

Planning and Highways Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 19 January 2023

Present: Councillor Curley (Chair)

Councillors: Shaukat Ali, Andrews, Y Dar, Davies, Flanagan, Hewitson, Kamal, Leech, J Lovecy, Lyons and Riasat

Apologies: Councillor Baker-Smith and Stogia

Also present: Councillors: Hilal and Stanton

PH/23/1. Supplementary Information on Applications Being Considered

A copy of the late representations received had been circulated in advance of the meeting regarding application 135235/FO/2022.

Decision

To receive and note the late representations.

PH/23/2. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 as a correct record.

PH/23/3. 117280/FO/2017 - Land At Spear Street, Manchester, Piccadilly Ward

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing that presented an application proposing an erection of a five-storey (ground floor plus 4) building to provide 6 no. residential apartments (Use Class C3) (5 x 1 bed (1 person)) and (1 x 2 bed duplex (4 person)) above ground floor commercial unit (Class E), private roof terrace for the top floor duplex apartment, cycle parking (6 x spaces), refuse and plant room.

The proposal would create 6 homes in a building that has been reduced in height from 8 to 5 storeys. 17 letters of objection had been received from 2 rounds of notifications, 14 in respect of the original 8 storey proposal.

The planning officer stated that a condition is recommended requiring the provision of a disabled parking should the Committee approve the application.

No objector to the application attended or made any representations.

The applicant (Manchester One) addressed the Committee. In response to initial reservations, the proposal had been reduced from 8 storeys down to 4 and 5 storeys. There had also been an addendum to design and access to reduce overlooking,

housing, rights of access and escape routes provided during construction. Manchester One had also worked with Koffee Pot to minimise disruption to their business. The company, part of Northern Group, had 15/20 years of experience in the Ancoats area redeveloping many sites, all of which had been retained and not sold on. Northern Group also had full control over lettings with the latest development being fully occupied.

Councillor Lyons said that he welcomed the revised height, that a S106 is always desirable but added that this was a small site and therefore understood the need for compromise. The development would suit the Northern Quarter area, 1 bed properties were much needed in parts of the city and Councillor Lyons concluded by stating that this was a good application overall.

Councillor Flanagan queried a comment in the report regarding disabled access that said the “scheme could be adapted.”

The Planning Officer responded and said the wording was clumsy, confirming that the whole scheme was accessible and space standards compliant.

Councillor Lovecy stated that she was pleased to see the revised scheme after the initial, larger application and moved the officer’s recommendation of Approve.

Councillor Lyons seconded the proposal.

Councillor Leech asked about if the disabled parking bay noted was site specific.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the space would be available for all blue badge users and clarified this would be secured through a planning condition.

Councillor Andrews requested confirmation that the recommendation to Approve took this into account and this was confirmed by the Planning Officer.

Decision

The Committee resolved to approve the application subject to conditions and for the reasons detailed in the reports submitted.

PH/23/4. 134953/FO/2022 - 68-70 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 1LF, Piccadilly Ward

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing that presented an application for the partial demolition of existing buildings (68-70 Oldham Street) (retention of facades to both 68 & 70 Oldham Street and internal floors of 68 Oldham Street), and erection of new 10 storey building (plus plant room) to incorporate retained elements, removal of roof and conversion of existing warehouse building (61 Spear Street) with 3 storey rooftop extension to create aparthotel (sui generis) and ground floor commercial uses (use class E)((a), (b), (c), (e) and (g) only.

The Planning Officer recommended a further condition (as per the previous application) in relation to the provision of a disabled parking bay on Houldsworth Street. Taken with the previous scheme this would secure 2 disabled bays in this location. Also, there was a duplication of condition 44 in the printed report. The Planning Officer confirmed that the final condition and not the penultimate condition that would stand if the Committee were to approve the application.

No objector to the application attended or made any representations.

The applicant addressed the Committee. He stated the company were the owners of the site and had worked within the property market in London and Manchester for 20 years. They had been searching for a hotel opportunity in Manchester and the applicant felt that this development would boost the area. The site had presented some challenges which included retaining the heritage associated with existing buildings but this had been achieved using Manchester based consultants to do this. Together, they had achieved the goal of retaining all features. The scheme took account of carbon reduction ambitions. He also stated that they were keen to integrate with the area and had assessed noise from the adjoining public house The Castle which had live music, confirming that the scheme was no threat to this or other live music venues in the area. If the Committee were to approve the application today, then work would begin immediately with a view to opening in 2026.

Councillor Flanagan raised a question regarding the disabled parking bay and proximity to the hotel. He felt that the hotels entrance down a side street would become easily blocked and asked how a disabled client may exit a vehicle and take any luggage without causing the road to become blocked.

The Planning Officer stated that there would be a loading area on Warwick Street for this purpose.

Councillor Flanagan remained concerned as this is a very narrow street that may not solve this problem.

The Planning Officer confirmed that there is also to be an entrance on Oldham Street.

Councillor Flanagan felt that this was close to the corner and there needed to be a priority for quick and easy access for disabled users and asked if this could be delivered via a conversation between Planning Officers and the applicant.

The Director of Planning stated that they would discuss this and find a way to cover this matter. If members were minded to approve the application she asked that Committee agree that a suitably worded condition be delegated to her to be agreed in discussion with the Chair.

Councillor Lyons stated that he agreed with Councillor Flanagan, adding that short term lets in an aparthotel were necessary for this area. The height was suitable for this area of Oldham Street and Councillor Lyons moved the officer's recommendation of Approve, subject to conditions and with the additional condition of resolving the question of the disabled parking and access.

Councillor S Ali seconded the proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to approve the application subject to conditions and for the reasons detailed in the reports submitted, and also with an added condition to be agreed by the Chair and Director of Planning regarding the disabled parking and access.

PH/23/5. 135235/FO/2022 - Vacant Site Bound By The Boulevard, The Avenue, Didsbury High School and existing properties on Clearwater Drive, Manchester, Didsbury West Ward

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing that related to the erection of a Part 8 and Part 6 storey building to form 76 no. residential apartments (Class C3) with ground floor medical centre use (Class E(e)) with associated car parking provided on a two-tiered decked car park, landscaping and infrastructure. The application site currently comprises overgrown scrub and trees, there is a small single storey services building on the site which is redundant. Prior to the sites clearance in the early 2000s, it formed part of the wider Withington Hospital site, the redevelopment of which has taken place over a period of 20 years to form a mix of houses, apartments, commercial uses and more recently the construction of a new secondary school. The application site is the last parcel of cleared former hospital land that remains. It has previously been subject of planning applications for redevelopment for offices and car parking, none of these proposals were developed. The proposals were subject to notification by way of 827 letters to nearby addresses, site notice posted at the site and advertisement in the Manchester Evening News.

Following an amendment to the proposal to include a screen to the proposed tiered car park a further period of renotification was undertaken.

In response to the notification process 185 comments were received, 182 of these objected to the proposals.

An objector attended and addressed the Committee on behalf of residents at Didsbury Point. The objector stated that they were not opposed to the development of this land but had serious reservations about the impact of increased traffic, scale and density of this scheme. The issue was raised of the 6-8 storey buildings having no outdoors area or balconies and no control over prices. The 2 storey car park would have an impact on Clearwater Drive, adding disturbance and light pollution. A 5 metre boundary wall challenged in that, if residents were to erect a wall of this size themselves, it was felt that the Council would object. Concern over the commercial space earmarked for a Medical Centre was raised as residents worried what may be placed there if not used as presented in the report. 60 car parking spaces were not enough for 200 residents and this would impact on the local area with parking issues and pollution. The Highways team should reconsider their findings within the report as the findings were taken during February 2021, during lockdown when traffic and Didsbury High School was much quieter. Regarding traffic issues, there have already

been problems whereby bin lorries and fire engines were unable to gain access. 1 bike storage space per dwelling was also seen as too little and would encourage people to use the road to walk. Didsbury High School will soon have a 6th form college on site, further increasing drop offs and pick-ups. There had been other applications, recommended for refusal for insufficient parking reasons. The objector concluded by requesting a site visit.

The applicant, representing Southway Housing Trust, addressed the Committee in support of the application, stating that this was a not for profit scheme, all dwellings would be affordable and that the 76 homes have a communal space and bike storage, parking and Medical Centre. 30 units would be affordable rentals with the remainder being offered for shared ownership. Southway have had conversations with the Council's Planning Team around tree planting and consulted with Members. 1000+ leaflets have been distributed and face to face meetings held at the nearby Didsbury High School. These meetings have led to changes to the proposals in height, acoustic and space standards, although it was noted that it had not been possible to please everyone. Car club provision was also available and the applicant concluded by requesting that the Committee approve the application.

Councillor Leech, speaking as Local Ward Councillor and not as a Committee member, stated that he was also representing residents, 10 of which were not available to attend the meeting. Some of the residents felt that this application was a done deal already. Councillor Leech requested a site visit as he felt that the report did not accurately reflect the challenges in the location and Committee members would have a better understanding by visiting the area. The size, scale, overlooking aspect were a problem, proven by the need for a 5.1 metre wall on Clearwater Drive. The scheme was out of place with other nearby developments which were mostly 2/3 storey homes and apartments. Information provided by Highways on parking and road safety in the report was incorrect and after requesting information, Councillor Leech stated that he only received this 2 days prior to the this hearing, which was dated 9 January 2023. He questioned why this had not been provided beforehand. Highways proposals needed reinvestigating as TfGM had stated that there are zero capacity concerns, one bike lock up per dwelling would be insufficient and nothing was mentioned in the report to stop the area being used as a drop off and pick up point for pupils of Didsbury High School. The Medical Centre had a proposal of 28 car parking spaces, many of which it was felt would be used by clients who had to travel to access the service. Most people across south Manchester are car owners, contrary to the report, and most people who move in will have a car. There had been no serious road accidents in the area so far but this development was likely to increase that probability. Concern was raised about the width of roads in the area. Neither Planning nor Highways appear to have challenged Southway Trust's report and Councillor Leech expressed that reports had been dishonest. Marlow Drive is a gated community and was not available for road users for parking. The square roundabout had been used for parking and people had had to be stopped and moved on. The report stated that the pick up and drop off for Didsbury High School had been fully taken into account but it was felt that this had not been considered. A previous application at Didsbury Tesco site had been refused and Councillor Leech expressed that part of that report could have been lifted wholesale and added to this report. Other members of the Committee had not declared an interest in this application and this surprised Councillor Leech as he stated that he was aware of Committee

members having been leafletting in favour of this application and visiting residents. A site visit or rejection/minded to refuse decision were requested of the Committee in Councillor Leech's closing statement.

Councillor Flanagan raised a point of order and requested that Councillor Leech remain in the Chamber to retract a comment regarding Committee members not declaring an interest and leafletting in favour of this application.

The Chair noted that Councillor Lyons had left the Committee meeting immediately after the previous item and conveyed that it was likely it was Councillor Lyons who Councillor Leech may have been referring to. The Chair asked Councillor Leech to retract the allegation and noted that the correct procedure for this would have been to raise this with the Director of Planning ahead of the meeting.

Councillor Leech confirmed that he would not withdraw the allegation.

The Chair requested again that Councillor Leech withdraw the comment or provide evidence to back up his claim.

Councillor Leech declared that he could provide evidence and stated again that other members should have declared an interest.

The Director of Planning stated that the appropriate time to declare an interest would be at the start of the meeting at Item 3 on the agenda or, failing that, at the start of the item of business. Regarding any concerns about officers' integrity, the proper route for dealing with this is to contact the City Solicitor and/or Chief Executive.

The Legal advisor confirmed Members' duties to declare interests and that the onus is on Members to do so.

(Councillor Leech left the room at this point and took no part in the ongoing discussions or decision making process).

Councillor Stanton attended and addressed the Committee as a Local Ward Councillor. As well as resident's concerns, he felt that housing affordability was also important. He gave thanks to the GM Mayor and Chief Executive for their work on affordable public transport and housing and added that more additional cars on the streets were not the City Councils goal. He stated that he participated in consultations early on and noted that some parking issues had been addressed but others were still outstanding. Some residents of this scheme will not be able to use public transport and this is an issue with this site. Parking has become worse with since the opening of Didsbury High School and this scheme will add to on street parking. Councillor Stanton requested that the Committee either do not approve without some improvements to the scheme or conduct a site visit at a peak time for school users.

Councillor Hilal attended and addressed the Committee as a Local Ward Councillor, expressing agreement with Councillor Stanton's comments and adding that she had met with local residents to discuss parking and had herself visited at peak times. She

had noted higher volumes of traffic and felt that this will be exacerbated by the scheme and the impending 6th form college at Didsbury High School.

The Chair stated that felt the need to apologise for Councillor Leech's conduct and accusatory manner, adding that Councillors are there to articulate residents' concerns. The Chair then provided a further opportunity for the Committee members to declare any interests.

