

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Tuesday, 14th January, 2009 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Chairman), R.A. Aveley (substitute for Cllr A.A. Meredith), R.G. Chaplin, J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, H. Rhodes and M.J. Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor S. Burrell for planning application W2008/0676

PB-65 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 10th December, 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors A.A. Meredith and F.R. Picken

PB-67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PB-68 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

(a) W2008/0676 – Land Adjacent to Standford Villa, Sambrook, Shropshire

This planning application was for the erection of a self-contained independent living unit comprising five separate bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom, a communal lounge, kitchen/dining room, laundry, storeroom, and office within the grounds of the existing Care Home. The proposed building, mainly 5 metres in height rising to 6 metres in the middle, would be constructed in traditional brick and tile to match Standford Villa. It would be situated within a large area of open space to the east of the property with a total of ten parking spaces being provided for the entire site.

The existing Care Home provided accommodation and care facilities for adults aged 18 to 65 with moderate learning difficulties. The applicants had stated that this location had been chosen because of its rural location with access to all the facilities available in Newport and Telford and because of the demand for and severe shortage of such accommodation in this part of the country. Accommodation of this type helped to prepare residents for independent living although they could remain there all their lives if they so wished. Their stay at the Care Home was voluntary and they could request to leave at any time. The existing residents were cared for by 5 staff on a 24 hour rota basis and were, therefore, never left unsupervised. The proposed extension would have a similar number of staff who, as with the existing Care Home, would integrate with the residents at all times and would not have their own rest rooms or staff quarters.

The residents would come from another Care Home or from their own homes and would be referred by a Primary Care Trust or a Social Services Department, which would pay for their accommodation. On referral prospective residents would be fully assessed to ascertain if they would fit in with the other residents and the applicants had stressed that they do not contemplate accommodating anyone with a criminal history.

A number of letters of objection had been received from local residents and Chetwynd Parish Council, as summarised in the report, with the predominant grounds of objection relating to the alleged behavioural problems of the current residents and the potential for these to increase if the new unit were approved. The main issue before the Board was whether the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the locality and have such an undue impact on the amenity of local residents as to warrant a refusal. There was no substantiated evidence that the proposed development would be a threat to public safety or lead to an increase in crime and disorder and, since opening in 2006, no complaints had been received by the Planning Enforcement Officer and it was understood that no incidents had been reported to the police or to the relevant Social Care authorities. There was a national objective of transferring people from large institutions to smaller, local units and the applicants claimed that there was an acknowledged need for more such facilities. The Care Home was fully registered with all the Social Care bodies and was subject to the standards as set out in the Care Standards Act 2000. In addition, it was subject to regular inspections by the Commission for Social Care (CSCI) and any contravention of the guidelines would be dealt with accordingly.

From a planning perspective the development was acceptable, as its design, appearance and location reflected and respected the character of the locality, and was sympathetic to the visual amenities of the surrounding area. It would, to a large extent, be screened by an existing roadside hedge, and a condition would be imposed to ensure its retention into the future. The Council's Highways Engineer had no objections to the proposed access and parking arrangements, believing that the new unit would not generate any substantial increase in traffic. His initial concerns about the under-provision of car parking within the site had been met by the submission of amended drawings showing the provision of 10 parking spaces for the whole complex.

Councillor Stephen Burrell, the Ward Member for Edgmond, was invited to address the Board and drew Members' attention to the number of objections to this application received from local residents and Chetwynd Parish Council. He referred to their concerns regarding the potential noise impact upon a peaceful location, the increased traffic on the A41, and the fact that the increased number of residents would not be matched by a corresponding increase in staff.

In summing up the issues before the Board, the Head of Planning & Environment stated that no substantiated complaints had been received regarding the current Care Home, the existence of which had already established the principle of such a facility on this site. As stated in the report,

the provision of small Care Homes was a national objective and also one for which there was a clear need in Telford & Wrekin. Concerns as to the ratio of staff to residents was not a planning consideration and would be one for the appropriate regulatory body to address should any issues arise.

