
Planning Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 22 February 2024 from 7.30 - 7.49 pm

Present: Councillors Councillor Sara Bedford (Chair), Councillor Steve Drury (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bedford, Ruth Clark, Philip Hearn, Khalid Hussain, Stephen King, Debbie Morris, David Raw and Raj Khuroya (Reserve) (In place of Chris Lloyd)

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Planning Solicitor
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Claire Westwood, Development Management Team Leader
Katharine Simpson, Committee and Electoral Services Manager
Shilpa Manek, Senior Committee Officer

PC48/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrea Fraser and Chris Lloyd.

Councillor Raj Khuroya was substituting for Councillor Chris Lloyd.

PC49/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024 of the Planning Committee be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC50/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Philip Hearn declared a pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5, 22/1764/FUL, World of Water, Hempstead Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD4 8QG as he had an interest in a competitor of the applicant.

The Chair made a Group declaration on behalf of the Liberal Democrat members of the Committee in respect of Item 6, 23/2183/FUL, Silver Birch Cottage, East Lane, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0NY as the architect was a Member of the Group and a Councillor.

PC51/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PC52/23 22/1764/FUL - WORLD OF WATER, HEMPSTEAD ROAD, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD4 8QG

The application was for the demolition of an existing building and the erection of retail food store (Use Class E(a)), with associated access, parking and amenities.

The Officer provided an update. Members who sat on the November Planning Committee were aware that this application was deferred. For those that were not in attendance, a summary of the reasons for deferral and actions which have occurred since:

- Firstly, the applicant confirmed they did not wish to change the access arrangements and wanted to pursue with the existing design and location of the access citing that alternative locations would not be feasible.
- Officers then instructed Evoke to independently review the highway arrangements. They concluded there was insufficient grounds to 'refuse' the junction design proposals from a highway perspective. A number of improvements were recommended, and these had been implemented and were shown on the updated highway drawing.
- In response to erecting fencing or similar means to stop parking on the grass verge either side of the entrance, the Highway Authority confirmed that higher kerb should be perfectly feasible to deter parking and can form part of the s278 agreement.
- On cycle safety, the Highway Authority was content that the scheme enhanced cycle access in the vicinity of the proposed foodstore – mitigation of the crossing point allowed for suitable access to the eastern side of Watford Road and a connection into Gypsy Lane.
- Delivery times had been confirmed to align with the opening hours of the store and the relevant condition had been amended to reflect this.
- Site visit arranged and took place, without agent, and discussion was had regarding whether the Toucan crossing required as part of the Warner. Bros. scheme could be provided. The applicant confirmed they do not need to provide the toucan based on the development proposed.
- In respect of the right hand turn and potential conflict with those turning right into the site, the modelling, speed data (outside of school holidays), audits and review have all concluded that it would be acceptable. In addition, it should be noted that:
 - Priority is given to those turning right into the site.
 - The modelling data is based on worse case scenarios confirms the traffic volumes and speed and that there was sufficient space / gaps in the flow to accommodate these movements. The data had also used growthed data up to 2036 and confirmed there was still capacity within the highway network.
 - Better visibility of the access from those approaching from the roundabout was considered to alter behaviour of drivers and influence speed.
 - It should be noted that it would be hard to completely rule out any conflict between vehicles given driver behaviour, but the scheme has been designed and been found to meet all requirements and thus fully accords with the NPPF in so far as it has been demonstrated that the scheme would not have an unacceptable impact on highways safety.

It was agreed that a site visit was still required with Officers and Councillors, and this would be scheduled during late afternoon, early evening, with the Applicant's Transport Consultant present at the site.

A recommendation to defer the decision to enable the Members of the Planning Committee to have a site visit to be made with the Applicants' Highways Consultant present at the site was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Steve Drury, put to the vote with 7 Members For, 1 Against and 1 Abstained.

RESOLVED: that consideration of planning application 22/1764/FUL be deferred to enable a site visit to be made with the Applicant's Highways Consultant present at the site.

PC53/23 23/2183/FUL – SILVER BIRCH COTTAGE, EAST LANE, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD5 0NY

The application was for the construction of a single storey side extension and relocation of entrance door at Silver Birch Cottage, east Lane, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0NY.

The application would ordinarily have been considered under delegated powers however the agent for the applicant was a Three Rivers District Council Ward Councillor.

Councillor Hearn asked for clarification regarding the Green Belt assessment in light of a recent appeal decision. The Officer advised that each application is assessed on its own merits and that the proposal before Members was not considered to be disproportionate in Green Belt terms.

Cllr Drury asked if the building was locally listed. The Officer confirmed that it was not.

The Committee noted that there were a number of mature trees and requested that Officers contact the Landscape Officer to ask them to consider whether any of the trees at the site would warrant protection via a TPO(s).

The Officer's recommendation to approve the application, subject to the conditions in the report, was proposed by Councillor Matthew Bedford and seconded by Councillor Stephen King and put to a vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the planning application be approved.

CHAIR