

PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 18 June 2014 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall

These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda and associated papers for the meeting.

Present

Councillors Aiden Gray (Chair)
Ken Ellcome
David Fuller
Colin Galloway
Stephen Hastings
Lee Mason
Les Stevens
Sandra Stockdale
Rob New (Standing Deputy)
Hugh Mason (Standing Deputy)

Also in attendance

Councillor Lee Hunt

Welcome

The chair welcomed members of the public and members to the meeting.

Guildhall, Fire Procedure

The chair, Councillor Gray, explained to all present at the meeting the fire procedures including where to assemble and how to evacuate the building in case of a fire.

69. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

These had been received from Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson who was represented by Councillor Hugh Mason as his standing deputy and from Councillor Frank Jonas who was represented by his standing deputy, Councillor Robert New.

70. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillors Sandra Stockdale and Les Stevens declared that they were ward councillors for St Thomas however this is not a pecuniary or personal interest and they would keep an open mind.

The chair gave his introductory information and invited introductions from members of the committee and supporting officers. He also reported that there would be recording of the meeting by the media however this would not include filming of the deputations.

**71. Planning Application: 14/00489/FUL The Camber East Street Portsmouth - Mixed use development to include the erection of a building to incorporate Class B1(c) light industrial and Class B1(b) research and development uses, team headquarters comprising Class B1(a) offices and meeting rooms, training and medical facilities, public access and viewing facilities and associated external hardstanding and car parking following the demolition of existing buildings
(AI 3)**

The City Development Manager reported that there had been a site visit the previous evening which had been well attended and members' attention was drawn to the supplementary matters list which gave the following additional information, which included additional highway comments and amended detail regarding conditions:

(i) Amended plans

The site boundary has been amended to exclude the parking spaces along Trimmers Court. This removes the requirement to obtain a formal stopping up order and retains 11 car parking spaces for public use. As such, the following plans have been amended:

- Site Location Plan - 14.001.101 A
- Site Plan - 14.001.102 B
- Site Management Plan - 14.001.103 C

(ii) Further comments from the Highways department

Further comments have been received in response to the amended site boundary which were attached to the Supplementary Matters list.

In summary, the Highways department are satisfied with the removal of 11 spaces along Trimmers Court from the site boundary. These, along with the parking spaces that would be provided for the public house and the dry boat storage, make adequate public parking provision and retain the option for the authority to define these either as shared use or resident only spaces.

With regards to the parking provision for BAR employees, this would continue to be sufficient following the removal of the 11 spaces along Trimmers Court from the site boundary. The applicant has demonstrated that a maximum of 50 parking spaces would be required for staff. This is a lesser parking accumulation than may ordinarily be associated with an unfettered B1 use of this scale.

With regards to the revised Site Management Plan, this is not sufficiently detailed to determine whether or not the spaces fronting East Street compromise the highways boundary. There is scope to remodel the car park to ensure that this boundary is not compromised whilst retaining sufficient parking to serve the proposed development. The Highways department have recommended a condition is imposed to require the submission of detailed

plans concerning the remodelling of the car park. This is addressed by Condition 7.

(iii) Amendments to conditions

Condition 7 has been amended since the committee report was published to reflect the amended site boundary and to address the further highways comments. This is now as follows:

Condition: Before any part of the development is first brought into use the car parking spaces and access thereto shown on the approved site layout plan (or such alternative parking layout as may be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), including not less than 3 'disabled' parking bays, shall have been surfaced in materials/finishes shown on the approved schedule pursuant to condition 10, marked out and made available for use; and these parking spaces shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision is made for parking in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policies PCS17 and PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

Condition 22 has also been added to ensure than an appropriate parking management plan would be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation. This is as follows:

Condition: Before any part of the development is first brought into use a Parking Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and the approved Parking Management Plan shall be implemented in full (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority).

Reason: To ensure adequate provision is made for parking in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policies PCS17 and PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

(iv) Additional representations

Since the committee report was published on the 10th June, an additional 26 letters / emails of objection and 32 letters / emails of support have been received. A summary of these comments is set of below.

In the 26 additional letters / emails of objection, the following concerns were raised:

Design and Heritage Issues:

- The design of the proposed scheme does not comply with the Old Portsmouth Conservation Guidelines.
- The comments of the Design Review Panel appear to have been ignored.

- Whilst the Camber was originally an industrial area, it has since been redeveloped as a residential area. The scale of the proposed building should be sympathetic to the scale of these residential buildings.
- An alternative scheme has not been sought.
- Views of the Bridge Tavern would be lost.

Committee Report

- The committee report lacks sufficient detail to enable the committee make a lawful decision.
- This report fails to address all requirements and criteria set out in the NPPF, the Portsmouth Plan and the City Council's Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), particularly with regards to the Tall Buildings SPD, Conservation Areas and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA) 2011.
- The committee report and the application documents do not give a full and comprehensive analysis of the harm, the effects of the harm and how this harm can be outweighed by wider benefits. In the absence of this information, the Planning Committee cannot make a decision that would comply with the NPPF.