Members raised a number of queries regarding the application but, on balance, accepted the need for this facility.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2008/0676 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(b) W2008/1252 – 28 Stafford Road, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire

The application sought planning permission for the conversion of an existing two-storey, vacant, four-bedroomed end of terrace Victorian property, with a single storey rear extension and lean-to structure into three flats, with one being located at first floor level and two at ground floor level, for which a single storey rear extension was proposed in order to form adequate accommodation. The conversion would also require a number of external and internal alterations and additions, such as the installation of an external staircase at the rear to replace the existing internal staircase, and the removal and addition of internal walls.

There had been two previous refusals for residential development/conversion at this property and the principal changes in the current submission, as set out in the report, were relatively minor. The amenity space had been retained and the proposal no longer included car parking provision but, given its central and sustainable location, close to the District Centre and public transport links, it was not considered necessary to allocate parking.

The plans referred to the new single storey extension at the rear of the property as permitted development. However, the Local Planning Authority has advised that, if the property was converted into flats prior to the erection of the extension, the proposed extension would require planning permission. The sub-division into three flats appeared to be dependant on this single storey extension being included, as it would form the bedroom to Flat 2. The Council's Environmental Engineers had requested a shallow mining investigation for the proposed extension and, as requested, the applicant had now submitted full elevational drawings of the extension. Based upon this information, the extension was considered to be of an appropriate scale and form in relation to the main building. A window was proposed on the rear elevation giving a view down the garden but would not overlook adjoining properties.

The Local Planning Authority had also requested that the financial viability of the conversion be established, as officers had advised the Agent that conversion to two units would be a more appropriate form of development for this property and that the proposed three units would be overdevelopment. In response the Agent had said that, in the current economic climate, it would be

difficult to achieve an adequate return on even three units and, as this was a relatively small development, it had not been considered appropriate to request further information.

Oakengates Town Council had submitted objections to the application on the grounds that there would be no provision of off-street parking to serve the three flats and one neighbour letter of objection had been received with the comments as summarised in the report.

Whilst the scheme was not ideal and conversion to two units would be more suitable, the resubmission had overcome the previous issues of poor design and layout and loss of amenity space. Whilst officers considered that two flats would create a better form of development and two better sized flats, the property was in a sustainable location and would provide adequate communal amenity space to the side and rear, whilst maintaining the existing and prevailing character of the rear garden areas and omitting the parking area as the previously proposed. Therefore, on balance, the proposal was considered acceptable.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2008/1252 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and in accordance with the amended plans.

(c) W2008/1325 – Land at Cricketers Lane, St. George’s, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought Tree Preservation Order consent to carry out works to maintain eleven mature Sycamore trees adjoining the highway verge on Cricketers Lane. The proposed works would include crown thinning, crown reduction, the cutting back of extended branches and killing of ivy on the trunks but no felling.

These mature trees provided considerable amenity value in a residential area and contributed significantly to the street scene. The proposed maintenance work had been identified by the Council’s Woodland Officer as being necessary to protect the future health of the trees.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2008/1325 Tree Preservation Order Consent be granted subject to the work being agreed on site with the Council’s Woodland Officer and the works being carried out by an appropriately qualified and insured arboricultural contractor,

(d) W2008/1336 – Land to the rear of 21 Priorslee Village, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Services sought Tree Preservation Order consent to carry out minor crown lifting and shaping of the lower canopy to a Blue Atlas Cedar situated on a prominent corner site adjoining the highway in an urban residential area.

The tree was situated in the street scene where it provided amenity and enhancement to the local environment and the proposed works had been specified by the Council's Woodland Officer as being appropriate to maintain its health and amenity value.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2008/1336 Tree Preservation Order consent be granted subject to the work being carried out by an appropriately qualified and insured, professional arboricultural contractor,

PB-69 SITE VISTS

RESOLVED – that a site visit in respect of planning application W2008/1648, to be considered at a special Plans Board meeting on 22nd January 2009, take place at 3.00 p.m. prior to the Board meeting.

PB-70 PLANNING APPLICATIONS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The Board received for information details of planning applications that had been determined under delegated powers.

The meeting ended at 6.50 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: