustainable and appropriate which had been considered acceptable in principle in the neighbourhood plan and would meet an identified demand for this type of development.

Blandford Forum Town Council had objected to the application on the grounds that, whilst welcoming residential development above retail, did not believe that the proposals were sustainable, particularly in terms of the dimensions of the units. They referred to the regulations for such premises and those standards to be met. They also raised concerns in relation to fire safety.

Having heard what was said, officers responded to some of the pertinent issues raised, being confident that each one could be addressed by the provisions of the application.

Officers clarified the differentiation between regulations and requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and dwellings/flats and that this planning application was being considered on the basis of the former.

Seemingly, the basis of the Town Council's objection was on the latter. The case officer considered therefore that the proposal did comply with the Regulations' standards and that the development was therefore not considered to be cramped and unsustainable. Regarding fire safety, officers confirmed this would be a matter for Building Regulations.

The opportunity was then given for members to ask questions of the presentation and what they had heard, in seeking clarification of aspects so as to have a better understanding in coming to a decision.

Some important points raised, some of which they considered still required clarification, were:-

- what the individual dwelling unit dimensions were, how these met the necessary planning requirements and how assessment of the suitability of these had been made
- what the differentiation between dwellings/ flats and (HMO's) were and how the necessary regulations governing this would be applied
- how facilities within the converted units would be accessed and the means by which this would be achieved
- parking arrangements

Officers addressed the questions raised – and provided what clarification was needed - providing what they considered to be satisfactory answers, which the Committee understood to be, and saw, as generally acceptable.

Of importance was that officers considered there to be no material considerations which would warrant refusal of the application and that this was the basis of the assessments made and the recommendation before the Committee.

From debate, the majority of the Committee considered the proposal to be acceptable - in meeting an identified need, with the introduction of residential accommodation on the upper floor being considered to contribute positively to the vitality and viability of the town centre, bringing vacant space back into use.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having taken into account the officer's report and presentation; the written representation; and what they had heard at the meeting, in being proposed by Councillor Carole Jones and seconded by Councillor Belinda Ridout, on being put to the vote, the Committee agreed – unanimously - to grant permission, subject to the conditions and informative noted set out in paragraph 17 of the officer's report.

Resolved

That permission for application P/FUL/2022/01062 be granted subject to the conditions and informative noted set out in paragraph 17 of the officer's report.

Reasons for decision

- The location is considered to be sustainable
- There is no harm to the architectural and historical qualities of the listed building, the setting of nearby listed buildings will be preserved as will the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The room sizes are considered to be acceptable; they comply with the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018.
- There are no adverse residential amenity impacts arising from this proposal

112. **P/RES/2022/00263 - Land to the south east of Lodden Lakes New Road Gillingham Dorset**

The Committee considered application P/RES/2022/00263 for the development of land to the south east of Lodden Lakes New Road Gillingham by the erection of up to 115 no. dwellings, form vehicular access from New Road and Lodden Lakes Phase 1, form public open space. (Outline application to determine access) (reserved matters application to determine appearance, landscaping, layout & scale following the grant of outline planning permission P/OUT/2020/00495) P/RES/2022/00263.

With the aid of a visual presentation, and taking account the detail in the report, officers provided context of what the main proposals, principles and planning issues of the development were; how these were to be progressed; how the development would contribute to meeting housing needs; and what this entailed. The presentation focused on not only what the development entailed and its detailed design, but what effect it would have on residential amenity and the character the area, taking into account the policies against which this application was being assessed.

Plans and photographs provided an illustration of the location, orientation, dimensions – form, bulk, size and mass - and appearance of the development and of the individual properties, with examples being given of how typical properties would be designed, along with their ground floor plans; how it would look; proposed street scenes; the materials to be used; access and highway considerations; environmental considerations; drainage and water management considerations, the means of landscaping, screening and open space provision and its setting within that part of Gillingham and the wider landscape. Flooding and affordable housing issues were all given particular consideration.

Officers showed the development's relationship with other adjacent residential

development and how the buildings were designed to be in keeping with the characteristics of the established local environment. The characteristics and topography of the site was shown and its relationship with the highway network. Views into the site and around it was shown, which provided a satisfactory understanding of all that was necessary.

In summary, the officer's assessment considered the acceptability of the proposal in relation to the Development Plan, and this formed the basis of the recommendation being made.

Simon Fife, agent, considered the application to be consistent with the Masterplan and would bring the benefit of 21 affordable homes, open space and environmental enhancements. Modifications had taken place to address issues that had been raised and what was now being proposed was designed to meet the needs of Gillingham.

The opportunity was then given for members to ask questions of the presentation and what they had heard, in seeking clarification of aspects so as to have a better understanding in coming to a decision. Some important points raised were and which they considered still required clarification were :-

- what prospect there was of installing additional electricity charging points and the delivery of other such environmental enhancements
- what was the status of the bridge mentioned in the report and did it have a bearing on this application
- that condition 4 - covering landscaping and trees – should be amended to allow for trees to be able to be replanted for up to a ten year period – instead of five – to more readily account for any condition that might befall it.
- that any cladding to be used should be of satisfactory quality to not deteriorate other than what might be ordinarily expected.

Officers addressed the questions raised – and what clarification was needed - providing what they considered to be satisfactory answers, which the Committee understood to be, and saw, as generally acceptable. Officers confirmed that condition 4 could be amended in the terms the Committee had asked for. They also confirmed an Informative could satisfactorily cover the issue of cladding.

Gillingham Town Council were supportive of the recommendation, as were the three local Ward members - Cllrs Walsh, Ridout and Potheary. Councillor Walsh addressed the Committee, endorsing the application wholeheartedly which he hoped the Committee would ratify. As the Master Plan Framework had been developed in consultation with the community it was important that this was now delivered as soon as practicable to acknowledge that local acceptance. The delays that had been experienced in getting to this stage were regrettable and had proved challenging by way of providing an opportunity for alternative speculative development to be ventured. However, what was now being proposed would satisfactorily achieve all that was necessary.

From debate, the Committee considered the proposal to be acceptable - understanding the fundamental issue of housing land supply, the need for accommodation of this sort and in making the best use of the land available – and considered that this development would significantly contribute to meeting the identified housing supply need within Dorset and should be seen to be beneficial.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having taken into account the officer's report and presentation; the written representations; and what they had heard at the meeting, in being proposed by Councillor Val Potheary and seconded by Councillor Belinda Ridout, on being put to the vote, the Committee agreed – unanimously, to grant permission, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 17 of the officer's report and to the modification of Condition 4, as set out above, and the inclusion of an informative note on cladding.

Resolved

That planning permission for application P/RES/2022/00263 be granted, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 17 of the officer's report and to the modification of Condition 4 - as set out above - and the inclusion of an informative note on cladding.

Reasons for Decision

- The principle of residential development on this site has already been established
- Para 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that permission should be granted for sustainable development unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise
- The proposal is acceptable in its design, scale, layout and landscaping
- There is not considered to be any significant harm to residential amenity
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

113. Urgent items

There were no items of urgent business to consider.

114. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to be considered.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.40 pm

Chairman

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