

Planning and Highways Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 November 2023

Present: Councillor Lyons (Chair)

Councillors: Shaukat Ali, Andrews, Chohan, Curley, Davies, Gartside, Hassan, Hewitson, Hughes, Johnson, Kamal, J Lovecy and Riasat

PH/23/80. Supplementary Information on Applications Being Considered

A copy of the late representations received had been circulated in advance of the meeting regarding applications 130387/FO/2021 and 135952/FO/2023.

Decision

To receive and note the late representations.

PH/23/81. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2023 as a correct record.

PH/23/82. 130387/FO/2021 - The Former Gamecock Public House Boundary Lane Manchester M15 6GE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing regarding the proposal for a part 7, part 9 storey purpose-built student accommodation building comprising 146 bed spaces (Sui Generis use class) with ancillary amenity space, a ground floor community hub (proposed for Use Classes F2(b), E(b), E (3), E(f)) and associated landscape works and infrastructure.

The Committee were 'minded to refuse' a scheme on 27 July 2023 for a part 7, part 11 storey PBSA building providing 197 bed spaces, on the basis that PBSA of this size would be contrary to maintaining a sustainable mixed residential neighbourhood.

6 objections had been received, along with two neutral comments. The Planning Officer noted a further 31 objections had been received, raising similar concerns to those already raised. Over 100 students had signed a petition against the proposal, and a letter of support had been received. The Planning Officer stated that there was no policy-based reason to refuse the modified scheme. The modifications included reduced scale and reduced bed spaces.

Two objectors addressed the Committee, stating that the reduced scale did not address their concerns. They accepted that the site needed development but not PBSA. The development could increase anti-social behaviour with issues such as noise and litter. The reduced development would still overlook nearby properties.

The applicant's agent identified the changes made to address previous feedback. The proposal was now 30% smaller in volume and height, with 44 less rooms. The scale and mass are similar to other buildings in the area. The site is a blight on the local area. A Community space would be provided on the ground floor. All bedrooms, kitchens and dining areas now have large windows. The applicant's agent felt the proposal to be no different to similar applications previously approved by the Committee. They noted that 20% of the bedrooms would be affordable.

A ward Councillor noted that this is a residential area, not a student area. The need for PBSA had not been shown, and the reduced scale and mass had not addressed their concerns. The changes did not alter the effect on the light at Cooper House. Nothing had really changed with the applicant not listening to the local community.

Another ward Councillor noted that student properties seemed to be progressing into residential areas. They noted ongoing issues with litter at similar developments, feeling there was no reason that this would not become an issue here. The trees have TPO's which was being ignored. The development would be a disruption during its build. They felt a development for the needs and demands of local people was what was needed at the site.

The Planning Officer stated that the reduced scale and mass would make a difference. Any highways issues throughout the build would be managed. There is a shortfall of around 10,000 student bedspaces. Students are residents and many live in the Hulme area. The Planning Officer noted that the upper level of the amended proposal would be around 1.5m closer to Cooper House. The applicant had committed to litter picking. The trees had not been ignored and the strategy was set out clearly in the report.

A member was concerned that the proposal had not addressed their concerns about whether the PBSA was appropriate for this area. They queried whether there had been any significant difference in square footage. A member noted that previously approved student accommodation was yet to be built. The litter picking offered by the applicant was insufficient. They had to consider the application as elected members and have a level of engagement with residents. A member queried if the shortage of 10,000 places in student accommodation included those developments approved but not yet completed.

The Planning Officer stated that the footprint was the same but had been reduced by two floors. It is predicted that up to 10,000 places would be required by 2030. The application must be considered in terms of Planning Policy and not in any other way. Applications for PBSA bring the same issues in any area but there was no reason for refusal that could be sustained in policy.

A member noted that the proposed site was close to the University's but felt that was not a sufficient argument for the application. Students were an important part of the city, but that residential areas had to be preserved. The member recognised that family homes were being used by students due to a shortage of PBSA. However, they felt that there were still areas of the city that were not residential where accommodation could be situated. A member queried the size of the community room offered on the ground floor.

The Planning Officer stated that the community room was 85 square metres. The issues raised by the previous member would be the same in any area proposed for PBSA.

The Director of Planning reminded the Committee that a recent appeal, where distance from the universities had been an issue, had been lost and the development proposed in this application was closer than that proposed in the appeal case. They reminded the Committee that, in making their decision, they were a Planning Committee and had to make their decision based on policy, in terms of which there was no reason to refuse.

A member recognised the need for student accommodation but did not see the benefits this application brought to the area, except the community room. They felt that they were minded to refuse on the basis of disamenity and lack of benefit to the community.

Councillor Lovecy moved minded to refuse due to the need to have a sustainable community and that required a balance of students across the city, not in established residential areas. She also noted the level of disamenity brought by the application.

Councillor Johnson seconded Councillor Lovecy's proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to be Minded to Refuse the application due to the development proposed having an adverse impact on the balance and sustainability of the neighbourhood, in keeping with city council policy, and also because of the disamenity brought by the application.

PH/23/83. 137346/FO/2023 - Land Bounded By Naval Street To The North, Poland Street To The East, Jersey Street To The South And Radium Street To The West Manchester

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing regarding the erection of a part 5, part 10 storey building comprising 256 apartments and townhouses, residents' amenity space (Use Class C3a), ground floor commercial (Use Class E), cycle and car parking, landscaping, access and servicing, and other associated works following demolition of existing structures.

2 letters of objection were received.

The applicant's agent noted that the applicant had delivered homes to Manchester previously. This application was the next phase of the development of this area, with the first phase already approved. They noted that the application would deliver 256 new, high-quality homes to the area, alongside commercial use spaces. The varied height of the proposed development had been welcomed by Historic England. The proposed site was in a sustainable area with nearby public transport available. The development would be low carbon.

A member noted that there was a lot to welcome in the innovative development, particularly welcoming the tree planting. They were, however, disappointed that there was no affordable housing due to financial viability grounds and queried if there was any way to change this.

A member then queried if, at the end of the business plan, properties could come back to the council, and sought clarity as to why there was a reference to appointing the architect in the recommendation.

The Planning Officer noted that the scheme did not reach the profit level required to be viable for affordable housing, however that would be retested. The Planning Officer that under a Section 106, they want to ensure that what was presented in the application was delivered. This agreement would seek to ensure that the architect who designed the proposals would be retained throughout.

Councillor Andrews moved the Officer's recommendation of Minded to Approve.

Councillor Curley seconded the proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to be Minded to Approve, for the reasons and subject to the conditions set out in the Officer's report, subject to the signing of a legal agreement to secure a re-testing of the viability to determine whether a future affordable housing contribution can be secured and to secure the use of the project architect.

PH/23/84. 135952/FO/2023 - Atlas Business Park Simonsway Manchester M22 5PR

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing regarding an application for full planning permission for the severable and phased construction of five units (light industrial (Use Class E(g)(iii)), general industrial (Use Class B2) and/or storage or distribution (Use Class B8), together with ancillary offices (Use Class E(g)(i)) providing a total gross external area of 36,706 sqm; and associated service yards, parking, landscaping, amenity space and infrastructure, with vehicular access off Simonsway.

The Planning Officer made reference to the Late Representation Report and stated that this includes the correct images to replace those included on pages 157 and 178 of the main report which show the scheme prior to revised drawings being received. Assurance was provided that the scheme had been fully assessed in relation to the submitted revised drawings. The officer also stated that the applicant had made reference to a severable phased development but in assessing the overall details of the scheme it is not considered that the part of the scheme located outside of the Green Belt could be looked upon favourably as it is integral to a wider scheme which as a whole is unacceptable and out of character with the area in general. On this basis additional wording is proposed to Reason 2 to state that the scheme could not be severed or phased in order to overcome the harm caused.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee, stating that application responded to the need for logistic space in South Manchester, delivering Grade A floor space. They acknowledged that a portion of the site was composed of the Greenbelt and by definition the scheme proposed represents inappropriate development but would only result in moderate harm, however the area was poorly kept, and would therefore improve the appearance. The height and scale of the application was consistent with the area, with the development 78 metres from the nearest residential property. The application would retain some of the existing trees at the site. The application would bring economic benefits to the area in terms of jobs and business rates, whilst continuing the regeneration of the area. They noted that the development would also support the transition to a low carbon future.

The Planning Officer stated that the report covered the benefits of the application, but the key point was the impact on the Greenbelt, and it is the case that the proposal represents inappropriate development that is harmful to the open character and special circumstances have not been demonstrated. The impact is considered to be significant. The area not being well kept was not a consideration that outweighs the harmful impact. The land outside of the Greenbelt within the application was acceptable in principle. The Airport maintained their objection to the application.

Councillor Andrews moved the Officer's recommendation of Refuse, for the reasons provided by Officer's in the written report.

Councillor Johnson seconded the proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to Refuse the application for the reasons set out in the Officer's report, including the additional wording to reason 2 referred to by the Planning Officer during the meeting.

PH/23/85. 137172/FH/2023 - 126 Chichester Road Manchester M15 5DZ

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing regarding the erection of a single storey rear extension to provide additional living accommodation.

The proposal sought planning permission to retain a single storey rear extension in the rear garden of 126 Chichester Road, located within the Hulme Ward of the City. The extension has a rearward projection of 4.54 metres, a lean to roof with a maximum height of 3.54 metres and an eaves height of 2.26 metres. The extension has a width of 3.83 metres which is approximately just under the width of the full dwellinghouse.

7 addresses were notified of the application and a number of representations had been received from the same address in response to the notification letter.

The Planning Officer had nothing to add to the printed report.

A member noted that it was disappointing the applicant was not available to attend. They stated that they would like more imagery of what had happened before making a decision.

Councillor Andrews moved a proposal to defer the application to allow Officer's to provide more images as part of the report.

Councillor Hughes seconded the proposal.

Decision

The Committee resolved to defer the application to allow Officer's to provide more images as part of the report.