



Planning applications committee

10:00 to 11:20

9 July 2015

Present: Councillors Sands (M) (chair), Herries (vice chair), Blunt, Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Lubbock, Jackson, Neale, Peek and Woollard

1. Declarations of interest

Councillors Sands, Bradford, Brociek-Coulton and Lubbock declared an other interest in item 4, Application no 15/00736/NF3 – Heathgate open space, Norwich as members of the Mousehold Heath Conservators.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2015.

3. Application no 14/01816/F - Land North West Side of 25 - 27 Surrey Street, Norwich

The senior planner (development) presented the report with the aid of plans and slides.

During discussion the senior planner, together with the planning development team leader (outer), referred to the report and answered members' questions. Members considered that they needed to be sure that although this was this was a speculative proposal for development, it must be acceptable for development in the future. There was some discussion over whether the ground floor offices in the scheme could be changed to residential units if the government were to extend the current permitted development rights after 2016. This would mean there would be no controls as to amenity and design of the building. The committee also sought clarification on future change of use for the commercial part of the proposed development. It was noted that there was a residential development next to the bus station at Chelmsford. A member pointed out that he did not object to a mixed development on this site under DM12 but considered that there should have been more consideration given to its detail.

Members sought assurance that the use of a spiral staircase and the lack of a lift in a four storey building was building regulation compliant and that it met the minimum lifetime homes standard. The committee expressed concern about the practicality of accessing the higher storeys by a spiral staircase for people with disabilities, young

children and buggies, and carrying heavy loads, such as shopping and furniture etc. and that a lift had not been provided. Members also commented on the layout of the flats and size.

The senior planner confirmed that the bin store provision was considered satisfactory by environmental health. A member expressed concern about the “dead-end” near the residents’ storage area and the potential safety issues for residents. The senior planner explained the layout for the commercial use on the ground floor and provision of toilets on the ground floor, and that the top floor had been configured to hide the plant machinery. The committee considered the comments of the Norwich Society and were advised that the contemporary design complemented the adjacent buildings. In reply to a member, the senior planner explained that the Norwich Society had commented on an earlier plan and its comments on the revised plans were not really concerned with design matters and. in the officer’s opinion, the revised designs had addressed the Norwich Society’s initial concerns.

A member suggested that there should be a roof garden or green wall. Members were advised that it was not practical to require that there was a sedum roof or green wall. The solar panels on the roof meant there might not be sufficient space for a sedum roof and the size of the roof might mean the area was not large enough for rainwater harvesting to irrigate a green wall. Also the cost of maintaining a green wall would be onerous on future residents. Members expressed concern about the use of the roof garden and its safety for children.

Discussion ensued in which members considered that the proposed residential units met minimum standards but offered poor amenity to future residents. Members expressed concern about the access to the upper storeys and considered that it was unacceptable in the 21st century not to provide a lift to a new-build four storey apartment building (although acknowledged that in some conversion schemes or listed buildings it might not always be possible). Members considered that some of the design features were positive but that they were also concerned about the lack of amenity for future residents and in particular the access arrangements to the flats from Surrey Street could be improved.

Councillor Sands (the chair) moved and Councillor Button seconded that the application be refused on the grounds that there was not an acceptable standard of amenity for future occupants as the flats met minimum size standards but offered very cramped useable space and poor amenity, and a poor arrival and setting, and there was no level access to the flats on the upper storeys; that the entrance and interior circulation to the flats was too dark and narrow and that not providing a lift most likely meant that the design of the flats did not meet the lifetime homes standard.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to refuse Application no 14/01816/F - Land North West Side of 25 - 27 Surrey Street, Norwich on the grounds of amenity to future occupants by not providing a lift; cramped conditions, poor access and setting; the design of the access arrangements and that the committee considered that more of the residential units should meet the lifetime standard; and to ask the head of planning services to provide the reasons for refusal in policy terms,

(Reasons for refusal provided subsequently by the head of planning services:

“The development would fail to provide a satisfactory standard of amenity for future occupiers, by reason of: a poor arrival experience for residents through a narrow and cramped passageway which is not surveyed from the public realm; a poor standard of communal internal circulation space within the building, which would fail to meet lifetime homes standards and its good practice advice, particularly as a result of the design of the ground floor lobby, inadequate spiral staircase, absence of a lift; and cramped and convoluted internal layouts of flats which would greatly reduce useable space. As such the proposals would be contrary to Development Management Policies DM2, DM3, DM12 and DM13 of the adopted Norwich Local Plan 2014, paragraphs 58, 61 and 69 of the NPPF, and the impending requirements of the Technical Housing Standards.”)

4. Application no 15/00736/NF3 – Heathgate open space, Norwich

(Councillors Sands, Bradford, Brociek-Coulton and Lubbock had each declared an interest in this item.)

The planning development team leader (outer) presented the report with the aid of plans and slides.

During discussion the planning development team leader referred to the report and answered members' questions. Members were advised that there would be supervision of the works to ensure that the root system of the oak tree was not damaged. The committee also noted that silver birches and sycamores were not a native species to the heathland and that the replacement planting would comprise the following species: hawthorn, blackthorn, wild cherry and crab apples.

Councillor Brociek-Coulton, as local member for Sewell ward, sought confirmation that the football pitch would be relocated and that the area would be levelled using soil from the top end of the site. The site would be nearer to residential areas.

Members commented that the revised scheme would provide a safe route for cyclists through Heathgate and Cannell Green.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve Application no 15/00736/NF3 – Heathgate open space, Norwich and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. Development in accordance with approved plans;
3. Landscaping (to include details of paving materials, replacement tree planting);
4. Development in accordance with the Arboricultural report;
5. Submission of a detailed schedule of the Arboricultural monitoring/supervision;

6. No removal of trees and vegetation to be carried out outside of the main bird nesting season (March-September)

Article 35(2) statement:

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined above.

5. Application no 15/00694/F – 12 Mile End Road, Norwich, NR4 7QY

The planning development team leader (outer) presented the report with the aid of plans and slides.

During discussion members considered the merits of the application and its impact on the street scene because of the trees and vegetation. Two members considered that an opportunity to improve the appearance of the existing extension had been lost, whilst other members were pleased to see a more contemporary approach to make the building fit the owner's purpose and bring an old house up to date.

RESOLVED, with 10 members voting in favour (Councillors Sands, Herries, Blunt, Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Lubbock, Peek and Woollard) and 2 members voting against (Councillors Jackson and Neale) to approve application no. 15/00694/F – 12 Mile End Road NR4 7QY and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans;

Article 35(2) statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined above.

6. Application no 15/00696/F – 92 Mill Hill Road, Norwich, NR2 3DS

The planning development team leader (outer) presented the report with the aid of plans and slides. He explained that this modern design approach was not visible from the front of the building and that there were other similar dormer windows in the area. The proposal therefore did not provide significant harm to the conservation area.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve application 5/00696/F 92 Mill Hill Road Norwich NR2 3DS and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans.

Article 35(2) statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined above.

CHAIR