

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 24 January 2023

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Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Upton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Aziz
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Malik
Councillor Morris (for Councillor Pegg)	Councillor Rehman

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

David Butler, Head of Planning Services
Robert Fowler, Development Management Team Leader (West)
Felicity Byrne, Principal Planning Officer
Tobias Fett, Senior Planning Officer
Louise Greene, Planning Lawyer
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Andrew Murdoch, Planning Manager

Also present:

Councillors Brown and Hall

Apologies:

Councillors Hunt and Pegg sent apologies.

The substitute for Councillor Pegg is shown above.

56. Declarations of interest

General

Councillor Upton stated that as a member and trustee of the Oxford Preservation Trust she had taken no part in that organisation's discussions regarding the applications before the Committee. Councillor Upton said that she was approaching the applications with an open mind, would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision.

22/00841/FUL

Councillor Fouweather stated that he had been a signatory to the call-in but was approaching the application with an open mind, would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision.

22/01842/FUL

Councillor Clarkson stated that she was a member of the Remuneration Committee at St Edmund Hall, and was acquainted with one of the speakers in that capacity. Although she had been aware of the application, Councillor Clarkson stated that she had not taken part in any discussion on it or formed or expressed any opinion, and would consider the application with an open mind.

57. 22/01842/FUL: 17 and 19 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PS

The Committee considered an application (22/01842/FUL) for partial demolition and alteration of C2 accommodation at 17 Norham Gardens; and demolition of C2 accommodation building (Brockhues Lodge), erection of 3 no. C2 accommodation buildings including drainage and landscape works and minor alterations to listed building and demolition of curtilage listed building at 19 Norham Gardens.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- Paragraph 10.11 of the report required correction to reflect that the total number of new rooms on the site was 128, and not 110. This figure comprised 110 rooms within the new block, and 18 refurbished rooms within 17 Norham Gardens. This would still provide a net gain of 72 rooms as stated in the report, equating to a net gain of 29 houses released to the market (not 30).
- Paragraph 10.81 of the report required correction to reflect that the existing three car parking spaces would be reduced to two car parking spaces. This was considered to be a positive change, which would result in a reduction of traffic to the site.
- The principle of the development was considered acceptable, as it represented redevelopment of an existing site providing student accommodation for St Edmund Hall. It would result in an increase on the existing 56 student rooms to 128, with the accommodation being used to house undergraduate students. This would enable the College to better support the health and wellbeing of this student group through the provision of rooms and ancillary facilities on site.
- The proposal would enable the space at the site to be utilised more efficiently, as well as providing more energy efficient and sustainable accommodation which would meet Passivhaus standard. The development also offered improved access arrangements for students, staff and visitors with disabilities.
- The development was considered to respond appropriately to the street scene and its context; the massing, bulk and amount of student accommodation was considered suitable for the site; and the proposal was considered to be of high quality architectural design. The high quality provision of biodiversity, sustainable drainage, and energy efficiency was considered by officers to be exemplary. Whilst there would be some harm to heritage assets in terms of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building, this was considered to be of low level less than substantial harm which would be outweighed by the public benefits. The application was therefore recommended for approval.

Eleanor Burnett (for the applicant) and Naila Yousuf (architect) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application, which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- Re-siting of plant from above the rooms to the basement had enabled a reduction in the massing of the roof area;
- The provision of purpose built accommodation would have a positive impact on student welfare;
- Officers undertook to discuss with Oxfordshire County Council the periods within the day when the movement of construction and demolition vehicles should be permitted or restricted, in order to avoid peak traffic / cycling hours associated with nearby schools' afternoon pick up times and minimise the risk of road traffic accidents;
- The removal of the existing unsympathetic extensions was considered to be a positive benefit of the scheme. Other public benefits were cited as: the releasing of housing stock into the general market; the provision of purpose built student accommodation enabling the College to capitalise on its reputation as a centre for excellence; the substantial biodiversity increase and the reinstatement of the front gardens; and the enhanced carbon performance of the buildings.
- A committee member highlighted that in considering planning applications, the judgement as to whether the benefits of a scheme outweighed any less than substantial harm needed to be based on benefits to the public, rather than private benefits to applicants themselves. The committee member requested that it be recorded that enhanced carbon performance of buildings was considered by the Committee to be a public and not a private benefit, which would be taken into account by the Committee in making its judgement in this regard. Another committee member commended the environmental credentials of this particular proposal; and another was pleased that the development would deliver enhanced student welfare through purpose built accommodation.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of this report and grant planning permission; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in this report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary; and

- issue the planning permission.

58. 22/00841/FUL: Cotswold House, 110C Banbury Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 6JU

The Committee considered an application (22/00841/FUL) for the demolition of existing rear sheds and external rear fire escape; erection of two storey rear extension with glazed link to provide 8 no. additional student rooms and refurbishment of existing property to provide 11 no. additional student rooms; replacement of 1 no. window 1 no. door to side elevation; replacement of 1 no. window with 1 no. vent to side elevation; replacement of 1 no. window and fire escape door with 1 no. window to rear elevation; replacement windows; formation of bin and cycle stores to rear; new accessible landscaping to front and new side access gate; provision of accessible car parking to front; hard and soft landscaping at Cotswold House, 110C Banbury Road, Oxford.

The Planning Officer presented the report, including proposed site plans and elevations, and visual representations. The officer recommendation was to approve the application, subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

Dr Giles Campion (local resident) spoke against the application.

Jayne Norris (agent) and Sir Malcolm Evans (for the applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application, which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- The use of the property had been certified to be student accommodation since 1992, rather than three flats which happened to be occupied by students. Officers did not therefore consider the proposal to result in the loss of family accommodation for the purposes of planning policies.
- A previous application for a much larger extension had been withdrawn in June 2020. The proposal now before the Committee represented a reduction in scale of development compared with that application.
- There was a challenge for the applicant in looking to provide student accommodation within an existing residential area, and in a relatively confined space.
- Some Councillors considered that the proposal represented over-development, and that it was not visually pleasing and was out of character for the area. It was noted that there would be also be an impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of the effect of construction on the plum tree within the grounds of No. 112 Banbury Road.

On being proposed, seconded, and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonable necessary.

59. Minutes

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 as a true and accurate record.

60. Forthcoming applications

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

61. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

Due to the workflow of applications, and a recent increase in the number of major applications received, the Chair and the Planning Manager informed the Committee that there may be a need to use some of the Overspill meeting dates, and in particular the dates of 16 March and 20 April 2023.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.46 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 21 February 2023

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.