

# Minutes of a meeting of the WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE on Tuesday 10 July 2018

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## Committee members:

Councillor Cook (Chair)	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Gant (for Councillor Gotch)
Councillor Harris	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Iley-Williamson	Councillor Lygo (for Councillor Corais)
Councillor Upton	

## Officers:

Sally Fleming, Lawyer  
Robert Fowler, Planning Team Leader  
Clare Golden, Team Leader, Urban Design and Heritage  
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Andrew Murdoch, Planning Team Leader  
Sarah Stevens, Planning Service Transformation Consultant

## Apologies:

Councillors Gotch and Corais sent apologies.

## 18. Declarations of interest

### 18/00258/FUL and 18/00933/VAR

Cllr Cook - as a Council appointed trustee for Oxford Preservation Trust and as a member of the Oxford Civic Society stated that he had taken no part in those organisations' discussions or decision making regarding the applications and was approaching them with an open mind.

Cllr Upton - as a Council appointed trustee for Oxford Preservation Trust stated that she had taken no part in any discussions or decision making by those organisations that may have taken place regarding these applications.

### Oxford Heritage Asset Register nominations 2018

Cllr Hollingsworth - as Vice Chair of the Cripsey Meadow Allotments Association said he had had no involvement in the proposals for Castle Mill Stream and Fiddlers Island Stream to be added to the Oxford Heritage Register but would not take part in the decision on those nominations.

## **19. 18/00258/FUL: Northgate House, 13 - 20 Cornmarket Street, Oxford, OX1 3HE**

The Committee considered an application (18/00258/FUL) for planning permission for the demolition of the existing building to ground level and the erection of a replacement building to provide replacement commercial units on the basement, ground and first floors, and new teaching facilities, ancillary accommodation and student fellows' rooms on the upper floors for Jesus College. (Amended Plans)

The Planning Officer introduced the report, noting the addition of two additional conditions (to seek a phasing and materials plan for the surfacing works to Market Street and to seek active retail frontages onto Market Street ) and the correction of the reference to Section 12 in recommendation 1.1 (a) which should read Section 11.

The proposal provided an excellent opportunity to reinvigorate that part of Market Street and Cornmarket. The current building gave a 'back of house' sense onto Market Street. The proposals would see a new principal entrance to the college from Market Street and open up the public realm. The report set out the reasons for the officer recommendation, the principal ones of which were:

- There was no material reason to object
- The deployment of the commercial element was flexible and would contribute to the need to re-energise Cornmarket following the Westgate development
- The scheme represented an important opportunity to redevelop the area and had the potential to act as a positive catalyst for other users in the immediate vicinity
- The expansion of the public realm
- The development of a 'front of house' sense in Market Street.
- The scheme would expose a grade one listed building which is currently hidden from view
- The scheme had been subject to extensive pre-application work and consultation, all views from which had been taken into account. This included positive support from both Historic England and Oxford Civic Society and two sessions with the Design Review Panel, both before and after publication of proposals.
- All anticipated views of the new building fitted well into the Cornmarket Street scene and represented a significant improvement in the case of Market Street.
- The "Gatehouse" tower element of the scheme had been subject to revision following the pre-application phase, notably a reduction in height to 21.3 m and some changes in design detail . This was above the City's benchmark of 18.2 m for new build but this was not an absolute limit . All cases had to be judged on their merits and assessments made of the harm that would be caused by height. Support for proposals in excess of the benchmark was not given lightly. In this case the anticipated skyline views from a variety of directions were considered improved by the scheme.

Debbie Dance, representing the Oxford Presentation Trust spoke against the application.

Professor Sir Nigel Shadbolt (Jesus College), Stuart Cade (Architect), and Simon Sharp (JPPC) spoke in favour of the application. David Stevenson (Jesus College) attended to respond to questions

The Committee discussion included, but was not limited to the following points:

- The extent to which the public had engaged with the various consultation elements of the proposal was questioned. It was explained that there had been every opportunity for the public to do so.
- Traffic management during construction would be dealt with by a condition and taking account of advice from the County Council as Highways Authority. The Committee sought assurance that the Market Street commercial frontage should be active and it was agreed that this should be added as a condition (which the applicant confirmed would be acceptable to them).
- The fact of the City's commitment to a Zero Emissions Zone was not a relevant planning consideration and should play no part in coming to a decision about this application.
- The scheme would have no material impact on current parking arrangements (including those for blue badge holders) in Market Street.
- Some Members of the Committee expressed concern about the height and bulkiness of the Gatehouse Tower while supporting all other elements of the scheme. Agreement to the height of the tower as proposed would not set a precedent in planning terms given the requirement for all proposals to be considered independently and on their merits.

In reaching a decision the Committee considered all the information put before it including the officer's report and presentation and the representations made by speakers.

On being put to a vote a majority of the Committee agreed with the officer recommendation as set out in the report, subject to the addition of two conditions to seek a phasing and materials plan for the surfacing works to Market Street and to seek active retail frontages onto Market Street.

**The Committee resolved to:**

- a) Approve the application for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 11 of the report and 2 additional conditions to seek a phasing and materials plan for the**

**surfacing works to Market Street and to seek active retail frontages onto Market Street and grant planning permission; and**

- b) Delegate authority to the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services to finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report and the two additional conditions referred to in (a) above including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.**