Alternative Locations:

- Vacant office space at the Civic Offices or Guildhall.
- Dockyard - reusing the vacant shipbuilding facilities.
- Other areas along the Portsmouth coastline.
- Building a temporary structure that could be removed when no longer required.
- Vacant land at the point - a slimmer tower structure could be constructed with a lower level 2 storey building to house the visitor centre, educational facilities and hospitality suites and also including a viewing tower. A lower level building at the application site could then house the manufacturing, training and office facilities.

Highways Issues:

- Increased traffic due to deliveries to the proposed boat building site.
- Potential construction impacts - disturbance and reduced parking.

Other Issues:

- No consideration given to the retention of the fish market or to providing a more aesthetically pleasing home for the boat storage and other small maritime based businesses.
- With a greater foresight from BAR and the planning department, a more appropriate development could have been achieved.
- Is there any need to have the associated operations of a HQ and not just the assembly element.
- Boundary fence of KB Boats now placed closer to the Bridge Tavern than shown on the submitted plans leaving only enough room for access.

- The manner in which this has been dealt with is poor. Not enough notification - wider communities not informed until the planning application was submitted.
- Enabling works - site clearance - without informing local residents of the loss of parking or the extent of the works is upsetting residents further.

In the 32 letters / emails of support, the following concerns were raised;

- Potential return on investment in sailing (a significant untapped market) would be great for the city.
- Even without winning the America's Cup, hosting America's Cup Works Series competitions annually along Southsea Seafront would have significant benefits in terms of return on investment.
- Bring semi-skilled and skilled and unskilled jobs to Portsmouth.
- Associated industries may wish to locate here bringing further economic benefits.
- Increased media coverage for Portsmouth.
- Investment and international recognition for the city.
- Futuristic design and cutting edge technology associated with the America's Cup.
- Prestige associated with having such an event in the city - boosting tourism.
- Boosting local morale and promoting pride in our city.
- Retaining the specialist boatbuilding skills.
- Proposed building has a strong architectural merit, enhancing the site on which it is to be built.
- America's Cup - one of the oldest sailing competitions in the world - also one of the most exciting and fiercely fought. Great opportunity to have a British team based here.
- Ambitious project that will enhance Portsmouth's maritime industry.
- The city needs tourism - drawing on the maritime history of the city and diversifying it to bring a different type of tourist.
- Greater opportunities for young people.

(v) **Other matters**

A number of representations have raised concern about the potential construction impacts including noise and disturbance during construction and an increase in traffic due to construction vehicles. This would not however represent a reason for refusal. Condition 18 has been imposed to ensure that construction takes place in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

The City Development Manager presented the committee report and addressed the issues of the impact on heritage assets of a building at the proposed height and explained the applicant's reasoning for a building of the size and design proposed which included the three parts of the application for the assembly and storage use, team facilities and thirdly for public facilities with visitor centre and associated sponsors' area.

Reference was made to the guidelines for Conservation Area No. 10, and to the statutory duties, because of the proximity of the Grade II listed Bridge Tavern, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving/ enhancing the character of the conservation area. The City Development Manager also referred to the National Planning Policy Framework requirements regarding the significance of heritage assets and their settings, which should also be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal within a conservation area. The committee was advised that they would need to give substantial weight to the potential harm to the heritage building and its setting in a conservation area (that could result from a building of the height proposed) and weigh such harm against the substantial public benefits of the scheme from the economic growth associated with the development. Officers believed that the nautical character of the area was reflected within the proposal and that it was a worthy design for this unique project. The City Development Manager therefore would recommend acceptance for this tall building in an area that was not identified as an area of opportunity for a tall building in the Tall Building SPD for the reasons set out in the report, as updated in the supplementary matters list.

Deputations were then made firstly by objectors to the proposal.

(i) Mr Clapham whose points included:

- Public concerns had been ignored for this sensitive site.
- The building was too high and bulky (the height was to allow VIPs a view of the Solent rather than allow public access).
- The wider public benefits were not explained so the report which was open to challenge.
- The slipway was currently used by many people with the boat trailer parking being lost and the livelihood of fishermen being affected as well as boating enthusiasts being inconvenienced.
- There was harm to the historic conservation area.

(ii) Mr Higham also spoke as a local resident whose objections included:

- Whilst the BAR project was welcome to the Camber the objection was to the building. It should not be compared to office structures in the city centre but to the structures in the Camber area such as the Bridge Tavern when considering the impact of its height.
- The illumination at night was not welcomed.
- There was a breach of planning policies and there would be long term harm to the conservation area, the harm to the heritage area not being sufficiently tested within the report.
- The height for the VIP area sponsors entertainment was questioned. This would harm the conservation area.
- English Heritage had said that the building was disproportionate and would detract from the historic nature of the conservation area.
- The proposal would sanitise the environment of the fishing and boating area. The Camber belonged to all of Portsmouth not just the VIPs.

