

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 16 December, 2009 at 6.0 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Chairman), E.A. Clare (substitute for Councillor F.R. Picken), R.G. Chaplin, N.A. Dugmore (Vice-Chairman), J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, Y.C. Hicks (substitute for Councillor M.J. Smith) and C.F. Smith (substitute for Councillor H. Rhodes)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor R.T. Kiernan for planning application W2009/0947

PB-65 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 25 November, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors H. Rhodes, F.R. Picken and M.J. Smith

PB-67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C.F. Smith declared a personal interest in planning application W2009/0544 and stated that he would leave the room during determination thereof.

Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher declared a personal interest in planning application W2009/0947 and stated that he would vacate the Chair and leave the room during determination thereof.

PB-68 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman of the Plans Board informed the Board that, with regard to planning applications W2009/0915 (Land at Malinslee House, Malinsgate, Town Centre, Telford) and W2009/0945 (Land off Southwater Way, Town Centre, Telford) he had been advised by the Council's Solicitor that, in view of the late objections made within the time limit but only recently received and the need to make an appropriate, considered response, he was proposing that their determination be deferred until January 2010.

RESOLVED – that planning applications W2009/0915 and W2009/0945 be deferred until a meeting of the Plans Board in January 2010.

PB-69 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

- (a) W2009/0544 – St. Luke's Catholic Primary School, Church Road, Trench, Telford, Shropshire

Determination of this application had been deferred at the meeting of the Plans Board on 25 November, 2009 to allow Members to undertake a site visit. A number

of issues raised for clarification at that meeting had been addressed in the current before the Board.

The reasons for refusal of the 2005 planning application for a Roman Catholic Church, with associated car parking and a new vehicular access, were set out in report. However, the current application had been the subject of pre-submission discussions with Planning and Highway Officers, whereas there had been no such discussions before the 2005 application was submitted. As a consequence, the current scheme was better thought out and justified and, in particular, it was considered that the appearance, layout, access and parking arrangements were a marked improvement over the previous scheme. In addition, the present proposal did not involve the loss of a playing field, as was the case in 2005. The Highways Engineer had no objection to the current application and had confirmed that he could not substantiate a highway reason for refusal based on access and parking issues.

Whereas the 2005 application had been solely for an independent church building, the current one was for an annexe extension that would provide church, school, and community facilities. Policy OL4 of the Wrekin Local Plan permitted development within the Green Network if community benefits were an integral part of the proposal and it was considered that, as the proposed annexe would be available for general community uses, it complied with the policy and overcame the first reason for refusal of the 2005 application.

The recommended two metre high acoustic fence would be erected along the northern boundary of the site, as described in the report. It was understood that the school owned the existing fence and hedgerow and, therefore, would be able to replace it with a 2-metre high acoustic fence, which would also have the effect of giving the occupants of the adjoining houses some degree of added security.

At the previous meeting of the Board Members had also requested a breakdown of the addresses of the 163 people who had written in supporting the application and of the 218 people who had signed a petition in support, and this was set out in the update sheet tabled at the meeting.

Since the Plans Board meeting on 25th November the applicants had submitted additional information which they wished to bring to Members' attention. With regard to parking facilities and traffic movements, the extended 45 place car park would be sufficient to cover all but the most exceptional circumstances and only very rarely would there be a need to use the school playground as an overflow car park. These occasions would always be outside the school day. The number of weddings and funerals would vary but recent history suggested 10–12 funerals and 4-5 weddings a year. For both it would be the parish priest's policy not to allow 'large' events during the school day, i.e. one where approximately 20+ cars were expected. Large events would be scheduled for non-school days with weddings typically being held on a Saturday.

The new building was of a flexible design so that it could reasonably be used both as a church and a hall. With regard to social/community events, the present school hall had accommodated approximately 6 per year where an occasional license had been obtained. No permanent licence would be obtained, not least because this would be

contrary to diocesan policy but should this be necessary any application would be advertised and local residents would have the opportunity to comment. The licensing authority would determine whether or not an occasional license should be issued and this was not, therefore, a material planning matter.

After receiving this information, and coupled with the fact that the Council's Highways Engineer was not objecting to the application, the recommendation to Plans Board for approval of the application remained unaltered.

Councillor C.F. Smith spoke as one of the Ward Members for Trench & Wrockwardine Wood. With regard to the addresses of those people who supported the application, he pointed out that, while the largest single number was from the Ward, the overall majority were not. The previous application had been refused in 2005 and, whilst the current application had been improved, there had been no changes to the site and he, therefore, questioned why the application was now recommended for approval. He expressed concern regarding the impact of the additional parking spaces and the potential noise nuisance for adjoining properties. He believed that the proposed acoustic barrier would not be sufficient to address this issue and would also cut out sunlight from gardens and take away the wildlife habitat provided by the existing hedge. With regard to the highways issues, he noted the proposed improvements but did not consider that these had fully addressed the concerns of residents. Whilst acknowledging the need for a new hall for school use, he queried whether the proposal was over-development and whether this was the best site for a new church in north-east Telford. If approved, there would be increased traffic in the area all week rather than just for five days as at present.

(Councillor Smith left the meeting during discussion and determination of the application)

A number of Members spoke in support of the application given its benefits for the school and the community and the improvements to parking and access made since the 2005 application. However, other Members expressed concern over the impact of the development on the amenities of local residents from traffic and noise and questioned whether this was the most appropriate site for a church. The Planning Officer responded that the decision was one of balance between providing new community facilities and improved access and parking and the needs of residents. However, given that the Highways Engineer was now satisfied with the proposed scheme, it would be difficult to refuse the application on those grounds.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0544 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out on the update sheet included with the report.

(Councillor C.F. Smith returned to the meeting)

(b) W2009/0745 – Highbury Villa, Drury Lane, Rodington, Shropshire

This application sought planning permission for the erection of a single storey side extension to the existing annex accommodation to provide a full granny annex on this site in the rural area. The main property was a large detached one with a detached gable fronted double garage to the rear and a smaller single storey

outbuilding to the side, which was currently used for storage but contained separate rooms for a kitchen lounge and bedroom and, therefore, was able to be used as ancillary living accommodation.

The proposed development would have a length of approximately 6m., which would be shorter than the existing building and with a width of approximately 3m. It would retain the same depth as the existing building but would be stepped back by half a metre. The proposal would be of a very similar character to that of the existing outbuilding with a small gable styled porch feature, although this would be well screened from the street scene by the existing dwelling and outbuilding. It was, therefore, considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. The property benefited from a modest plot and, therefore, the development would leave adequate amenity space within the curtilage of the dwelling.

The proposed development would be on the opposite side of the car parking area to the neighbouring depot, which was approximately 7m. away. There would be one additional window on that side elevation but, as this would be a bathroom window, there would be no detrimental overlooking of the neighbouring industrial properties. At this distance and as the development would be single storey, it would not lead to a detrimental level of overshadowing.

Given the rooms in the existing annex, the unit would then include a separate bedroom, bathroom and kitchen, which was contrary to policy for the creation of new dwellings within the open countryside. A condition was, therefore, required to control its future use but, due to previous issues relating to enforcement of such units in the rural area, it was considered that a Section 106 agreement would ensure this was not breached. The applicant had now agreed to enter into a Section 106 legal agreement to ensure that the proposal stayed ancillary and linked to the main dwelling.

As the proposed development would not dominate the site, was in keeping with the character and appearance of the general area and not of detriment to the amenities of the neighbouring properties, it complied with policies UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and CS15 of the Core Strategy.

RESOLVED: that with respect to planning application W2009/0745 delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning & Transport to grant planning permission subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 agreement with regards to the proposed development remaining linked to the main dwelling as ancillary accommodation and to the conditions as set out in the report.

(c) W2009/0768 – Old Hall Building, King Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application for the erection of a two storey rear extension, following a partial demolition, and a single storey extension for use as a mosque. The Plans Board had previously approved a change of use of the former Territorial Army Centre to a Mosque and ancillary facilities, together with the remodelling of the facade (W2007/0667) and, therefore, the principle of redeveloping the site for a mosque had already been established. At the time of the current submission the applicants had

demolished the majority of the building but had retained the front façade. This was not in accordance with the previously approved plans but was in accordance with the current application.

The agents who had dealt with earlier application had failed to address the religious needs of the proposed users and new agents had been appointed to redesign the layout to provide the necessary accommodation thus limiting the usability of the site. The consequence of redesigning the layout had resulted in addressing the external parameters and, therefore, the main issues being considered under this application were those of design.

The previous application sought to remove the front elevation of the Drill Hall whilst retaining the rear aspects but the present proposal sought to retain the front elevation with the erection of a two storey element which displayed modern architectural features set back from the front elevation. The proposal would be slightly higher than the ridge of the Drill Hall but with a curved roof and elevations, which would be rendered in a light colour. The proposed set back acted as a buffer and would be well screened at a pedestrian level on King Street by the retained façade.

Taking this into account it was considered that the proposed design was more in keeping than the previous approval, respecting and reinforcing the architectural features of the Drill Hall and the character of the surrounding area. Whilst it was accepted that this was a modern development attached to a mature façade, it was considered it would preserve the Drill Hall whilst giving it a modern twist which met the needs of the user.

The proposal would provide 27 parking spaces and, as parking along King Street would be restricted by yellow lines, users could not overspill onto the highway. Occasional events such as weddings and funerals would require additional parking and, consequently, an agreement was in place with New College to cater for such events. The Council's Highway Engineer had raised no objections subject to the inclusion of the previous conditions relating to the Travel Plan.

The proposed hours of use had not been conditioned on the previous application but, given the location of the site on a main road into Wellington, it was considered that the nature of the use was acceptable. As the principle of use had already been accepted on the site, it was considered that the revised proposal respected and reinforced the Drill Hall and the surrounding area, and was less intrusive than that previously approved. Subsequently it was considered that the proposed application met the criteria of Local Plan Policy LR1, UD2 and Core Strategy Policy CS15.

A number of Members expressed concern at the possible traffic congestion that could result from this application but the Planning Officer informed them that the applicant already had an agreement with New College to pay for use of its parking facilities.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0768 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) W2009/0794 – Roden Lane Farm, Roden Lane, Roden, Shropshire

Determination of this application had been deferred at the meeting of the Plans Board on 25 November, 2009 to allow Members to undertake a site visit. Members were now informed that the Council's Environmental Health Officer had raised no objections to the proposals subject to the conditions set out on the update sheet. In addition, an informative had been recommended whereby the enclosed run areas and the kennels would require a good level of ventilation to ensure thermal comfort. Comments had also been received from the applicant's agent, as set out in the report, and the issues raised by the Council's Arboricultural Officer had been satisfactorily addressed.

The update sheet tabled at the meeting informed Members that the representative of local residents had now withdrawn the objections to this application, for the reasons set out. However, they would continue to press their case for longer term protection against a change of mind/regime at the Dogs Trust (and/or any other constituent) to future development plans on the overall site. However, the planning officer reminded Members that any such application would be considered on its merits at the time.

Members considered the application would provide improved facilities for the dogs, thus reducing their stress.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0794 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the update sheet tabled at the meeting.

Informative: The enclosed run areas and the kennels will require a good level of ventilation to ensure thermal comfort.

(e) W2009/0811 – Ketley Hall, Red Lees, Ketley, Telford, Shropshire

This application sought full planning permission for the erection of a detached single storey one-bedroomed dwelling together with associated car parking spaces and amenity area on an 'L' shaped site, located on the north-west boundary of the Hall, a three-storey Grade II listed building, some 20 metres from the Hall. Access to the new property would be via the existing private driveway to Ketley Hall from Red Lees. Ketley Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

The site was located in a predominantly residential area, with a modern two-storey residential estate to the south, previously used as a haulage yard. The proposed dwelling would be located very close to the boundary (approximately 1.2m.) with the adjoining dormer bungalow, Champions Ridge, but would present a blank elevation and 3 rooflights and existing boundary screening would ensure that there would be no overlooking or loss of privacy of adjoining residential amenities.

Ketley Parish Council had no objections to the proposed design but considered it would be too close to the listed building and were concerned about the access arrangements and the additional pressure on the exit onto Red Lees. These comments had been noted but the proposed dwelling was very modest and had

been designed to have the scale and simple form of an outbuilding, subservient to the main house. Given the proposed siting of the new dwelling, it was considered that the proposal would not affect the setting of the Hall. In addition, it would appear smaller in footprint and height than the adjacent dormer bungalows beyond the site boundary and would accord with national and local planning policies relating to listed buildings. Landscaping and boundary treatment to the new property would be important in order to protect the setting of the listed building, and this would be controlled by condition.

The plans had been amended in accordance with Conservation Officer's advice to simplify the design and give the building more vertical emphasis, with fewer glazing bars, omission of timber features, and the addition of sills to windows on the front and side elevations. Therefore, it was considered that the amended scheme was acceptable, by virtue of its modest size, the simple design, and siting within the grounds of, but a sufficient distance from Ketley Hall, and with no adverse effect on adjoining residential properties.

