

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 18 July 2023

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Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Hollingsworth (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Malik	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Upton	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

David Butler, Head of Planning Services
Tobias Fett, Senior Planning Officer
Jonathan Gentry, Planning Officer
Louise Greene, Planning Lawyer
Hayley Jeffery, Development Management Team Leader (East)
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

16. Declarations of interest

General

Councillor Upton declared 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.

23/00842/FUL

Councillor Chapman 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.

Councillor Railton stated that she was a member of Littlemore Parish Council, but had taken no part in any discussion of the application by the Parish Council and would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision.

17. 23/00272/FUL: 152 London Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 9ED

The Committee considered an application (23/00272/FUL) for demolition of the existing retail store (Use Class E); erection of new building at 1 to 4 storeys containing a retail store (Use Class E) and hotel (Use Class C1); service area, landscaping, cycle parking and drop off bays on Stile Road at 152 London Road, Headington, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The application had missed its statutory target decision date due to awaiting consultation responses and further information from the applicant, and the timing of committee dates. The applicant had decided to lodge an appeal for non-determination. This meant that the Council could no longer determine the application. Instead, the Committee was asked to give an indication of its likely decision, had it been in a position to determine the application, which officers could use in the Council's submission to the appeal.
- The application site was on the east side of London Road on the edge of the Headington District Centre, with Bury Knowle Park to the north and Stile Road, which was residential, to the west of the site. St Andrew's Primary School, a non-designated heritage asset, was situated to the east of the site.
- Planning permission was sought for the demolition of the existing single storey retail store which was currently occupied by the Co-Op, and erection of a part three, part four storey building containing a new hotel with a retail unit at the ground floor. There would be two operational parking spaces and manoeuvring spaces to the front of the development, and a service yard to the rear (accessed via Stile Road). The application also included some hard and soft landscaping.

Michael Dent and Bruce Huggett, Governors of St Andrew's Primary School, spoke against 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:

- Reasons why officers had reached a recommendation to refuse the application were set out in full in the report, and included some shortcomings and lack of information in the submitted application. Planning Officers considered that some of these may have been able to be addressed through conditions; however, the potential for this had been superseded by the commencement of the appeal process. Recommended conditions would be included within the Council's appeal statement.
- The applicant had sought to address privacy issues through the use of opaque glass on windows (including opaque corridor windows to avoid overlooking of St Andrew's School), which officers considered would cause loss of outlook to hotel residents.
- The site was inside the district centre, and the Local Plan included policies which encouraged increases in density and careful increases in height within district centres. There was therefore potential for a well-designed and respectful development on the site. However, it was not considered that this proposal met those criteria.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote, the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation that had an appeal not been lodged, the application would have been refused for the reasons given in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **agree** that if an appeal had not been lodged the application would have been refused for the reasons given in the report; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:
 - finalise the recommended reasons for refusal in the report for the purposes of defending the appeal, including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary.

18. 23/00842/FUL: 26 Alice Smith Square, Oxford OX4 4NF

The Committee considered an application (23/00842/FUL) for the demolition of an existing garage; erection of a part single, part two storey side and rear extension with associated alterations to fenestration at 26 Alice Smith Square, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The application site was on the southern side of Alice Smith Square, with neighbouring properties to most aspects of the site. The property was a two-storey semi-detached house.
- The application had been revised in order to overcome officer concerns relating to the design which had initially been proposed. The revised application was now considered by officers to be acceptable in design terms and not to adversely impact neighbouring amenity, and was also considered to be compliant in all other regards. It was therefore recommended for approval, subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

Moses Ekole (agent) 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:

- A landscaping condition was proposed, setting out the landscaping requirements should the scheme be approved. Officers undertook to try to ensure that the existing hedge was retained as part of this condition. However, it was noted that a requirement to retain the hedge could not be enforced following a period of five years after first occupation of the development.
- Whilst there had been very few objections to the proposal, loss of light to neighbouring properties and overlooking / loss of privacy from the additional fenestration had been cited as a concern. Officers had considered this carefully when assessing the proposal, but were of the view that the revised proposal would not result in material amenity harm to any neighbouring properties in the proximity of the site.

- A concern had also been raised by an objector that the proposal would cause harm to the ‘open character’ of the corner plot. The Planning Officer confirmed that this had been a consideration when assessing the design proposal. Typically, corner plots were more sensitive when looking at the scale of development which they could accommodate. However, a key consideration in this instance was the degree of separation which would be retained between the extension area and the side boundary of the site. Officers had therefore concluded that this was not a concern sufficient to generate grounds to recommend refusal.

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 the report and grant planning permission.
2. **agree to 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.

19. Minutes

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 as a true and accurate record.

20. Forthcoming applications

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

21. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.01 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 15 August 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.