

PLANNING COMMITTEE 15 DECEMBER 2011

Present :- Councillor Ray Gamble* (Chairman)
Councillors Christopher Arnold*, Peter Chillingworth*,
John Elliott*, Stephen Ford, Peter Higgins*,
Theresa Higgins*, Jackie Maclean, Jon Manning and
Laura Sykes

Substitute Member :- Councillor Marcus Harrington
for Councillor Sonia Lewis*

(* Committee members who attended the formal site visit.)

98. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2011 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the words "or a small tree" being deleted from the second line of the fifth paragraph of minute no. 86.

99. 111927 Land to west of Boundary Road, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ

This application was withdrawn by the Head of Environmental and Protective Services to resolve issues raised by the Environment Agency.

100. 111981 Colchester Town Station, St Botolphs Circus, Colchester, CO2 7EF

The Committee considered an application for the development of the Colchester Town Railway Station approach area, including the removal of the parking area, to form a new pedestrian space. Works included new paving, lighting and bespoke artwork for seating, guarding/gates and feature rails, inset within the paving. The Committee had before it a report in which all information was set out, see also Amendment Sheet.

The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposal upon the locality and the suitability of the proposal for the site.

John More, Principal Planning Officer, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Neil Hopkins, Colchester Borough Council Regeneration Programme Co-ordinator, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in support of the application. The design had been worked up by Colchester Borough Council Urban Design Team in collaboration with an artist appointed to the project. He explained that cycle parking had not been included because there would be six cycle racks outside the magistrates' court. In discussions

with East Anglia Railway they had indicated that their preference would be for cycle racks to be provided on the railway platform rather than in the square. The objective was to make Colchester different and to create a space respected and cared for; the more high quality the space the better would be the social behaviour.

Members of the Committee had a number of concerns:-

- there was no drop-off point for taxis. There should be a drop off point within walking distance. Dropping people off in the roundabout was neither efficient nor safe. A nearby bus stop was suggested as a possible solution;
- the granite seating had no lumbar support and would be uncomfortable with the stud insets included. They were neither functional nor art;
- cycle racks should be provided within the square rather than on the railway platform. People may not feel they should park in the cycle racks outside the magistrates' court; cycles racks should be designed to keep cycles dry;
- the granite path in front of the old building leading to the platform should be made in a material other than granite; some members did not like all surfaces in granite;
- some members did not consider it appropriate for the Committee to comment on matters of taste; the area should be designed so that it could be used by all.

It was explained that cycle racks on the platform would be outside the red line of the application and therefore could not be conditioned. The situation would be the same for a taxi drop off point outside the red line area. The resurfacing material adjacent to the listed building would be granite sett. English Heritage were content with the use of granite and did not want the use of a range of different materials.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be deferred for investigations into the possibility of providing cycle racks on site, the provision of a taxi drop off point nearby or for signage to a nearby drop off point, and further consideration of the seating.

Councillor Ray Gamble, Councillor Peter Higgins, Councillor Theresa Higgins and Councillor Jon Manning (in respect of being acquainted with the public speaker) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

101. 091088/9 3-4 Greens Yard, Colchester, CO1 1QP

The Committee considered a listed building application, 091088, for the conversion of 4 Green's Yard into two separate dwellings including an associated loft conversion, together with a planning application, 091089, for the conversion of 4 Green's Yard into two separate dwellings. The Committee had before it a report in which all information was set out, see also Amendment Sheet.

The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposal upon the locality and the suitability of the proposal for the site.

Sue Jackson, Principal Planning Officer, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Josephine Hayes addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in opposition to the application. She explained the dates of origin of the cottages, the year they were listed and when the unauthorised alterations were undertaken. She referred to there being new render on the front and rear elevations, the use of softwood windows which she considered to be unsuitable, and to an inappropriate gas flue. She believed this case should be prosecuted and the application refused.

Arthur Clarke addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in support of the application. He intended to bring the property up to a modern standard and convert it into two homes. He believed he was not doing anything detrimental to the building. All the properties had been extended at the rear and he did not intend to do anything to the frontage.

Members of the Committee commented that this was a delightful terrace of cottages typical of the time they were built. It was advantageous that this cottage was being divided into two and that they were being brought up to date. The Committee had to consider the situation as it currently stands and ignore past problems. No concerns were expressed about the rear elevation, but it was considered important to retain the front facade as it should be. Mention was made of the possibility of removing the gas flue.

The planning officer explained that prosecution issues had been investigated thoroughly and had been resolved prior to her involvement. There was insufficient evidence about what the internal structure had been before the works were carried out. She considered it would be possible to discuss the gas flue with the applicant. In the event that the application was refused there would be enforcement issues but if it was approved there would be no enforcement issues. The Development Manager explained that the Unilateral Undertaking would have to be signed prior to any consents being given. It was also clarified that the application had been with the planning team for some time but as it addressed retrospective work to a listed building it was important to get the right resolution and not a quick answer, therefore the application had not been rushed even since the current case officer took it over from a former colleague in July.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that –

(a) Consideration of Listed Building application 091088 and Planning application 091089 be deferred for completion of a Unilateral Undertaking to provide for a contribution towards Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document.

(b) Upon receipt of a satisfactory Unilateral Undertaking, the Head of Environmental and Protective Services be authorised to grant consent with conditions and informatives as set out in the report and on the Amendment Sheet for Listed Building application 091088 and Planning application 091089, together with an

additional condition requiring re-positioning of a gas flue within the building if practicable.