Members considered that the proposed dwelling would be well screened and was an improvement upon the site's previous use as a haulage yard.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0811 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (f) W2009/0917 – Oakengates Leisure Centre, New Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council was for the siting of one new storage container and a portable w.c. facility near to the athletics running track. It was also proposed to regularise the situation regarding eight existing metal storage containers on the site some of which were the subject of now expired temporary permissions and others which had been in situ for many years and were, hence, immune from enforcement action. In addition it was proposed to relocate container 'K' which had been given planning permission earlier this year (W2009/0401)

The proposed single 9 metre long container would be sited within the existing gated compound adjoining the car-parking area and would be used to store an 'indoor mobile sports hall' trailer for use around the community by disabled persons. It was essential to store this trailer within a secure compound for insurance purposes but in this location it would have little impact on the appearance of the area and would not detract from local amenity. All the existing containers as well as those proposed, were situated well within the Leisure Centre site and, therefore, would have little impact on the residential amenities of any dwellings which adjoined the site. It was proposed to paint all of them dark green which would result in a unified appearance and would further reduce their visual impact on the site.

As there were no proposals for a permanent storage building on the Leisure Centre site and officers considered that the metal containers were unsuitable to form a permanent development, a temporary planning permission for the new containers for 3 years was considered appropriate in this case. .

Councillor Smith welcomed the application, which would provide needed secure storage facilities and which, if painted dark green, would blend in with their surroundings.

RESOLVED: that with respect to planning application W2009/0917 planning permission for a temporary period of three years be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(g) W2009/0947 – 6, 8 The Avenue, Wrockwardine, Shropshire

This application sought planning permission for the erection of 4 dwellings following demolition of a pair of semi-detached, post-war properties with limited character, within the designated Conservation Area of Wrockwardine. They were sited approximately 12m. from the rear of the pavement, and followed a similar building line as the adjacent semi-detached properties to the north and south, which had similar architectural character but with differences between the exact features. Members noted that a previous application, W2008/0011, had been refused on the grounds of an insufficient demonstration of need, failure to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, and failure to demonstrate that protected species would not be adversely affected.

In line with the criteria of saved Policy H24 of the Wrekin Local Plan, an exceptions policy for small scale affordable housing schemes, the applicant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) provided details of this need and was accompanied by the Housing Needs Survey template undertaken in Wrockwardine during March 2009. The findings of the survey were that there was a need for 2-bedroomed properties with support for a small development to provide affordable housing within the village. The Housing Needs Survey and findings were supported by the Council's Housing Enabling Officer, who was also satisfied that there were no forthcoming sites within the identified suitable settlements which would cater for this need. The village had a predominantly older population and the provision of housing for younger families would create a more balanced, mixed and sustainable community. It was expected that a lettings plan would be agreed between the Council and the Trust to ensure that the properties were allocated appropriately.

Policy H24 required development not to have an adverse impact on the character and setting of a village, no overriding environmental problems, and satisfactory access and services. The design of the dwellings had been subject to pre-application advice following the refusal of a similar application (W2008/0011) and officers were now satisfied that the proposed design would preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. With regard to parking, the Highways Officer would have had no objections if two off-road and two on-road spaces had been provided, as per the existing parking facilities, but the applicants had preferred to submit an application with four spaces on site. Whilst it was considered that this would address the nature of the Conservation Area more appropriately, it was not a sufficient reason to refuse this application and it was, therefore, considered acceptable.

Previous concerns with regard to protected species had been addressed following the submission of a survey which had concluded that, while there was a colony of bats within the village, there was no evidence they had used the existing properties

on the site for the purposes of roosting or harbourage. In addition, no evidence of nesting birds or barn owls had been found either internally or externally. Therefore, it was considered that the proposal had addressed the previous grounds of refusal and, that subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement to ensure that the dwellings were affordable accommodation in perpetuity, it should be approved.

Since preparation of the report to Members, comments had been received from Wrockwardine Parish Council which fully supported the proposed development subject to the units remaining affordable housing. They considered that the Wrekin Housing Trust had sufficiently identified a need for such housing in the village and that the encouragement of a younger generation in what was an increasingly elderly one would help to ensure a more balanced population.

These comments were supported by Councillor J.M. Seymour, one of the Ward Members for Wrockwardine. Councillor R.T. Kiernan, the other Ward Member, was invited to address the Board and indicated his support for the application but referred to the need also for affordable family housing to be provided.

Members welcome the application, which would provide much needed affordable housing of a design in keeping with this Conservation Area.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0947 delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning & Transport to grant planning permission subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 agreement to provide 100% affordable housing, and to the conditions as set out in the report.

PB-71 SITE VISITS

None.

PB-72 PLANNING APPLICATIONS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

The meeting ended at 7.06 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: