

WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 November 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Van Nooijen (Chair), Gotch (Vice-Chair), Benjamin, Cook, Darke, Gant, Hollingsworth, Price and Tanner.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of City Development), Murray Hancock (City Development), Michael Morgan (Law and Governance), Jennifer Thompson (Law and Governance) and Nick Worledge (City Development)

ALSO PRESENT: Daniel Round (Oxfordshire County Council)

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clack (substitute Councillor Darke).

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

79. WESTGATE CENTRE, OX1 1NX: 14/02402/RES

The Head of City Development submitted a report which detailed an application for planning permission for the demolition of southern part of Westgate Centre, 1-14 Abbey Place and multi-storey car park, retention of library, refurbishment of remainder of the existing Westgate Centre and construction of a retail-led mixed use development together providing A1 (retail), A2 (finance and professional services) and/or A3 (restaurants and cafes) and/or A4 (public house, etc.) and/or A5 (hot food takeaways) uses, C3 (residential) use and D2 (assembly and leisure) uses, public toilets, associated car and cycle parking, shopmobility facility, servicing and access arrangements together with alterations to the public highway. This application dealt with the reserved matters of outline planning permission 13/02557/OUT.

The site comprised the Westgate Centre and adjacent land encompassing the existing Westgate Centre and land bounded by Thames Street, Castle Mill Stream, Abbey Place, Norfolk Street, Castle Street, Bonn Square, St Ebbes Street, Turn Again Lane and Old Greyfriars Street OX1 1NX.

Introduction and speakers

The Committee had before it:

- The report of the Head of City Development
- An addendum of comments received after the publication of the report and a summary of the environmental impact assessment relating to air quality

- The papers considered by the committee in respect of application 13/02557/OUT

and had the opportunity to view architectural models, plans, and material samples on display prior to the meeting and during the adjournment.

Planning officers presented the report, showed plans and visualisations of the finished development, and drew attention to:

- air quality, including the relevant condition on the outline planning permission;
- those design elements still to be agreed via conditions;
- the impact of the proposals on the immediate and wider area; and
- updates to the papers: since publication of the addendum, a comment from resident opposing the development was submitted and a response from the Environment Agency raised no objection on flooding grounds.

The Chair permitted a maximum of 20 minutes for those speaking as representatives of the community and the same time for those speaking on behalf of the developer.

Cecilia Fry, representing Cyclox, outlined the remaining concerns of the cycling group including providing adequate cycle parking and providing safe cycling routes separate from bus routes.

John Miller, representing SENDRA, requested reassurances that there would be an acceptable impact on flooding, on air quality and of additional bus traffic. There were concerns over the impact of construction work. A full traffic assessment was needed before changes were made.

Councillor Ruthi Brandt, local ward councillor, urged refusal because of the lack of on-site affordable housing was contrary to council policy, and the impact on air quality, traffic and on residents.

Jane Baldwin, representing the Oxford Preservation Trust, raised concerns over the impact of the development on views across the city due to its size and scale and design, and the blank frontages. The design was not sympathetic to the remaining heritage sites in St Ebbes and Thames Street, and the public realm could be improved.

Sara Fuge and John Grinnell, representing the developer, explained the wider benefits of the scheme, low carbon and sustainable design, design influences, increased employment and proposals to provide training for prospective retail employees.

The Chair adjourned the meeting to allow committee members to view the models and plans, then reconvened.

Debate

Members questioned officers about remaining points of concern about the proposals including the provision of cycle parking; detailed design of specific frontages; the treatment of public spaces, landscaping and the relationship of the new development to existing buildings and spaces; air quality; traffic; and the provision of affordable housing. Sara Fuge answered questions about the proposed skills training programme.

A motion was proposed and seconded to grant reserved matters planning permission, with conditions as set out in the report.

The Committee agreed amendments as below:

Additional conditions

A requirement for air filtering equipment for any properties at Tennyson Lodge, flats at new Building 1A, Paradise Square or Butterwyke Place if its NO₂ levels exceed 40µg/m³.

Amended elevational details of the south side of building 4 and north – east corner of building 3 as they face onto the public space created at Turn Again Place, and also of the eastern elevation of Old Greyfriar's Street and the entrance from Pennyfarthing Place.

Amendments to conditions

The existing public realm condition to make specific reference to all squares and public places

Points not relating to the grant of permission

The Committee noted that the operation of the taxi rank should be such as to cause the minimum of disruption to nearby residents.

The Committee agreed that:

(1) the following should be presented to Committee for decision at a later stage once details were submitted:

- Landscaping, in particular in Abbey Place and Turn Again Lane.
- Public realm details.
- Tower feature.
- The elevational amendments referred to above
- Details of cycle parking (condition on permission 13/02557/OUT) to ensure that the concerns of Cycloxx were addressed.

(2) the Learning and Skills Strategy be agreed in consultation (not necessarily formally) with the committee to ensure this was wholly satisfactory.

Decision

The Committee resolved to grant reserved matters planning permission for application 14/02402/RES, at Westgate Centre and adjacent land, subject to conditions:

1. Time limits.
2. Reserved matters approved.
3. Approved drawings.
4. Southern entrance door to block 1.
5. Details of public realm works, including covered streets and squares.
6. Landscaping details.
7. Ecology and new habitats.
8. Details of tower feature to block 4.

9. Bus routes via Queen Street.
10. External lighting scheme.
11. Mitigation of any adverse wind impacts.
12. Temporary wind screens.
13. Protection of privacy to new County Hall building.
14. Details of display cabinets to Castle Street elevation of Building 4.
15. Architectural and construction details, (to include windows, doors, roof, plant enclosures, escalators, stairs etc).
16. A requirement for air filtering equipment for any properties at Tennyson Lodge, flats at new Building 1A, Paradise Square or Butterwyke Place if it NO2 levels exceed 40ug/m3.
17. Amended elevational details of the south side of building 4 and north – east corner of building 3 as they face onto the public space created at Turn Again Place, and also of the eastern elevation of Old Greyfriar's Street and the entrance from Pennyfarthing Place.

Decisions not related to the grant of planning permission

The Committee agreed that:

- (1) the following should be presented for decision at a later stage once details were submitted:
 - Landscaping.
 - Public realm details.
 - Tower feature.
 - The elevational amendments referred to above
 - Details of cycle parking (condition on permission 13/02557/OUT) to ensure that the concerns of Cyclox were addressed.
- (2) the Learning and Skills Strategy be agreed in consultation (not necessarily formally) with the committee to ensure this was wholly satisfactory.

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.10 pm