Deputations were then made by those wishing to support the application.

(iii) Ms C Buggy on behalf of Shaping the Future of Portsmouth

- She was representing the local businesses and had a letter of support from Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and there had been 1500 signatures of support on a petition.
- This had been a dream project after the BAE announcement and would raise the aspirations and skills of the young.
- It would attract government funding and bring new skills as well as redeploying others.
- The scheme included innovation and sporting prowess.
- It would attract positive press attention reflecting Portsmouth well.
- The area had been a working dock area which needed investment.

(iv) Dr Mitchell who lived in the local area and was involved in education and the business community whose points included:

- As a resident of Old Portsmouth she had attended the public meeting and was very impressed by the proposal and saw this as a great opportunity for the city and should not be refused.
- There was a public contribution of jobs as well as the opportunity to support a world class project on behalf of future generations.

(v) Mr Page, who was also a local resident whose points included:

- There would be an improvement to the current view of the old sheds and a general improvement in the appearance of the area.
- The structure would be iconic and promote Portsmouth as a great waterfront city.
- The area should not just be developed for retirement homes but be an active part of a modern boatbuilding city.

(vi) Mr Guy on behalf of Portsmouth Sailing Club whose points included:

- Local sailing organisations had agreed a statement of support for basing the facility at the Camber and did not believe their access to the scene would be restricted but had been told that the public slipway would be maintained which would require the co-operation of users.

(vii) Mr Edwards whose points included

- He was a local resident and was involved in a local charity which sought to provide real world experiences to inspire young people which this project would do by giving young people practical hands-on experience in an inspirational and exciting way.
- He welcomed the architecture and felt this would be an iconic building within Old Portsmouth.

(viii) Mr Harding whose points included

- He lived in the Spice Island area and went to school in Portsmouth and would be studying physics and chemistry further and felt this project would inspire young people in both sailing and science inviting school trips, encouraging them to go into areas of science such as sailing technology, and to return to the city when seeking graduate employment.

(ix) Mr Reay in support of the application as the agent whose points included:

- The floorspace was necessary and had been reviewed by the architect.
- There needed to be world class provision to attract sponsorship hence the need for VIP provision to ensure that the building was of a good quality.
- Most of the floorspace were where the yachts were being assembled and built.
- There also needed to be a team HQ which would require space and this would be sustainable being at one location.
- Ben Ainslie Racing Limited (BAR) wished to involve the public and invite the participation of schoolchildren so there was incorporation of a public viewing area
- Part of the English Heritage response referred to this as an exciting and vibrant proposal with benefit to Portsmouth as a whole.
- He believed that this would enhance the conservation area.
- A tall building statement had been submitted and the other areas of opportunity had not been suitable due to the space requirements and the siting not being at the waterfront. There was adequate separation from listed buildings and this was a landmark building appropriate to the location. The process had not been rushed but had been prepared within a short period of time.

(x) Sir Ben Ainslie whose points included:

- He thanked all involved in the consultation and preparation of this proposal and explained why Portsmouth had been chosen as the base for the America's Cup preparations with a desire to put back into the marine industry.
- The project would include a charitable foundation and outreach work and technical apprenticeships as well as hoping to bring young people into sailing from the area and he hoped that the building design would add to the maritime heritage of Portsmouth.

(xi) Councillor Hunt spoke as spokesperson for Culture, Leisure & Sport in support of the application whose points included:

- The economic importance of sport to hosting cities as seen with benefits of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and the America's Cup in New Zealand.
- The regeneration benefits as well as enhancing the waterfront as Portsmouth.

- The site was suitable and there had been great support from local residents and this would bring great investment to the city and this opportunity to bring a world class event to the city should be welcomed.

Members' Questions

Members of the committee asked questions including the angle from the top of the building to the nearest residential property in consideration to whether there would be loss of light, the access to the waterway used by existing boats and it was reported by the City Development Manager that the Port had been involved in working with BAR to ensure they would be good neighbours and the multiple users would be in dialogue. It was asked if the Camber area was typical of the conservation area. The level of potential harm to the conservation area was queried and the basis of this being height would need to be weighed against the wider economic benefits. The life expectancy of the materials being used were queried and the future use of the site, as well as the adequacy of public utilities.

Members' Comments

Members of the committee referred to the site visit and public meeting as well as the points raised by the deputations. They felt that the history of the Camber had been varied but a modern building would not be out of place on this site. They felt that there was a great opportunity for jobs and training as well as the promotion of the city worldwide and they believed this was an opportunity that should not be missed. They felt that the great presence of the building was suitable in the setting in the harbour and the design was appropriate in reflecting sails.

RESOLVED (1) that conditional permitted be granted;

(2) that delegated authority be granted to the City Development Manager to add/amend conditions where necessary.

The meeting concluded at 3.35 pm.

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Signed by the Chair of the meeting
Councillor Aiden Gray