The Planning Officer addressed the comments and issues raised by the preceding comments, stating that with reference to the timing of surveys undertaken by the applicant, officers are aware of the car parking pressures in the area and these have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation (as noted in the late representations). This includes pick up and drop off for the school, illegal parking, refuse collections etc. With reference to the capacity of the junction of the Boulevard and Princess Road there are no overall highway capacity issues, but Condition 14 requires a review of the operation of that junction and any necessary changes to be made. The officer added that during the application process, there had been an ongoing dialogue between officers of the Planning and Highway Services to understand highway related matters and the comments received had been fully taken into account. The Planning Officer stated that 56 off street parking spaces are proposed together with 4 on street bays and an ambulance bay. Details of the breakdown of the number of spaces for the residential element and medical practice were also provided. It was stated that this is a very accessible location, close to tram stops and bus stops and the developer would also provide access to a car club vehicle as well as cycle hire bikes. The Medical Centre would have shower facilities to encourage staff to use cycles. Overall, it is considered that there would be an appropriate number of spaces provided at this location. The Officer also stated that he had listened to the concerns raised and recommended an additional condition requiring the submission of a car parking management plan to include monitoring and review mechanisms and measures to prevent the on street spaces being used for school pick up and drop off. In relation to height, it was stated that this is shown on page 199 and is comparable to the adjacent office building stepping down towards Clearwater Drive. The Planning Officer referred to the scheme being 100% affordable housing and drew attention to the raised garden which would be positioned above the Medical Centre for residents' use. In relation to privacy there would be a screen on the upper deck of the car park and this would also contain a living green wall and mature trees would be retained within a landscaping strip. Further planting would address some ecological concerns and also help with screening. The Planning Officer addressed concerns over usage of the site for the Medical Centre, confirming that there is a condition proposed to limit the use to that of a medical centre. It was noted that each scheme is required to be assessed on the individual merits of the case.

Councillor Flanagan stated that residents want to have confidence in members and officers and felt that Councillor Leech should have to make a comment to the Chief Executive. Councillor Flanagan confirmed that he did not wish to take a site visit but understood the concerns around parking.

The Planning Officer again stated that an additional condition could be added for a car parking management plan.

Councillor Flanagan came back with comments about clear parking issues, asking where disabled parking spaces are, can spaces at the medical centre be used at quiet periods for resident and are there disabled parking bays at the medical centre.

The Planning Officer stated that there are 2 disabled parking bays on each of the two floors of the residential car park and that this could be further looked at as part of the suggested car parking management plan condition together with exploring whether the spaces for the medical use could be used by residents when not in use.

Councillor Flanagan stated that 4 disabled spaces were not enough.

The Planning Officer stated that this could be reviewed and that the 21 places at the medical centre are for the use of patients and users of the centre.

The Director of Planning noted that the applicant was at the meeting and would be aware of the concerns. She stated that they would work together in an attempt to resolve the issues, adding that there was potential to use the medical centre parking for others when it was closed and that, if the Committee were minded to approve today, this could be built into the conditions.

Councillor Davies expressed the need for affordable housing and this provided such an opportunity for an area notable for its high housing prices. She added that if people felt there were not enough car parking spaces, then this would deter them from moving there in the first place. One third of Mancunians did not have access to a car and this was not the kind of suburban development for 3 bed houses with 2 parking bays at the front. Affordable housing ties in with the lower likelihood of residents having the money to own a car as well and she added that the level of parking on offer here may actually be appropriate.

Councillor Lovecy stated that she was also concerned about the level of affordable housing across the city, adding that site visits have been helpful in previous decisions and moved a proposal to undertake a site visit.

No member of the Committee seconded this proposal.

Councillor Flanagan noted the need to keep affordable housing in focus and felt that information should be made available to members swiftly. He felt that there was a need to have the applicant work with the city council on the issues of parking for this development in order to move the officer's recommendation of Approve.

The Chair confirmed that there had been a commitment from the Director of Planning in this regard.

The Director of Planning confirmed that a condition would be drafted in relation to a car parking management plan, to be agreed with the Chair.

Councillor S Ali seconded Councillor Flanagan's proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to approve the application subject to conditions and for the reasons detailed in the reports submitted, and also with an added condition relating to a suitable parking management plan being agreed between planning officers and the applicant.

(Councillor Lyons left the room before this item and took no part in the discussion or the decision making process).