

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 25th August, 2010 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors N.A. Dugmore, R. Aveley (substitute for Councillor R.T. Kiernan), D.R. Chaplin, J.A. Francis, F.R. Picken, C.F. Smith (substitute for Councillor H. Rhodes) and K.L. Tomlinson (substitute for Councillor G.M. Green)

PB-28 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on the 4th August, 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors G.M. Green, R.T. Kiernan, H. Rhodes and M.J. Smith

PB-30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PB-31 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

None.

PB-32 SITE VISITS

None.

PB-33 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

(a) TWC/2010/0133 – Watkins Nursery, Apley Castle, Telford, Shropshire

This application and the accompanying Listed Building application (TWC/2010/0134), related to the erection of two dwellings and the demolition of a 4.1 metre section of the wall of the former garden of Apley Castle to allow vehicular access. The applications had been submitted to the Board meeting of 14th July 2010 but deferred to allow a Conservation Appraisal to be undertaken. Councillor K.L. Blundell, the Ward Member, had requested that the applications be determined by the Plans Board.

The two houses, which would face each other, were identical in design and appearance both being two-storey four-bedroom houses with an attached single garage and additional parking on the driveways. They matched in style and appearance those that had already been approved within the walled garden. Following the comments and objections made regarding the access into the woodland when it was first proposed to erect a 900mm high metal fence along the remainder of the site boundary, it was now proposed that the rear gardens would be

enclosed by 1.8 metre high walls. The stability of the listed wall would be protected by the introduction of piers to the inner face adjacent to the opening and the salvaged bricks from the demolition would be re-used to replace damaged areas of brickwork elsewhere in the wall. Amended plans had been submitted showing a 4.1m wide and 3m high archway.

Councillor Blundell had objected to the application on the grounds that a further breach of the wall would detract from its appearance, affect its character and the view from inside Apley Woods and, as a listed structure, should be afforded protection. Objections had also been submitted by local residents and Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council, as summarised in the report.

The Council's Arboricultural Officer had objected to the application on the grounds that the trees bordering the application site would create heavy shading on the proposed houses with resultant pressures from the residents to prune them. The Council's Environmental Maintenance Officer had objected on the grounds that the application would encourage the use of an area of Apley Woods which people were being discouraged from using for conservation reasons. Shropshire Wildlife Trust had objected to the application on the grounds of the degradation of an area of green space which was already grappling with issues of visitor pressure and considered that the proposals offer any no mitigation measures or enhancements to offset these negative impacts.

The Council's Conservation Officer had commented that the amended scheme was an improvement on the original proposal as the effect on the integrity of the listed wall and enclosure was reduced by a sense of continuation of the upper part of the wall structure. However, she considered that a narrower access through the wall of only one vehicular width rather two would be preferable as that would further reduce any impact and reflect, to a certain degree, the existing pedestrian openings along the wall. Furthermore, she had no objections to the proposed development in terms of its design, appearance, form, scale, massing, proportions, details, and materials.

However, following further research, planning officers had concerns regarding the demolition of 4.1m of the wall. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent had previously been granted for the erection of 18 dwellings within the walled garden (W2010/0011), but with an amended access along the western wall, which had been considered more acceptable, and, on the basis that the scheme was an enabling development, with a condition that the existing listed wall be repaired in order to safeguard it for the future. The Design & Access Statement for the current application made reference to the proposed development enhancing the fabric of the wall whilst retaining and improving its setting but officers considered that the significant physical alteration to the wall, with the new vehicular opening, effectively forming a continuation of the housing development inside the wall. The Listed structure would, therefore, not be enhanced but would lose its integrity as a complete enclosing structure and its intrinsic character would be compromised. As a result, the development of the site could only be supported if an alternative means of access could be provided outside the walls and if all other planning considerations were acceptable.

Subsequent to the publication of the agenda, the applicant had submitted amended plans showing a 2.6m opening with the height of the proposed archway remaining at 3m. This would provide a single car width vehicular link from the approved housing development within the walled garden and sought to allay concerns regarding the creation of an additional incursion into the fabric of the historic wall.

