

Development Management Committee

8 June 2016

Present: Councillor R Martins (Chair)
Councillor S Johnson (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D Barks, S Bashir, N Bell, A Joynes, J Maestas,
I Sharpe and M Watkin

Also present: Councillor Stephen Bolton

Officers: Development Management Section Head
Planning Officer
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Disclosure of Interests (if any)

There were none.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2016 were submitted and signed.

4 15/01759/FULM 1-7 Lord Street and 56-58 Queens Road

The committee received the report of the Head of Development Management, including the relevant planning history of the site and details of the responses to the application.

The Planning Officer introduced the item, explaining that the application proposed the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of 25 one and two bedroom apartments and commercial/retail uses on the ground floor.

It was reported that the committee had undertaken a site visit prior to the meeting.

The Chair invited Douglas Bond from Woolf Bond Planning to speak in support of the application. Mr Bond, the agent for the application, explained that there had

been considerable pre-application dialogue to agree a high quality, policy compliant development proposal.

The site was ideally suited to a mixed housing and retail development, and the developer had worked with officers to meet local residents' concerns and to optimise the number and type of affordable housing units. The current affordable housing proposals had the support of the Council's housing manager.

The Chair then invited Councillor Bolton, Central Ward Councillor, to speak to the committee. Councillor Bolton explained that whilst the principle of development was accepted, its current form was not. This area of the town had undergone considerable development in recent years and he was concerned about the on-going disruption to residents and businesses.

Councillor Bolton questioned the design of the proposed development, as well as its scale which seemed more in keeping with Beechen Grove rather than the adjacent Estcourt Conservation Area. It would result in a loss of amenity to local residents.

He also expressed concerns about: the loss of commercial space on the ground floor, which ran contrary to moves to increase commercial activity in the area; the size of some of the housing units, which fell short of national standards; and the potential loss of parking and loading spaces during construction.

In the event that planning permission were granted, Councillor Bolton requested that careful consideration be given to the street planting in front of the development.

In response to a request from the chair, the Planning Officer clarified that careful consideration had been given to the impact of the development on the neighbouring conservation area. The current proposal, including its roof line, had been approved by the Urban Design and Conservation Manager. He further explained the need to balance housing needs against the loss of a relatively small area of commercial space in the application.

The Chair invited comments from the committee.

Whilst welcoming development of the site and the improvement of the current proposal over previous applications, Committee members expressed some concerns. In particular, they had reservations about the percentage of affordable housing which fell short of the council's 35% target. Councillors did not wish to set a precedent at a time of acute housing shortage.

Concerns were also expressed about the shortfall on room sizes in some of the affordable housing units against minimum standards.

Addressing Councillors' concerns, the Head of Development Management explained that in order to make the development viable, a balance of material considerations had been taken into account during pre-application discussions. Despite the slight shortfall in the affordable housing target, the Housing Manager was content with the agreed number and mix of housing provision.

Committee members expressed the view that a completely car free development was unrealistic and some future occupants would own cars, despite the removal of permit entitlement in the surrounding parking zones under a section 106 planning obligation. Parking was an existing problem in the area. It was important to minimise any loss of loading and parking bays during construction.

In view of the central location of the development, there was some discussion about appropriate hours of working on the site. The Head of Development Management clarified that, whilst an informative had been added, the issue was covered more effectively by environmental health legislation.

Considering the street planting, Committee members acknowledged that negotiations would need to take place with the Highways Authority. However, it was proposed that proper planting arrangements at the front of the development should be secured through a Grampian condition.

The Chair moved the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to the completion of a planning obligation under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the following Heads of Terms, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

1. To secure 8 units as affordable housing to comprise 4 units for affordable rent at ground floor (2 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed) and 4 units for shared ownership on the upper floors.
2. To secure a financial payment to the Council of £2,000 towards the variation of the Borough of Watford (Watford Central Area and West Watford Area) (Controlled Parking Zones) (Consolidation) Order 2010 to exclude the site from the controlled parking zone, thereby preventing residents' parking permits being allocated to this site.

3. To secure the provision of fire hydrants as required by the County Council to serve the development.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

10205/PL001 Location plan
10205/PL002 Rev A Site plan
10205/PL003 Rev A Floor plans: ground, 1st & 2nd
10205/PL004 Floor plans; 3rd & roof
10205/PL005 Rev A Elevations & section
3. No construction works shall commence until details of the materials to be used for all the external finishes of the new building, including all external walls, roofs, doors, windows, balconies and privacy screens, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved materials.
4. No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.
5. No external plant or equipment shall be installed on the building unless details of the type, size, siting and noise levels of the plant or equipment have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plant or equipment shall only be installed in accordance with the approved details.
6. No development shall commence until details of the existing and proposed ground levels and the finished ground floor levels of the buildings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

7. No development shall take place on site until an off-site landscaping scheme; including details of soft and/or hard landscaping, maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years, and an implementation schedule; for landscape works in the immediate vicinity of the site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the approved implementation scheme, whichever is the later, and maintained in accordance with the agreed maintenance schedule.

Informatives

1. This planning permission is accompanied by a unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the provision of 22 affordable housing units and the necessary fire hydrants and exclusion from parking permit entitlement to serve the development.
2. In dealing with this application, Watford Borough Council has considered the proposal in a positive and proactive manner having regard to the policies of the development plan as well as paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations, and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, as amended. The Council also gave pre-application advice on the proposal prior to the submission of the application and undertook discussions with the applicant's agent during the application process.
3. Before commencing the development the applicant shall contact Hertfordshire County Council Highways (0300 123 4047) to obtain i) their permission / requirements regarding access for vehicles involved in the demolition of the existing building; ii) a condition survey of any adjacent highways which may be affected by construction vehicles together with an agreement with the highway authority that the developer will bear all costs in reinstating any damage to the highway.
4. The proposed development is liable for contributions under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Please contact the Planning Support Team at Watford Borough Council (telephone number: 01923 278327) if you have any queries about the CIL procedure and how CIL payments are collected.

5. Before commencing the development the applicant shall contact Hertfordshire County Council Highways (0300 123 4047) to obtain i) their permission/ requirements regarding access for vehicles involved in the construction of the development; ii) a condition survey of any adjacent highways which may be affected by construction vehicles together with an agreement with the highway authority that the developer will bear all costs in reinstating any damage to the highway.
6. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of Ground Water. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.
7. You are advised of the need to comply with the provisions of The Control of Pollution Act 1974 Part IV, The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Clean Air Act 1993 and The Environmental Protection Act 1990.
8. In order to minimise impact of noise and general construction work should be restricted to the following hours:
 - Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

 - Saturdays 8am to 1pm
 - Noisy work is prohibited on Sundays and bank holidays.
9. In the event that an acceptable planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has not been completed by 18th August 2016 in respect of the Heads of Terms set out above, the Development Management Section Head be authorised to refuse planning permission for the application for the following reasons:
 1. The proposal fails to make provision for affordable housing on-site and as such is contrary to Policy HS3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.
 2. The proposal would exacerbate demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone, which already experiences parking problems.

The proposal is therefore contrary to saved Policy T24 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

3. The proposal fails to make provision for fire hydrants to serve the development and as such is contrary to Policy INF1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and saved Policy H10 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

10. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the Hertfordshire County Council website at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

11. Before commencing the development the applicant shall contact Hertfordshire County Council Highways (0300 123 4047) to obtain i) their permission/ requirements regarding access for vehicles involved in the construction of the development; ii) a condition survey of any adjacent highways which may be affected by construction vehicles together with an agreement with the highway authority that the developer will bear all costs in reinstating any damage to the highway.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm
and finished at 8.22 pm