

Planning Committee

Thursday, 14 June 2018

Attendees: Councillor Lyn Barton, Councillor Vic Flores, Councillor Pauline Hazell, Councillor Theresa Higgins, Councillor Brian Jarvis, Councillor Cyril Liddy, Councillor Derek Loveland, Councillor Jackie Maclean, Councillor Chris Pearson

Substitutes: No substitutes were recorded at the meeting

Also Present:

593 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Hazell be elected Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

594 Appointment of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Jarvis be elected Deputy Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

595 Site Visits

Councillors Barton, Flores, Hazell, Higgins, Jarvis, Liddy, Loveland and Maclean attended the site visits.

596 Minutes of 26 April 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

597 Minutes of 23 May 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

598 Minutes of 24 May 2018

Councillor Pearson was of the view that minute number 583, Appointment of Chairman, did not adequately reflect the clarification he was seeking in relation to Ian Vipond's

authority, as an officer, to act as the Chairman of the meeting.

RESOLVED that arrangements be made for minute no 583 to be redrafted and the consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

599 180719 Oaks Hospital, Oaks Place, Colchester

The Committee considered a planning application for a proposed new MRI side extension, theatre four and stores rear extension, re-siting of existing two storey porta-cabins and additional car parking at Oaks Hospital, Oaks Place, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because it had been called in by Councillor Goss. The Committee had before it a report and amendment sheet in which all information was set out. The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposals upon the locality and the suitability of the proposals for the site.

James Ryan, Principal Planning Officer, presented the report and, together with Simon Cairns, Development Manager, assisted the Committee in its deliberations.

Diana Thompson addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in opposition to the application. She explained that she was a resident of 114 Mile End Road, the back garden fence of which backed onto the hospital site. She was concerned about the car parking proposed for the development which would deliver a net gain of only four spaces. She considered this to be grossly inadequate given the incidences of cars parking on grass verges and on Mile End Road leading to restrictions on access for residents onto Mile End Road and from their rear gardens as well as cars driving round and round the car park looking for available spaces. She was of the view that the extensions proposed would generate a lot more traffic and, whilst acknowledging the Oaks Hospital had been a considerate neighbour, she considered the addition of only four additional car parking spaces was totally inadequate.

Nick Ratcliffe addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in support of the application. He explained that he was the Operations Manager at the hospital and confirmed that the Oaks now had an extensive Travel Plan in place, a Travel Plan Committee had been established and a Travel Plan Co-ordinator appointed. The Hospital had recently linked up with Colchester Travel Plan Club, working with Colchester Borough Council and with strong targets in place. He detailed the multiple travel schemes and initiatives in place and, in particular highlighted the intention to trial a car number plate recognition system in conjunction with a sister hospital.

Councillor Goss attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He explained that the Oaks Hospital was a fantastic neighbour, was well

used, well respected and he acknowledged that Mr Ratcliffe had a track record of responding to issues which were brought to his attention. He was of the opinion that four additional car parking spaces was insufficient and he considered the travel plan initiatives would make very little practical difference to the car parking issues, if only for the fact that the patients were highly unlikely to travel to the hospital other than by car when they were ill. He was of the view that the existing parking provision was inadequate and that the site was a very tight one. He welcomed that proposals to extend the theatre and the MRI scanning unit but he was concerned about the implications for car parking in the future. He asked the Committee members to consider deferring the application so that further discussions could take place to increase the proposed parking provision. He was worried that the current proposals would exacerbate existing parking problems and that more incidents of parking in Mile End Road would be the result.

The Principal Planning Officer was of the view that the architects had already maximised the number of car parking spaces, particularly given that the car park layout needed to be workable in practice, and he did not consider a deferral of the Committee's consideration would achieve anything further. He also confirmed that the parking standard applicable for the hospital was a maximum one, to be assessed on a case by case basis and, as such, there was no actual requirement for additional spaces to be provided.

Members of the Committee sought clarification in relation to the impact of a car number plate recognition system in reducing the number of vehicles parked at the site by non-hospital users, in relation to the measures to compensate for the loss of landscaping, in relation to the potential for the two storey elements of the proposal to impinge sight lines and in relation to the need for a condition to provide for a Construction Method Statement. Reference was also made to the cycle provision on the site and whether improvements could be made to make cycle parking both secure and more accessible.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that currently it was not known who was using the car park and that it would be necessary for assessments to be carried out to clarify the situation. He explained that a bespoke landscaping condition was being proposed to provide additional landscaping, of better quality and more structured, over and above that which was being removed. In terms of impinging on sight lines, he was of the view that the two storey elements were to be located as close to the existing buildings as possible and, as such would be well away from neighbouring properties such that the impact would not be significant. He explained that, although a Construction Method Statement had not been proposed as a condition due to the existing operation of the hospital on a 24 hour basis, it would be reasonable for the Committee to seek such a condition, if considered appropriate. He confirmed that the cycle parking provision was in need of improvement and also suggested the Committee could consider the addition of an informative to seek the provision of electric cycle charging points on site.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions

set out in the report as well as an additional standard condition to provide for a Construction Method Statement and an informative to provide for prominently and conveniently located cycle parking and positive consideration to the provision of electric cycle charging points.

600 180710 Former Bus Depot, Magdalen Street, Colchester

The Committee considered a planning application for a short term temporary public paid parking, with no changes to the site, the use to be until the approved development proceeds at the former bus depot, Magdalen Street, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because the site was owned by Colchester Borough Council and objections had been received. The Committee had before it a report in which all information was set out.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report and the amendment sheet.

601 180918 United Reform Church, 9 Lion Walk, Colchester

The Committee considered a planning application for the fitting of a small plaque at the base of the church tower, south-facing and two metres from the pavement, to commemorate the Colchester Earthquake in 1884 at the United Reform Church, 9 Lion Walk, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because the applicant was an Honorary Alderman. The Committee had before it a report in which all information was set out.

Eleanor Moss, Senior Planning Officer, presented the report and, together with Simon Cairns, Development Manager, assisted the Committee in its deliberations. The Senior Planning Officer explained that a condition had been proposed to address concerns regarding the proposed location of the plaque and its potential impact on the dressed stone.

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in opposition to the application. He explained that this was the latest planning application which had been submitted for a commemorative plaque which was of the same size as that provided by the Civic Society. He was of the view that the condition attached to the proposed approval made the application impossible to carry out. He confirmed that the plaque was smaller than the notice board already located on the listed building and the building had already been the subject of damage as a result of the earthquake the plaque was commemorating. He did not see how a small plaque could cause damage to the building and as the proposal was of no cost to the public purse he regretted it was being treated in a negative way.

The Senior Planning Officer explained that advice had been sought from the Council's Heritage Officer who's view was that it was not best practice drill into dressed stone and that the plaque would also be contributing to visual clutter if positioned in the proposed location

The Development Manager explained that the proposal was supported in principle but the buttress of the church was already host to a noticeboard, a more considerate location or a plaque of smaller dimension would be preferable in order to avoid an over-crowded appearance. A condition to this effect had been proposed which wasn't considered unreasonable.

Some members of the Committee did not consider the proposal to be visibly cluttered and were concerned that reducing the size of the plaque would mean that it would be unreadable, whilst questioning whether the existing noticeboard had the benefit of planning permission and whether the proposed position of the plaque at two metres high would also make it unreadable. Another member of the Committee commented on the proposed colour of the plaque and suggested an alternative to green might be preferable.

The Development Manager acknowledged concerns in relation to the proposed height of the plaque whilst explaining that a more balanced position, potentially on an alternative buttress to the tower which did not involve a stacking appearance, would be preferable visually. He confirmed that these matters were already provided for in the proposed condition but it was explained that an amendment to the condition would be required if an alternative colour for the plaque was considered to be of merit.

RESOLVED (EIGHT voted FOR and ONE ABSTAINED) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report.

602 181087 Charter Hall, Colchester Sports Centre, Colchester

The Committee considered a planning application for consent to display two new internally illuminated signs and nine banners promoting and situated at Charter Hall, Colchester Sports Centre, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because it had been made by Amphora Trading on behalf of the Council. The Committee had before it a report in which all information was set out.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report and the amendment sheet.

603 181235 35 De Vere Road, Colchester

The Committee considered a planning application for the erection of an extension to an

existing garage at 35 De Vere Road, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because the applicant was a Council employee. The Committee had before it a report and amendment sheet in which all information was set out.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report and the amendment sheet.

604 Land at Axial Way, Colchester – Amendments to Section 106 Agreement

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director Policy and Corporate giving details of changes to the requirements of the County Highway Authority in respect of application 162302, development to the south of Flakt Woods. It was explained that the works agreed between the Highway Authority and the applicant's technical team in accordance with section 278 of the Highways Act, subsequent to the drawing up of the section 106 Agreement, did not include an upgrade to a traffic island. The section 106 agreement therefore needed to be amended to remove this requirement.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the proposal to remove the requirement for a traffic island upgrade for the Section 106 agreement be approved.