The Conservation Officer considered that the narrower opening to serve the two dwellings went some way towards retaining the overall integrity of the historic wall but had stated that care would be required on the way in which the incursion was executed in terms of materials, workmanship, etc. Whilst approval had been given for access through the listed wall under W2010/011, this had been due to the extent of the physical changes over time to the front of the wall. However, that had left the rear wall as the most important aspect and its retention as a continuous enclosure was considered highly desirable to retain its integrity and historic and conservation value.

Colin Potts, Clerk, detailed the objections of Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council to the applications on the grounds of the proposed demolition of part of the listed wall, the erection of two dwellings, and the unacceptable impact upon the surrounding environment. These views were strongly supported by Councillor Karen Blundell and by Mrs. Dorothy Hughes on behalf of the Apley Castle residents. In support of the application, Howard Thorn on behalf of Shropshire Homes, referred to their record of successful conservation projects within Telford & Wrekin and their close working relationship with Planning and Conservation Officers, as had been the case with these applications. He drew the Board's attention to the amended, narrower access archway, which would much reduce the impact upon the listed wall, and to which the Conservation Officer had raised no objections.

In response the Planning Officer acknowledged that the original recommendations made to the Board at its meeting on 14th July, 2010 had been that the applications be approved. However, in view of the issues raised by objectors, consideration of the applications had been deferred to allow a full Conservation Appraisal to be undertaken. In addition, the applicant had sought to minimise the impact on the listed wall by reducing the opening to an archway only 2.6m in width.

He advised the Board that, in determining the application, they needed to be mindful that, as 'white land', residential development was acceptable in principle. In addition, the site was within the Telford boundary and, being under 0.4 hectare, could be classified as a windfall site in accordance with Policy H6 of the Wrekin Local Plan. Therefore, the only grounds for refusal would be that of the demolition of a further stretch of the listed wall, the impact upon the setting of the adjacent listed building, and the need to ensure that the historic character of the wall and surrounding area was safeguarded. He acknowledged that the Conservation Officer was prepared to support the application but drew the Board's attention to the comments in the update report, as cited above, regarding the importance of the rear portion of the listed wall. In addition, he referred to the objections received from the Council's Arboricultural and Environmental Maintenance Officers and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust relating to the additional pressures that this development would place upon Apley Woods. In conclusion, Planning Officers were of the opinion that any further demolition of the

listed wall would compromise its integrity, do little to enhance its conservation value or maintain its original purpose as a continuous enclosure.

Councillor Smith supported the recommendation for refusal as he considered it would be inappropriate to demolish part of a listed wall and the development as a whole would have a detrimental impact on the view from Apley Woods. A number of members of the Board supported his comments. The Head of Planning advised the Board that, while discussions held over a period time had led to this revised submission, in determining the application it was necessary to recognise the Local Planning Authority's duties with regard to preserving the historic character of the listed wall; its retention in forming a continuous enclosure was considered to be an essential part of that character.

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2010/0133 be refused planning permission on the following grounds:

- 1. The Local Planning Authority considered that the demolition of part of the wall of the former walled garden of Apley Castle to provide vehicular access to the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the wall, which was a Grade II Listed structure, and would have an adverse effect on the prevailing integrity and intrinsic character of the structure. The proposed development was therefore contrary to PPS5, Policy HE15 of the Wrekin Local Plan, and Policy CS14 of the LDF Core Strategy.**

(b) TWC/2010/0134 – Watkins Nursery, Apley Castle, Telford, Shropshire

This application for Listed Building Consent was considered in conjunction with planning application TWC/2010/0134.

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2010/0134 be refused Listed Building Consent on the following grounds:

- 1. The Local Planning Authority considered that the demolition of part of the wall of the former walled garden of Apley Castle to provide vehicular access to the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the wall, which was a Grade II Listed structure, and would have an adverse effect on the prevailing integrity and intrinsic character of the structure. The proposed development was therefore contrary to PPS5, Policy HE15 of the Wrekin Local Plan, and Policy CS14 of the LDF Core Strategy.**

(c) TWC/2010/0302 – St. Mary's R.C. Primary School, Coronation Crescent, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application by Telford & Wrekin Council for a new boundary fence to improve security in the school grounds. The proposed fence would be a metal vertical bar 'single point' type to a height of 1.8 metres and 2.1 metres in part and finished in green. There were existing green-painted 1.8 metre metal fencing and security gates at the school entrance.

