

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Monday, 2 March 2015 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Nolan (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), Cole, R. Hignett, S. Hill, June Roberts, Rowe, Wainwright, Woolfall and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C. Plumpton Walsh and J. Stockton

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Dave Thompson

Officers present: A. Jones, J. Tully, T. Gibbs, M. Noone, A. Plant, J. Eaton, J. Farmer and R. Wakefield

Also in attendance: Councillors K Loftus, N Plumpton Walsh, A Lowe and Howard and 6 members of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

DEV43 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

Action

The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.

DEV44 - 15/00034P3JPA - PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM FORMER OFFICE BUILDING (USE CLASS B1A) TO 448 NO. SELF CONTAINED APARTMENTS COMPRISING 54 1 BEDROOM FLATS AND 394 STUDIO FLATS, AT EAST LANE HOUSE, EAST LANE, RUNCORN, CHESHIRE

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

The Committee noted that this application was deferred at the Committee meeting on Monday 9 February, for additional information to be sought in relation to transport and highway impacts of the development and contamination risks on the site. In this regard it was noted that the applicant had submitted: a Transport Statement; an Asbestos Report; and an updated site plan showing 157

parking spaces.

Officers advised the Committee that after consideration of the additional information, the application was considered acceptable and that prior approval was not needed for:

- Transport and highways impact of the development;
- Contamination risks on the site; and
- Flooding risks on the site.

Members were presented with detailed information relating to transport and highways issues surrounding the site. A presentation was made to show:

- A 2km pedestrian catchment;
- Pedestrian access to bus stops;
- Pedestrian access from the development to bus stops and local taxi rank;
- Evening routes to bus stops;
- A 5km cycle catchment;
- Runcorn Shopping Centre Bus Service Timetable;
- Daytime bus routes and off peak bus routes;
- Railway Station services; and
- Traffic flow comparison information.

Members were advised that despite the site being in a sustainable location, there were a number of minor issues identified:

- The amount of disabled parking spaces;
- The usability of some of the parking spaces;
- That the TRICS data was based on averages of selected sites and therefore may not be fully representative; and
- Future parking management issues.

It was reported that one written representation had been received from Committee Member Councillor Thompson, who was unable to attend the meeting, regarding the revision of parking spaces to 157.

The Committee was addressed by local Ward Councillor K Loftus who opposed the proposal due to concerns regarding the parking allocation. She handed Members recent photographs taken of illegally parked cars around East Lane and Crown Gate areas and urged Members to refuse the proposal.

Local Ward Councillor A Lowe then addressed the Committee adding to those comments made previously and included parking issues already existing around the Hospital overflowing onto Earls Way in Hallwood Park. He also commented that the report did not refer to the fact that Halton Lea Shopping Centre closed at 7pm at night thus cutting off the pedestrian access to the building from there. Additionally, he stated that there were no buses past 7pm at night and that these issues were not addressed in the Applicant's Transport Statement. He requested the Committee to reject the proposal.

One Member of the public, Mr Griffin, then addressed the Committee and referred to the 36 objections to the proposal for the reasons already referred to by Members: traffic chaos, too close to Halton Lea; insufficient parking; dangers from asbestos; and limited type of accommodation offered.

Members discussed the application and the additional information supplied by the applicant. Clarifications were made with regards to comments on the proximity of the site to a conservation area and housing policies, in that these were not material conditions. The issues around parking conditions such as the size of the spaces, the lack of the required number of disabled spaces and the future management issues of the parking spaces remained. Members were not in agreement with the technical assessment on transport and highways impact and expressed a view that a number of issues had not been covered within the assessment. Consequently, on the information available the Committee decided that it would be likely that the transport and highways impact of the proposed development would be severe.

Furthermore, the Committee considered that there was some doubt as to whether the application was valid since the previous lawful office use may have been abandoned.

Members moved to refuse the proposal and this was agreed after a show of hands.

RESOLVED: The statutory procedures did not allow the Committee to request further information within the time available. Consequently:

- 1) Assuming that the application was valid, prior approval was required and is refused because, on the information available, the transport and highways

impact of the proposed development would be likely to be severe; and

- 2) Notwithstanding (1) above, there is doubt that the application was valid since the lawful office use may have been abandoned.

Meeting ended at 6.25 p.m.