

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

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

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

#### **PB-100      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PB-101      APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor M.J. Smith

#### **PB-102      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G.M. Green declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application W2010/0039 and stated that she would leave the room during determination thereof.

Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher declared a personal interest in planning application W2009/1005 and stated that he would vacate the chair in favour of the Vice-Chairman and leave the room during determination thereof.

#### **PB103      APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

##### **(a)      W2009/0911 – 26 Quarry Lane, Ketley, Telford, Shropshire**

This application for the erection of extensions and associated alterations for the creation of lower ground floor accommodation and excavation to create a double garage and alterations to the access following the removal of the existing garage had been deferred at the previous meeting of the Board to allow Members to make a Site Visit.

Councillor H. Rhodes said that, having attended the Site Visit, she still had concerns relating to the application given the size of the proposed extension and the ability of the local road layout to cope with the traffic from the site, which were supported by Ketley Parish Council. In addition, she requested clarification of the permitted hours of working on the site and the measures to be taken in respect of the slope stability of the site. In response the Planning Officer said that the hours of working would be standard and a report would be required to be submitted to the Council's Geotechnical Officer. Other members of the Board indicated their support for the application.

**RESOLVED – that planning application W2009/0911 be granted planning permission subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

(Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher having previously declared an interest in the following application left the room during determination thereof and Councillor N.A. Dugmore took the Chair).

(b) W2009/1005 – Abraham Darby Comprehensive School, Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

This application requested full detailed planning permission for the demolition of the existing Abraham Darby Academy and the erection of a 1050 place Academy, a 420 place Primary School, incorporating ancillary Primary Care Trust office and consulting space, a community Leisure Centre, playing fields and associated facilities and works. The application site also included the property known as 9 Ironbridge Road. Acceptance, in principle, for the construction of a new senior school, primary school and leisure and community centre at this site had been established by outline planning permission W2008/1290 granted in March 2009.

These proposals were part of the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF), which sought to rebuild or remodel every state secondary school in the country over the lifetime of the programme in line with the initiative launched by the Department for Education & Skills in February 2004. This was the first such application in the Telford & Wrekin programme and was particularly important due to its location in an area of low attainment levels.

The report outlined the responses from the statutory and non-statutory consultees. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) was the Government's advisory body on architecture, urban design and public space and, as it had been involved in pre-application reviews of the proposals, it was consulted on the application scheme as submitted. CABE's panel of assessors had, however, found the overall design quality rating to be unsatisfactory. There had been 13 representations made in respect of the application, 7 of which were objections and 6 of which were observations, as outlined in the report.

The proposal was for the north of the existing Abraham Darby Academy site to house the new Abraham Darby Sports and Learning Community and associated facilities. This siting would enable the existing facility to continue whilst construction works were underway and, when completed, to allow for a transfer to the new facility without significant interruption followed by the demolition of the old facility. The location of the existing school buildings within the site would be moved to a new configuration where the major elements of the complex were to be built on the sloping portion of the site between the existing school and Ironbridge Road with the Primary School being situated on the flat south facing upper location to the north. This basic arrangement would maximise the playing fields available for both schools and the community leisure facility use. The whole site Masterplan was organised around a series of axis and vistas to provide a seamless transition between internal and external spaces. Circulation would be provided within atria and walkway spaces.

The individual building components, the Academy, the Primary School and the Leisure Centre, would be articulated as discrete and recognisable units, stepping down the hillside. Each would have its own, defensible, arrival space and front door, and dedicated external space. The Academy and the Primary School would be linked together by the shared dining space and the Academy and the Leisure Centre by a shared changing room complex so that they could operate as a single entity or as separate buildings. The overall design approach had been influenced by the wider site context, addressing the hill, landscape and the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. The palette of materials to be used included brickwork, concrete, render and timber, although the details would have to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

The Primary School would be situated on the upper plateau and would be a low rise building appropriate for children. It would incorporate a sedum, inverted green roof and ancillary primary care trust offices. There would be 56 cycle spaces and 50 staff/visitor car parking spaces, 3 DDA spaces and 3 enlarged DDA staff spaces. The Academy building would be much more dominant to the street scene and built into the side of the bank, thereby using the change in levels to accommodate 4 storeys of accommodation with a partially glazed dome at roof level. There would be 120 cycle spaces, 88 staff/visitor parking spaces, 8 DDA spaces and 5 enlarged DDA staff spaces. The Leisure Centre would also be set at the lower end of the site and, although 3 storeys in height, would be set back from Ironbridge Road to the rear of the Academy car park. It would have 72 cycle spaces, 99 staff/visitor parking spaces, 6 DDA spaces and 3 enlarged DDA staff spaces available.

The design had evolved through both the BSF bid and the planning application process, during which a series of design user group meetings with the end users and Telford's educational advisors had helped determine the final scheme, as set out in the main report. The design approach had also been rooted in an appreciation of the fact that the Abraham Sports and Learning Community would sit at a key strategic location on the route to the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. In addition, one of the key drivers in the master plan for the site was to maximise the amount of high quality external space for sports provision and informal/social play, whilst still ensuring that the proposed landscape & buildings sat comfortably within the existing topography and visual character of the surrounding areas. It was, therefore, officers' opinion that, notwithstanding CABE's comments, that the design brief had on the whole been met and on balance had led to an acceptable scheme subject to a condition to secure an amended plan to show an improved arrival space at the main entrance to the Academy. This compromise had one some way to meet the requirements of inclusive design whilst securing the end users remit for safety purposes.

With regard to transport and access the proposed access arrangements had been amended during the planning application process to respond to the concerns of the Council's Highways Engineers, public consultation and in response to the Road Safety Audit Stage 1. The existing access off Ironbridge Road would continue to be the major access point via a priority junction to the site, serving the Academy and the Leisure Centre. An additional access point to the west of The Keep, as a priority junction, would be the access point for the Primary School and the Primary Care Trust/Children's Services. The access point at Wrekin View/Hermitage Way would continue to be for occasional service access and a secondary pedestrian access.

The proposal also included improvements to pedestrian access points, through new toucan crossings, which related to existing bus stops along Ironbridge Road. The detail of these pedestrian improvements would be agreed through a Section 278 Agreement.

Right of Way number 136 (Madeley) ran through the middle of the site, although it was not surfaced or directed. It was considered that, in the interests of safety, security and the efficient operation of the new combined facility, this should be closed. A School Travel Plan Framework had been set out so that a relevant Plan could be developed by the school.

Part of the Abraham Darby Sports & Learning Community site was designated within the Wrekin Local Plan as part of the 'green network'. A copy of the Green Network Plan relating to this application had been appended to the update report for information but Members were reminded that this matter of principle had been resolved in the approval of outline planning permission by the Plans Board on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

Whilst there would be an overall net gain of open space as part of the proposed development, there would be some loss of usable playing field. However, part of this would be as a result of a greater range of outdoor sports provision being re-provided, the new indoor facilities as part of the Leisure Centre and the improvement to quality and drainage. It was, therefore, the Local Planning Authority's opinion supported by Sport England, that this outweighed any concerns about a loss of playing field space.

With regard to landscape, the Tree Protection Plan/Bat Mitigation Plan associated with the proposal demonstrated that the mature trees present along the boundary of the site would be retained, with the exception of a small number of trees located at the pedestrian entrance to the Academy. Similarly, the boundary hedgerow would be retained with the exception of new access points into the site, which would create a strong link with the existing woodland to the north of Ironbridge Road. A large number of trees would also be retained across the site and native tree and shrub planting in the form of woodland infrastructure planting would be planted to reinforce the existing vegetation. The proposal would not, therefore, adversely impact on protected species and mitigation of any identified risks would be addressed in line with the local policy context and PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

While any development of this scale would have a significant impact upon its surroundings, the proposal was a replacement for a facility that already made a significant impact. The existing school had grown and developed over the years and as a result was rather disjointed and parts of the building were at the end of their usable life. However, the proposal had been designed to reduce its impact as much as possible whilst being a modern joined-up facility that should be a significant improvement visually to the existing buildings.

A Lighting Strategy had been submitted as part of the planning application, although the detailed design was to be finalised. Given the site's prominent position it had been confirmed that the proposal did not include any floodlighting to sports pitches or any feature lighting to highlight the buildings. The proposed lighting scheme had been designed to have minimal impact on the surrounding environment and the

exterior lighting installation work would be within British Standard parameters and criteria. In addition, the principles of Secured by Design, supporting natural surveillance and security on the site would be applied to the overall lighting design strategy for the proposal.

With regard to the operating noise of the site: the building would be constructed in accordance with current acoustic standards. Background noise levels had been used to determine suitable limits for plant/external plant terminations in order to prevent disturbance at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. There were currently outdoor activities at the site, which would continue, and it was considered that any increase in activity and associated noise would not adversely affect adjacent users.

The update report tabled at the meeting set out a number of comments made by the applicant's agent for the Board's further information. In presenting the report, the Planning Officer informed the Board that the Principal of the Academy wished to emphasise the importance of having secure perimeter fencing, which was an Ofsted requirement. The Council's Highways Engineer had also requested the imposition of additional conditions relating to the extension of the footway south of Ironbridge Road.

Councillor G.M. Green, Ward Member for Madeley, welcomed the inclusion of No. 9 Ironbridge Road into the application site. Other Members spoke in support of the application which they were pleased to see coming to fruition.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/1005 delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning & Transport to grant full planning permission subject to appropriate conditions as set out in draft in the main report and an additional highway condition pertaining to the widening of the footpath on the southern side of Ironbridge Road.**

(Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher returned the room and resumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting).

- (c) W2009/1078 – The Stables Flat, Greenacre Farm, 13 Crudgington Green, Crudgington, Shropshire

The Chairman informed the Board that this application needed to be deferred to allow for a separate application relating to a change of use of the land to be submitted.

**RESOLVED – that determination of planning application W2009/1078 be deferred to enable officers to make further enquiries with regard to the appropriate designation of the land.**

- (d) W2009/1107 – Former Watkins Nursery, Apley Castle, Leegomery, Telford, Shropshire

The proposal was for the partial demolition of the west wall to create a pedestrian and vehicle access in association with the development for the erection of 18 dwellings within the listed walled kitchen garden (W2009/011). The wall was

approximately 4 metres in height and was largely in good condition. There was an existing access point on the northern elevation, which was previously used as access to the Nursery.

It was considered that this was the preferred location for access to the site, as it would have a more limited impact on the character and appearance of the area. This location would result in a loss of approximately 6% of the wall's total length which was the minimum amount to meet adoptable road standards and have adequate pedestrian access. Any alteration to the existing access would be unacceptable, as this elevation was dominant within the street scene, and would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. The proposed scale of demolition was appropriate and an element of rebuild would be required. In addition, salvaged brick work would be used to replace damaged areas of brickwork which had been highlighted by the architectural survey and conditions report as submitted with the application. The proposal also sought to improve the northern elevation fronting the road by removing an existing canopy and making repairs. Furthermore, the proposal included strengthening, as necessary and identified in reports submitted with the application, to ensure the long term survival of the wall.

Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council had submitted an objection on the grounds that the proposed demolition of a section of the south-west corner of the wall to provide access for a new dwelling was not necessary. The update report tabled at the meeting informed the Board that the Conservation Officer's comments with regard to the justification statement submitted by the applicant had been considered in accordance with the new national guidance for the Historic Environment, PPS5, which had been issued since drafting of the main report. An additional condition relating to the details of repair to preserve the character and appearance of the Listed wall was also set out in the update report.

**RESOLVED** – that the Head of Planning & Transport be granted delegated authority to grant Listed Building Consent subject to the conditions as set out in the report and to the additional condition relating to details of repair to preserve the character and appearance of the wall, as set out in the update report tabled at the meeting.

(e) W2010/0011 – Former Watkins Nursery, Apley Castle, Leegomery, Telford, Shropshire

The proposal is for the erection of 18 dwellings within the Listed walled kitchen garden together with the construction of a new vehicular and pedestrian access through demolishing part of the west wall of the kitchen garden wall and provision of additional parking spaces off Apley Castle. Following discussions with officers, the proposal had been amended to exclude the conversion and extension of the lean-to Listed Building to allow for additional bat survey work to take place at the appropriate time of year. A proposed additional detached dwelling unit to the south of the site falling outside the kitchen garden wall had also been omitted from the drawings submitted as part of the initial application as this would have necessitated creating a second break in the Listed kitchen garden wall.

The application site was located within the built-up area of Telford and was

approximately 0.4 hectares in size. Whilst the proposal did not strictly meet the relevant criteria relating to housing development on sites of up to 1 hectare, in this case the development related to a Grade II Listed Wall and, officers, therefore, considered that the long term security of the Listed Building and kitchen garden wall might benefit from this development. Accordingly, the proposal was acceptable in principle and was generally in accordance with 'saved' Policy H6 of Wrekin Local Plan.

It is considered that the access would provide reasonable highway standards and be designed as a shared courtyard to give a low-key highway solution in keeping with the Listed structures. The update report tabled at the meeting informed the Board that the Council's Highways Officer was satisfied that the detail submitted were sufficient to ensure that refuse vehicles could access the site and turn to leave in forward gear. He had no objections in principle subject to conditions regarding parking and loading, access prior to other operations and details of a new road and footway and an informative regarding permission. In addition, Members were asked to note that there would be adequate garden space for refuse bins to be located within gardens rather than in a separate storage space.

Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council had submitted objections to the application, as set out under W2009/1107, and was please to note that the dwelling outside the Listed wall and the second breach of the wall had now been omitted. However, its comments relating to other issues still remained. Councillor K. Blundell, Ward Member for Apley Castle, had submitted an objection to both applications relating to the proposed demolition of the Listed wall on the south side of the development to make way for a single dwelling. The update report tabled at the meeting set out in detail her objections, including one relating to parking provision. In response the Planning Officer had stated that this related to 6 spaces in front of the wall, currently used for parking. The proposal would alter the layout of the spaces to ensure that cars did not overhang the footpath, a current issue, which would be reinforced through appropriate boundary treatment, as set out in the update report.

The development would be contained within the existing walled garden, the height of which and the level of separation distance from existing properties would ensure that the new development would not have an adverse impact on adjacent properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light or loss of privacy. The layout of the development was based around a courtyard style development, which had been identified as an appropriate form of development in this unique setting by the Council's Urban Designer. Amended plans had been received to change the siting and style of plots 4 to 7 to reinforce the courtyard approach and to remove the standard sub-urban form previously proposed and also to remove the additional dwelling proposed outside the wall.

The detailing of the buildings, with window cill details, timber windows, corbelled eaves, window headers and plain roof tiles, was reflective of the existing Listed lean-to barns and was considered appropriate and in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the Listed Building. The plot division and landscaping with use of walls, estate fencing etc. all reinforced the courtyard style of development and complemented and reinforced the context of this unique development within the walled garden. Accordingly, the development was

considered to comply with 'saved' policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and policy CS15 of the LDF Core Strategy.

The scale of development would have an impact upon existing education and leisure provisions and a contribution of £36,101.79 was required for primary education I and a contribution of £10,200 for improvements to leisure and recreation facilities in the local vicinity, as no play facility was to be provided as part of the development. As the development was for more than 15 dwellings Policy H23 sought to secure affordable housing and, due to the issues relating to the renovation of the Listed Wall and associated costs, evidence had been provided to demonstrate that a reduction in the level of affordable housing to one dwelling, which was to be a shared ownership tenure, would be appropriate. Following publication of the main report, continuing negotiations with regards to the contribution for primary education had result in this figure being revised down to £27,600. For the Board's clarification the leisure contributions of £600 per dwelling would be required for all properties of 2 or more bedrooms, including affordable dwellings. The recommendation before the Board had, therefore, been amended to reflect these two changes.

Councillor R.G. Chaplin commented that she was sad to the closure of the Nursery and stressed the need for the development to be sympathetic to the existing dwellings in the vicinity, to take great care of the access arrangements and for adequate parking to be provided.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2010/0011 the Head of Planning & Transport be given delegated authority to grant planning permission upon the signing of a Section 106 Agreement for £27,600 for primary education, £600 per dwelling (including affordable) for leisure and recreation and one affordable dwelling to be shared ownership tenure and subject to the conditions as set out in the update report tabled at the meeting.**

(f) W2010/0017 – Land at Isombridge Farm, Isombridge, Shropshire

This application sought full planning permission for the conversion of a redundant farm building into a 3-bedroom, self contained dwelling. The applicant's agent had advised that the reason for the application was that the existing farmhouse was too large for the applicant and his sister, who required ground floor accommodation due to a disability. The buildings were positioned close to the main farmhouse and opposite the existing cattle sheds beyond the farm track/Definitive Right of Way. The farmhouse fronted the highway with an adjacent row of 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed cottages which, together with the adjacent barn were Grade II listed buildings.

As set out in the report, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy which, for consistency with the spatial development strategy, stated that housing needs in the rural area would be met by approximately 170 new dwellings, a threshold which had already been met by dwellings already built or having received planning permission. In addition, Policy CS7 stated that development within the rural area should be focussed on the three key settlements of High Ercall, Tibberton and Waters Upton. Isombridge was not one of these and neither did it constitute one of the 13 suitable settlements in Policy H9 of the Wrekin Local Plan (superseded by

CS7). Therefore, any new residential development would be limited to agricultural, forestry or other occupational dwellings or affordable housing, having regard to national policy guidance but this proposal had not been identified as any of these exceptions.

Regard had also to be taken of Policy H18 of the Wrekin Local Plan, which stated that the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use in the rural area would be strictly controlled by defined criteria, as set out in the report. Where a proposal was outside of the three key settlement areas, the conversion of non-residential buildings would only be permitted where the Council considered the buildings to be of sufficient architectural or historic merit, made a significant contribution to the character of the local area, or the dwelling was required to provide accommodation for an agricultural or forestry worker.

The application stated that the buildings were of sufficient architectural or historic merit, however they were not listed or locally listed, and the Council's Conservation Officer had assessed the buildings and considered that they were of no architectural merit or historic merit. Thus, whilst the application had demonstrated marketing of the buildings, this would have been to meet the criteria for conversions in the list of suitable settlements, which did not include Isombridge, and the buildings were not deemed to be of sufficient merit to justify conversion. Furthermore, there were no exceptional planning circumstances for the conversion of the building to a dwelling.

Following discussions between the architect and the Council's Conservation Officer, amended plans had been submitted, which proposed the retention of the pig sties and utilisation of the existing garage. Whilst this was an improvement to the original submission, officers remained of the view that the principle of new residential development in an unsustainable rural location and the fact that the buildings were not of such significant architectural or historic merit to justify retention and conversion to residential use had not overcome the fundamental policy issues.

Rodington Parish Council supported the application, stating that, whether or not the site was within the Core Strategy, it was meeting the local need for housing and specialist facilities needed by the applicant.

Councillor J.M. Seymour, Ward member, was invited to address the Board and spoke in support of the applicant. She informed the Board that the applicant was the head of a farming family that had been resident at Isombridge Farm for nearly 100 years. The applicant currently lived in the farmhouse but now that he was semi-retired he wished to move into the proposed property together with this disabled sister. His nephew, who had a growing family, would move into the vacated farmhouse. The applicant's agent believed that all the properties on the farm belonged to and were occupied by members of this actively farming family and could not be sold on independently.

Councillor Seymour further represented the agent in noting that she was led to believe that the The applicant had previously had a site visit with a Planning Officer who had advised him to give consideration to converting these particular buildings. Given Core Strategy Policies CS1 and CS7 and the difficulties of building new properties in rural areas outside of the main settlements and following the approval

on appeal of the barn conversions at Longdon-on-Tern the applicant's planning advisor and architect had ensured that a thorough process took place to establish a sound basis for this application. Throughout the application process no particular issues were brought to the applicant's attention until the application was referred to the Conservation Officer who indicated 'a lack of support' for the historical and architectural merit of the application. In view the agent's comments, Councillor Seymour asked that the Board consider making a site visit before determining the application.

Members made reference to a letter they had all received from the applicant's solicitor a copy of which had not been seen by the planning officers. The Head of Planning & Transport said that in view of this new information it would be helpful to defer the application and make a site visit before determining this application. He added that while Councillor Seymour had made reference to a number of farming issues but none of these had been mentioned by the applicant in support of the application.

**RESOLVED – that determination of planning application W2010/0017 be deferred until the meeting of the Plans Board on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010 to allow Members to make a site visit.**

(g) W2010/0029 – Unit 10, Telford Forge Retail Park, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire

The Chairman informed the Board that officers had advised him that this application and the associated application, W2010/0030 should be deferred until the next meeting of the Plans Board to enable a technical issue to be resolved.

**RESOLVED – that planning application W2010/0029 be deferred until the meeting of the Plans Board on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010.**

(h) W2010/0030 – Unit 10, Telford Forge Retail Park, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire

**RESOLVED – that planning application W2010/0030 be deferred to the meeting of the Plans Board on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010.**

(Councillor G.M. Green having declared an interest in the following application left the room during determination thereof.)

(i) W2009/0039 – Red Lion Public House, Park Street, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

This application sought planning permission for the change of use of the existing Red Lion Public House (A4 use class) to a Veterinary practice (Sui Generis) to enable the relocation of the existing Old Pound Vets practice from No.44 Park Street to these larger premises with improved facilities.

Madeley Parish Council had made a response stating that it might be necessary to establish that there was a local need for the facility and that it would not have

adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residential dwellings in terms of the comings and goings of clients and vehicles. If approved, the premises should be conditioned that it provided consultation and treatment for only small domestic animals. Councillor A.A. Mackenzie, Ward Member for Cuckoo Oak, had stated that this public house was a community facility the loss of which would have an effect on the local community and exacerbate traffic problems. Four letters of objection had been, as summarised in the main report. In addition, one letter had been submitted confirming no objection to the change of use, but querying work to a wall at an adjacent site and boundary dispute; however this was a civil matter.

The Design & Access Statement submitted with the application asserted that the Vets practice would treat small domestic animals, principally cats and dogs, and would enable minor and emergency surgery to take place. The relocation of the Vets to the larger premises with greater parking provision would enable an increase in the number of consultations from 25 currently to 32 from Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6.30 p.m., and an additional 24 consultations on Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. No external changes were proposed to the building and minor internal alterations would include the creation of reception, waiting area, 2 consultancy rooms and a dispensary. Theatre and kennels would be located at first floor level above the existing store with the existing first floor serving as a staff room and overnight facilities in association with the Veterinary practice. The Agent had confirmed that there would be no overnight accommodation of animals, and that emergency operations out of hours would be carried out at the Much Wenlock practice.

Officers considered that the change of use of the public house to a Veterinary practice would not constitute the loss of a community facility, as outlined in CS10 of the Core Strategy, as the function of the building would remain as a commercial use and there were a number of other commercial premises within Park Street and other public houses within Madeley. The Park Inn, the adjacent public house on Park Street was currently vacant, however it was not for sale and the 5 year tenancy agreement would not be suitable for the applicants' requirements.

This Veterinary practice was already located on Park Street and provided a service to the local community. With regard to the vehicle movements and parking provision associated with its expansion, the Highways Engineer had raised no objection. Furthermore, it was considered that it would not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the adjoining properties on Park Street by virtue of the hours of opening, which would be significantly shorter than those of the Red Lion Public House. Thus, whilst the proposed use might create more traffic movements, the opening hours of the practice would cause far less noise and disturbance in the evenings or at night.

As the application proposed no external changes to the building, therefore the development would not affect the existing character or appearance of the building or the streetscene and area.

The update report tabled at the meeting included a indicating the location of the existing Old Pound Veterinary Practice in relation to its proposed relocation to the adjacent Public House on Park Street. The Agent had sought clarification from the

Veterinary Practice with regard to ensuring that no activities occurred outside the opening hours proposed on the application and they had responded that if there was a major emergency and it was in the animal's best interests, it would be treated out of the opening hours proposed. In addition, as the existing Veterinary Practice had no restriction on opening hours although it was attached to a residential property and there would be no increase in the number of consultation/treatment rooms, they had queried why a restrictive hours condition was required. In response officers considered that, in order to maintain the residential amenity of the area, it was necessary to impose a condition to restrict the hours of opening, as set out in the update report, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This would enable officers to re-assess opening hours if necessary.

Councillor A.A. Mackenzie, Member for the adjoining Ward of Cuckoo Oak, was invited to address the Board and tabled a number of relevant photographs. He did not support the application on the grounds he considered there was sufficient land to the rear of the existing Veterinary Practice to accommodate an extension to the facilities rather than moving to the proposed site, which was still a viable business. In addition, this particular public house was a community asset which raised money for a number of charities and should be retained in view of the number of other public houses in the area which were closing. Councillor Mackenzie was also concerned at the potential impact of the proposal upon the existing traffic on Park Street which he considered had been increasing for some time and asked the Board to consider making a site visit before determining the application.

In response the Highways Engineer said that a signing scheme was required in this part of Madeley which would direct through traffic via Parkway rather than Park Street. In addition, the new Tesco Supermarket provided 200 parking spaces with no restrictions on use, therefore there was no need for Park Street to be used for parking. The Planning Officer responded to Councillor Mackenzie's comments by saying that, while the loss of a public house was regrettable, there was no reason based upon planning policy for refusing the application, which would be difficult to uphold at appeal. In addition, legal advice had been sought which had confirmed that a veterinary practice was classed as a community facility. The Head of Planning & Transport advised the Board of the need to focus upon planning issues in determining this application.

On being put to the vote, the Board was not in favour of making a site visit.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2010/0039 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the main report and the update report tabled at the meeting.**

(Councillor Green returned to the meeting)

(j) W2010/0085 – Land at 4 Merlin Coppice, Leegomery, Telford, Shropshire

This was a retrospective application for the conversion of the detached double garage into living accommodation, which the applicant had stated would be ancillary to the use of the house. In 2004 an enquiry had been made to the Planning Department regarding change of use of this garage and the owners had been

advised that this would only be acceptable if its use was incidental and ancillary to the occupation of the house. However, in 2005, following advertisement of the garage to rent as separate accommodation, a Planning Contravention Notice was served on the owners and the garage vacated. In late 2008 the letting of the garage was again brought to the Council's attention had which resulted in the serving of an Enforcement Notice in November 2008.

One letter had been received from a neighbour in Merlin Coppice objecting to the application on the grounds that the short term rental of the garage had resulted in parking problems, there were no other properties in multi-occupancy in the area, the garage should not have been converted and the proposal represented undesirable expansion of occupancy. The principle of the creation of a separate habitable unit occupied independently of the house was considered to be unacceptable in this area where subdivision within the curtilage of dwellings would harm local character and amenity. However, the applicant had now proposed that the converted garage would be occupied by a family member only.

With regard to the impact on the street scene, the appearance of the garage from the street was unchanged as the garage doors remained in place albeit now effectively cosmetic. The driveway was at least 12m. long which it was considered would provide adequate parking space to serve the dwelling and the annexe. Therefore, the converted garage had little additional impact on the street scene.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2010/0085 planning permission be granted subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement which would restrict the occupation of the converted garage to ancillary accommodation incidental to the house and prevent further subdivision or selling off separately and subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(k) W2010/0100 – Telford Town Park, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought planning permission for various improvement works to increase awareness of the heritage within the Town Park and educational and social facilities along with improvements in accessibility. These would be achieved through improvements to the entrances with better signage, the addition of new heritage and nature trails together with small activity and meeting areas in key areas around the park. The application arose out of Telford & Wrekin's 'Parks for People' Project Group, the aim of which was to encourage more use of the site for educational and leisure purposes.

Great Dawley Parish Council supported improvements to access but had raised concerns that the placing of a gateway under the Stirchley Lane railway bridge might suggest a movement of the boundary of the Park. However, it was noted that no such changes were part of this application. Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council had raised concerns over the proposed gateway off Stirchley Road adjacent to Stirchley Grange, as the road was used to access the dwellings at Grangemere along with the proposed dwellings at the Grange subject to a current application. However, the proposed archway would have sufficient room to allow large vehicles such as fire engines, coaches and refuse lorries to pass through.

Policy CS4 of the adopted Core Strategy stated that development should be encouraged that enhanced the role of the Telford Town Park as a valuable sport, recreational, open space and leisure asset for the Central Telford area. Policy LR1 of the Wrekin Local Plan supported the provision of community facilities whilst seeking to ensure they were in highly accessible locations, such as the Town Centre, Dawley Centre, and Stirchley Centre. In addition, Policy CS9 – Accessibility and Social Inclusion, aimed to ensure that everyone was afforded reasonable opportunity to access sports facilities, recreation and open space and sought the promotion of sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and walking through improved accessibility and signage. The application sought to improve signage throughout the Town Park to ensure the routes were well marked and to encourage usage. Concerns have been raised about the proposed access adjacent to Stirchley Grange,

The application would provide new community facilities through the multi-use games areas, meeting areas, trails along with learning zones and interpretation areas. Although some of this development was to be constructed on open space, the proposals were to provide significant community benefits through the provision of social, recreational and leisure facilities, in compliance with Policy CS11 – Open Space. As the proposal would take place within the Local Nature Reserve Policies, CS12 of the Core Strategy and OL2 of the Wrekin Local Plan were relevant, as they sought to ensure that these areas were protected and enhanced. The application had been accompanied by an ecological statement and the Council’s Environmental Planner had raised no objections subject to the placing of a condition with regards to a method statement being submitted.

All of the Town Park was situated within the Green Network and the proposed development complied with Policies OL3 and OL4 of the Wrekin Local plan as they were complimentary to the aims of the Green Network and the provision community facilities were an integral part of the proposal. The proposed development would help to protect and enhance the cultural and historic environment of the area by increasing awareness and protecting the heritage assets, such as the locally listed Stirchley Chimney, therefore, the proposed alterations would comply with Policy CS14 by helping to underpin the overall quality of life for the community and visitors alike.

Policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan sets out a design criteria for developments within the Borough, which the proposed improvement works complied with. The proposal would integrate and respect the wider setting by making the Park and its facilities more accessible to the neighbouring communities whilst the new facilities would be based far enough away from neighbouring properties so as not to be detrimental to their amenities. The development would also enhance local features of architectural, historical, landscape and nature conservation value, such as Stirchley Chimney. Finally, the increasing signage for the routes through the Park would maximise permeability and reinforce existing movement patterns.

The update sheet tabled at the meeting made reference to the concerns raised by the Highways Officer relating to structures crossing the highway, namely Dark Lane, Stirchley Grange and the Silkin Way Bridge, which would require a Section 178

licence to be granted under the Highways Act 1980 and to be shown as an informative on the approval. The Highways Officer had also recommended that conditions be attached to the approval requiring the applicant to demonstrate that the height clearance and the structures were acceptable for vehicles using the routes on which they impacted and to ensure they were constructed in a safe manner including foundations; an issue relating to building regulations control. It was also general practice to indicate the clearance height of any structure over a highway if it was less than 5.03m by means of a hanging sign attached to the underside of the arch and this would need to be conditioned unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Members were, therefore, advised that the conditions and informatives set out on the update sheet should be amended to read:

- 1 – Archaeological watching brief
- 2 – Highways condition with regards to access by emergency vehicles
- 3 – Highways informatives with regards to highways licences

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2010/0100 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the main report and the update report tabled at the meeting.

(l) W2010/0100 – Apley Castle Woods, Apley, Leegomery, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application by Telford & Wrekin Council for the installation of an ‘eco toilet’ among trees near to the entrance of this part of the woodland at the eastern end of Apley Castle. The size of the eco toilet would be 2.2m. x 1.64m. and 2.2m. high, which would allow for wheelchair access. It would have a mono-pitch roof with ventilation pipe and, externally, would be finished in dark grey cladding. The installation would be a composting, urine-separating toilet with waste being composted in the underground storage chambers, which would be emptied approximately once a year/every 18 months based on its intended usage. The unit would be self-contained with no water supply required.

The toilet would provide an essential facility for those working on the improvement and management of the woodland as well as contributing to improved access to this woodland for community and education groups. Through the emptying of waste it would also provide natural composting. The toilet would not be for use by the general public and access would be limited to designated key holders.

Given that this area of woodland provided an area of high amenity value in relative close proximity to residential parts of north Telford, the main issue was the visual impact of the toilet installation. The proposed site did not immediately adjoin the footpath and had been chosen so that the toilet would be relatively unobtrusive and naturally screened amongst verdant surroundings. Further planting was intended to reduce its visual impact and, therefore, the structure would not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area. Therefore, the siting of the toilet would generally accord with the objectives of Green Network Policy, as contained in Policies OL3 and OL4; by providing environmental and community benefits and with a size and appearance which would not significantly affect the function and appearance of the Green Network.

One letter has been received from a nearby resident in support of the application.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2010/0124 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(m) W2010/0126 – Lord Hill Public House, High Street, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application by Telford & Wrekin Council for a temporary two year change of use of the former public house to use class B1 business (offices). The building was currently vacant and it was proposed to operate the former public house as site offices, meeting rooms and public displays in relation to the Dawley Regeneration projects.

The building was currently a vacant public house with bar, kitchens and toilet facilities at ground floor and living accommodation including kitchen and bathroom at first floor. The proposal would involve minimal disruption to the general layout of the building by re-using existing kitchen and toilet facilities, whilst converting the bar and lounge area at ground floor to office space and public meeting areas, with conferences space and meeting rooms on the upper floors. There was existing parking associated with the building which the proposed use would utilise. The Highways Engineer had raised no objection to the proposal.

There would be no external alternations to the building and, therefore, no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building and the proposal would have no adverse impact on the amenities of the adjacent properties.

As the site was within the secondary retail zone of Dawley, B1 office use at ground floor would be a permitted change, subject to size, design and impact on the centre being acceptable, in accordance with saved Policy S19. It was considered that the re-use of the property would be of benefit to the High Street and the B1 office use would not undermine the vitality and viability of the primary retail zone. In addition, it would help to preserve a vacant building while decisions were made as to its ultimate use. Long term, the building could revert back to an A4 public house use.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2010/0126 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(n) W2010/0133 – Charlton GM School, Severn Drive, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought approval for the change of use of open land, comprising a grassed area to the front of the school, to a car parking area to provide an additional 32 spaces for school staff. Retrospective permission had recently been granted for a similar proposal for a temporary car park on the site and this current application would provide a permanent solution to the existing problems of insufficient parking.

As there were 102 full time members of staff at the school with a current provision of 47 parking spaces and 2 disabled parking spaces, the proposed car park would help

to alleviate problems of double parking within the existing car park and on-street parking on adjoining residential streets; although it would still constitute a shortfall of more than 60 spaces to the requirements of the Parking Standards identified in the Wrekin Local Plan.

The parking area would be of a standard design and materials with tarmac surfacing, which would be in keeping with the existing parking and drive access. The level of the car park would be slightly lower than the existing ground level to reduce the visual impact of the tarmaced area at the front of the school site and in the streetscene. Its position would require the removal of existing trees and vegetation, although the majority of the trees on the site would be retained and enhanced with the addition of 9 further trees.

The proposal would not lead to a significant loss of open space or a loss of playing field, as this site did not constitute playing field area to the school. Members noted that the existing Travel Plan for the school had not been updated since 2004 and it would, therefore, be necessary to condition that an updated Green Travel Plan be carried out to include assessment of staff travel and parking need, as well as consideration of alternative, sustainable travel modes. Following discussion with the Highways Engineer, officers considered that this should not be a pre-commencement condition, as a rapid resolution to the current parking shortfall and congestion on adjacent streets was required. Therefore, it was suggested that the Green Travel Plan be submitted within 3 months of commencement of the development.

The update report tabled at the meeting confirmed that the Council's Drainage Engineer had no objections to the proposal and included a plan indicating the existing and proposed car parking areas at the school for Members' clarification.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W20100133 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

**PB-104      SITE VISITS**

**RESOLVED** – that a Site Visit be made in respect of planning application W2010/0017 at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2010.

**PB-105      PLANNING APPLICATIONS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

The Board received for information details of the planning applications dealt with under delegated power.

The meeting ended at 7.26 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....