The school grounds and the adjoining Silkin Way footpath were situated within the Green Network and consideration needed to be given to the visual impact of the fence on the amenities of the surrounding area. The lower fence height of 1.8 metres was considered appropriate for the west boundary of the playing fields adjoining Coronation Crescent. The new fence would be positioned in front of the hedge where it would have some impact due to it being of slightly greater height. However, the hedge would be retained and, overall, it was considered that the appearance would be acceptable. The 2.1 metre fence would be located on the north side and part of the eastern boundary at the foot of the landscaped bank adjoining the Silkin Way, where it would be relatively unobtrusive.

RESOLVED – that with regard to planning application TWC/2010/0302 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) TWC/2010/0349 - Town Park, Hinkshay Road, Malinslee, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought approval for the creation of a new single storey Visitor Centre (use class sui generis) to replace the existing facilities at Spout Farm House, which were proposed for demolition to facilitate the Southwater redevelopment scheme. The new building was part of a wider project within the Town Park for improvements to facilities and attractions.

The building would be a single storey wooden structure, with off-white panels, and measuring a maximum of 19.3m by 18.3m. Phase 1 of the scheme would comprise toilets and baby changing facilities, an information desk, café/refreshments area, staff room and office with phase 2 providing an educational space and bicycle hire facility. The development had a phasing option to allow for flexibility with the funding options.

The Council's Geotechnical Engineer had raised no objections to the proposal subject to the inclusion of Informatives I17 Minerals Area and I20 contaminated land. Further comments had also been received from statutory consultees in support of the proposal.

The proposed building would be sited within the green network but would enhance the role of the Town Park as a valuable sports, recreation, open space, ecology and leisure asset and provide a facility for both the local and wider community and other visitors to the park. It was, therefore, considered that these benefits were sufficient to mitigate the limited impact of the new structure and would offer complimentary services to its function in accordance with 'saved' policies OL3 OL4 and OL5 of the Wrekin Local Plan. In addition, as it would be sited close to the main visitor attractions, within walking distance of the Town Centre, and with a number of adjacent footways and cycle routes and a reasonable level of adjacent car parking provision, it would accord with Policies LR1 of the Wrekin Local Plan and CS4 and CS10 of the Core Strategy.

The scale, mass, design and siting of the building had been carefully chosen with regard to the facilities and amenities within the Town Park and the proximity to the Town Centre. Its modern design would provide a strong but appropriate contrast to

the existing chapel building and would not detract from it or the surrounding Park. The use of wood would ensure that over time the building would weather and blend in with its surroundings. As the building was single storey to allow full access to all sections of the community and had sufficient circulation space and separate access for toilet facilities it was considered that it accorded with the guidance and principles in 'saved' policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan, Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy and PPS1.

The proposed building would be located adjacent to a number of semi-mature trees and a mature Willow, which would have to be removed for safety reasons, but it would still be framed by a mature tree belt to give it a woodland setting. Therefore, the loss of the trees would not have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area. With regards to ecology, the possible loss of bat roosts, birds' nest and trees could be mitigated through a replacement planting scheme and the installation of bat and bird boxes in the immediate vicinity, together with invertebrate boxes. These could all be secured through the imposition of appropriate conditions and it was, therefore, considered that the proposal accorded with 'saved' Policies OL11 of the Wrekin Local Plan and guidance in PPS9. Following receipt of the additional responses, as set out in the tabled update report, officers remained of the view that the proposal was acceptable in principle subject to appropriate mitigation through amended conditions and the recommended informatives.

Members supported the need for a purpose built Visitor Centre but expressed concern about the potential problems that could arise from the proposed flat roof design. The Head of Planning responded that the Board should rely upon the competency of the applicant, the Council's Leisure Property Services, to judge what would be a building fit for purpose within their budgetary provision. However, he had some concerns regarding the use of light rendered panels, which would be prone to graffiti, and suggested that the condition relating to materials include a requirement for an appropriate colour to be used which would blend in with the immediate surroundings of the Centre; this was supported by the Board. With regard to Members' comments about the flat roof design, he advised that they contact the Leisure Property Services direct as this was an issue that could not be dealt with through the planning process.

RESOLVED - that with regard to planning application TWC/2010/0349 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions and the informatives as set out in the tabled update report and subject to condition B06 (Samples of Materials) stating that the colour used should blend into the building's immediate surroundings.

The meeting ended at 7.04 p.m..

Chairman:

Date: