

TWC/2015/0746

Meeting Point House, Southwater Way, Telford Town Centre, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4HS

Erection of a two storey front extension to create 3no. restaurants/cafes at ground floor level (Use Class A3) and theatre and meeting rooms/community space on first floor level (sui generis and mixed use B1/D2)

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council, James Dunn

RECEIVED

17/08/2015

PARISH

Great Dawley

WARD

Malinslee and Dawley Bank

OFFICER Steven Drury

THE APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO BE DETERMINED BY PLANNING COMMITTEE AS THE COUNCIL IS THE APPLICANT

1.0 PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a two storey extension to the front of Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre. The proposed building will contain 3 units at ground floor level for use as cafes and restaurants within the A3 use class and a mixed use space at first floor level comprising meeting rooms and a theatre.
- 1.2 The proposed extension will be erected on part of the grassed area to the front of the existing Meeting Point House. It will extend out from the front of Meeting Point House on the north west corner and will include alterations to the existing front elevation in order to integrate the proposal with the existing building. Outside seating will be provided along the front elevation. The building will comprise a total floor area of 634 square metres.
- 1.3 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is located in Telford Town Centre and comprises part of the Southwater development, a mixed use development comprising predominantly entertainment uses such as restaurants, bars and a cinema. The site sits on grassed area to the front of the existing Meeting Point House. It is located between the recently constructed multi storey car park the Premier Inn Hotel. The main pedestrian footway runs along the front of the site.
- 2.2 Meeting Point House is a two storey, mixed use building characterised by large areas of red framed glazing in the front elevation and a tiled pitched roof. The building is set well back from the main building line through the Southwater development.

- 2.3 Meeting Point House contains a mixture of uses including a café, small retail space and church at ground floor level and meeting rooms at first floor level which are available for public hire.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 TWC/2012/0008 - Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide a hotel, cinema, class A3/A4 floorspace, multi storey car park, class A1/A2/A3/B1 unit within the multi storey car park, replacement surface car park, public realm improvements and associated works including highway works – Granted 08/03/2012.
- 3.2 TWC/2011/0037 - Provision of public realm improvements to facilitate a new main street, new public squares and access to include street furniture, CCTV, lighting, flagpoles, boundary treatments, landscape improvements and water features and associated and ancillary works – Granted 10th March 2011.
- 3.3 W2009/0914 - Outline planning application with means of access (part) for a mixed use development comprising Offices and Civic offices (B1a/sui generis); Residential (C3) (up to 330 units); Retail, Cafes/Restaurants, Financial and Professional Services, Drinking Establishments (A1,A2,A3,A4); Learning and Media Centre (to include the replacement of Meeting Point House), Leisure Pool, Cinema, Hotels, Energy Centres, Conference and Event facilities including outdoor events space and a Medical Centre (C1, D1, D2 and sui generis); associated landscape improvements to the public realm, replacement and construction of Southwater Lake, boundary treatment and new and reconfigured access; construction of basement, undercroft, surface and multi storey car parking; and all associated and ancillary works. Retention, refurbishment and extension of the existing ice rink building and extension to bowling and bingo building. Retention of existing hotels (the Holiday Inn and International Hotel) and Event Centre – Granted 17th June 2010

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Telford & Wrekin Core Strategy:
CS2: Jobs
CS3: Telford
CS4: Central Telford
CS10: Community Facilities
CS14: Cultural, Historic and Built Environment
CS15 Urban Design
- 4.2 Wrekin Local Plan:
UD2: Design Criteria
TC1: Town Centre
TC3: Leisure Uses and A3 Uses
TC4: Mixed Use Development
TC14: Town Centre Design

- 4.3 Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP):
 - SA2: Southwater
 - CT1: Mixed Use
 - CT6a: Leisure, Culture and Tourism
 - CT6b: Establishing an Evening and Night Time Economy
 - CT6c: Managing the Evening and Night Time Economy
 - CT15: Design
 - CT17: Public Realm
 - CT18: Storey Heights and Tall Buildings

- 4.4 National Planning Policy Framework

5.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 Great Dawley Parish Council: No comment

5.2 Standard consultation responses

5.2.1 Urban Design: Comment

The application is essentially trying to promote improvements to a site and an existing building where the context has changed significantly, in order to try to integrate it back into its new surroundings. Unfortunately whether this is because of limitations imposed by the brief or the client, it is considered that the proposals are disappointing and not likely to maximise the key features and qualities of this site, for example relating to the adjacent green space and favourable southern orientation as well as looking at odds with neighbouring new development due to a disparity in scale.

In summary the application represents a missed opportunity to build on the success of Southwater 1 and it is most unfortunate that time was not afforded for pre-app consultation.

5.2.2 Public Protection (Pollution Control): Support

A suitably worded condition to control the extraction and dispersal of fumes and odours should be constructed

5.2.3 Drainage: Support

No objection subject to standard conditions requiring details of foul and surface water drainage.

5.2.4 Highways: No comment

5.2.5 Shropshire Fire Service: Comment

5.3 Neighbour consultation responses

- 5.3.1 One letter of objection received on behalf of Mecca Bingo Ltd, raising concerns that the proposal would harm the accessibility and visibility of their existing business, to the detriment of their business and the service they offer to the residents of Telford and the surrounding area.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development
- Suitability of Proposed Uses
- Design Issues
- Access and Parking
- Other Material Considerations

6.2 Principle of Development

6.2.1 In terms of relevant planning policies, Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Jobs) is supportive development which will deliver new jobs sufficient to create a dynamic and widely based economy in the Borough in order to meet the employment needs of the growing population. Policy CS3 (Telford) advises that Telford will be the focus for the majority of the Boroughs spatial development and Policy CS4 identifies Central Telford as a focus for creating more shops, homes, offices, cafes and restaurants, sport, recreation and leisure. CS4 also seeks to encourage people into the town centre at different times of the day and night.

6.2.2 Within the Wrekin Local Plan, Saved Policy TC1 (Town Centre) supports the provision of changes of use and new development which contributes towards its function as a multi-purpose sub regional centre. Saved Policy TC3 (Leisure Uses and A3 Uses) advocates support for leisure, food and drink uses within identified areas within the town centre and Policy TC4 (Mixed Use Development) supports the re-development of identified sites within the town centre, subject to achieving required design principles, secure enhancement of public open spaces and the provision of a range of uses.

6.2.3 The proposed development will provide a mixture of uses intended to complement the existing offer within the Southwater development and will therefore contribute to the aim of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre and by attracting people into the town centre of different times of the day and night. The proposal will also result in additional job generation and will provide a boost to the local economy.

6.2.4 The Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP) deals more specifically with sites within the town centre. With specific regard to the Southwater area, the plan aims to redevelop the area with a mixture of uses, in order to create a focal point for the town. Policy SA2 identifies a range of key uses which will be supported within the area including leisure/recreation, cafes, restaurants and bars, events related uses, new hotels and community/civic uses. Proposals should contribute towards the vision of a vibrant mixed use heart to the town centre. Furthermore, CTAAP Policy CT6a indicates support for the provision of leisure, culture and tourism uses within the town centre area, provided they include a high quality public realm and integrate well with a range of other

uses. CTAAP also aims to establish an evening and night-time economy, providing an exciting leisure and cultural experience which will continue throughout the day-time, evening and into the night. Policy CT6b indicates support for appropriate use which will contribute to this aim, provided that they do not unacceptably impact upon neighbouring uses by reason of noise and light pollution, disturbance or traffic. Policy CT6c concerns the management of the evening and night-time economy and requires planning applications and permissions to take into account appropriate design and controls to ensure relevant premises remain open in the daytime to avoid dead frontages and to secure closing times when appropriate.

- 6.2.5 Again, the proposal will provide a mixture of uses, which are considered appropriate and will complement the existing offer in the Southwater development. The types of uses proposed will include leisure, cultural and community uses which could be used by a broad spectrum of the local community and will encourage activity throughout the daytime and evening. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the aims of the relevant policies within CTAAP, the Core Strategy and the Wrekin Local Plan and is considered acceptable in principle.

6.3 Design Issues

- 6.3.1 The proposed extension will be erected upon what is currently part of a small grassed square in front of the existing Meeting Point House. The proposal will consist of a two storey, flat roofed building rising to a height of 10.5 metres. The building will contain a mixed palette of materials and has been designed to fit within the modern context of the Southwater development. The front elevation will contain a vertical emphasis with full height columns, clad in timber effect or dark grey render separated by recessed area. At ground floor level, the recesses will contain bi-fold doors acting as the main frontage to the units. At first floor level, the recessed areas will be clad in zinc panels which will be illuminated at night time to enhance its effect. Fascia panels will be provided in a Grey Trespa cladding which has been reduced in depth at the request of officers, in order to increase the height of the ground floor to better reflect the adjacent buildings in Southwater. The south side elevation will also contain a vertical emphasis, generated by sections of full vertical cladding, interspersed with glazing and zinc panels. The whole elevation will be surrounded by dark grey render. At the request of officers, this elevation has been amended to provide full height glazed panels, in order to provide a greater degree of activity within this frontage.
- 6.3.2 The building will be attached to the front of Meeting Point House which is a distinctive two storey building characterised by red framed glazing. In order to accommodate the proposal, alterations will therefore be carried out to the front elevation of Meeting Point House, involving the provision of timber effect cladding and dark grey render at first floor level.
- 6.3.3 Officers have raised concerns regarding the scale of the building which it is considered would sit too low in relation to those surrounding it. In particular, the multi-storey car park and Premier Inn are significantly taller buildings and

it is considered that the proposed building may appear out of place within the street scene. Having discussed these concerns with the agent, there is no scope to provide a taller building on site and the requirement to align with floor levels within Meeting Point House provides a further limitation to the development. Any significantly taller building could not be provided on the site as it would have an overbearing impact upon and appear out of proportion with the existing Meeting Point House. Therefore, although significantly lower than the two buildings either side, on balance it is considered that the proposed building would be acceptable in terms of its height and scale.

- 6.3.4 With regard to the treatment of the building, it is felt that the palette of materials used would complement the existing range and modern character within the wider Southwater development. The use of Timber effect Trespa cladding will introduce a new material and feature within the Southwater street scene, but is considered to be an appropriate addition. The Councils aim is to provide an attractive, distinct and recognisable town centre through the use of contemporary architecture and it is therefore considered that the proposal meets the requirements of CTAAP Policy CT17 in addition to Policies UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and CS15 of the Core Strategy.
- 6.3.5 The front of the building will be set marginally back from the front of the adjacent multi-storey car park and Premier Inn but will essentially maintain the building line along the east side of the footway. Outside seating will be provided in front of the building, however, no details have been submitted with the application. The appearance of the outside seating area is likely to have a significant impact upon the appearance of the development and needs to be considered as part of the overall design for the site. The agent has advised that until tenants are known, such details cannot be provided. This will therefore need to be requested as a condition of any planning permission granted
- 6.3.6 The location of plant and machinery such as air conditioning units can also have an impact upon the appearance of the building and also need to be considered as part of the design. The agent has confirmed that all plant will be provided behind a 1.1m high parapet wall on the roof of the building which will be sufficient to screen such items from view. Again, further details will need to be requested as a condition and will be provided once the tenant is known. Similarly details of extraction equipment will also need to be requested as a condition.

6.4 **Suitability of Proposed Uses**

- 6.4.1 The proposed development will provide a mixture of uses which are considered to be appropriate for a town centre use and compatible with existing uses within the Southwater development. At first floor level, the provision of meeting spaces and a theatre area will assist in the Councils aim to provide community and cultural facilities within the town centre and will increase the range of facilities on offer within Southwater.

6.4.2 The Premier Inn Hotel is located immediately to the south of the site and is a potentially sensitive receptor given that hotel guests could potentially be disturbed by the development of the site. However, having regard to the nature of the proposed uses, it is unlikely that unacceptable levels of noise, disturbance, odour or anti-social behaviour would be likely to occur. Furthermore, given the level of background activity taking place within the Southwater development, guests at the hotel should be prepared to tolerate a certain level of background noise taking place.

6.4.3 Notwithstanding the above, in order to avoid the proposed uses occurring at unreasonable hours, an hours condition can be placed upon any planning permission granted. Furthermore, hours restrictions can also be placed upon the construction process as part of the Construction Management Plan in order to protect the amenities of guests within the adjacent hotel.

6.5 Highways and Access

6.5.1 The site will be easily accessible for members of the public. The development will be accessed from the front as part of the wider Southwater development. Deliveries will be provided to the rear of the building via the existing car park used by Meeting Point House. The car park will not, however, be used by the development. Instead, arrangements will be made for staff to park within the adjacent multi-storey car park.

6.5.2 The site is located within the town centre and is therefore easily accessible by a range of sustainable transport measures. A number of public car parks are located within close proximity to the site.

6.5.3 The application has been assessed by the Council's Highways Officers who raise no objection on technical highway grounds. The proposed development will not result in any adverse impact upon highway or pedestrian safety.

6.6 Other Matters

6.6.1 Drainage:

The application has been inspected by the Council's Drainage Engineers who raise no objection subject to the attachment of conditions to any planning approval requiring the submission of details of methods of foul and surface water drainage, to be agreed prior to the commencement of development on site.

6.6.2 Odour and Fumes:

The Council's Public Protection Officer has inspected the proposal in respect of odour emissions and raises no objection subject to the attachment of a condition requiring the submission of details of any extraction equipment to be installed.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposed development would result in the provision of a suitable and appropriate mixture of uses which will complement the range of existing

leisure uses within Southwater and the wider town centre area. The proposed uses will contribute to the aim of providing an evening and night time economy within the town centre through the provision of cultural and leisure uses.

- 7.2 The site occupies a prominent location adjacent a busy pedestrian route from the shopping centre to Southwater and the town park beyond. The building will abut the edge of the footway and will therefore be clearly visible within the street scene. Officers have raised concerns that the scale and height of the building would not be in keeping with taller buildings adjacent but the building's height is constrained by the height of the existing Meeting Point House. Attempts have been made to give the building a vertical emphasis through the use of vertical columns and the design will incorporate a mixed pallet of materials which will help to achieve an attractive, distinct and recognisable appearance, in accordance with the aims of CTAAP. On balance, officers feel that the proposed design is acceptable and will accord with the requirements of Policies within the Core Strategy, Wrekin Local Plan and CTAAP.
- 7.3 The building will be provided in an easily accessible location, close to public car parks and a range of sustainable transport links. Servicing and delivery arrangements are considered acceptable and the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon highway or pedestrian safety.
- 7.4 The proposed uses will not have an adverse impact upon the amenities of nearby existing uses and there are no issues identified which cannot reasonably be addressed or controlled through the use of conditions. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of relevant policies within the Core Strategy, Wrekin Local Plan, Central Telford Area Action Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that the Committee **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. A04 Time limit – 3 years
2. B011 Samples of Materials
3. B061 Foul and Surface Water
4. B082 Details of Plant and Machinery
5. B086 Details of extraction equipment
6. Bc01 Details of external lighting
7. B150 Site Environmental Management Plan
8. C009 Details of outside seating
9. C038 Development in accordance with the plans
10. D11 Open Hours

Informatives

- I40 Conditions

I41 Reason for Grant

I05 Advertisement requires consent

RANPPF1 Approval - National Planning Policy Framework.