

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY ON
WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2020, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor B Deering (Chairman)
Councillors D Andrews, T Beckett,
R Buckmaster, B Crystall, I Devonshire,
J Kaye, I Kemp, T Page, C Redfern, P Ruffles
and T Stowe

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor J Goodeve

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Steven King	- Finance Management Trainee
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Jill Shingler	- Principal Planning Officer
David Snell	- Service Manager (Development Management)
Victoria Wilders	- Legal Services Manager

274 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor R Fernando. It was noted that Councillor Devonshire was substituting for Councillor Fernando.

275 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman said that the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into force on Saturday 4 April 2020 to enable councils to hold remote committee meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic period. This was to ensure local authorities could conduct business during this current public health emergency. This meeting of the Development Management Committee was being held remotely under these regulations, via the Zoom application and was being recorded and live streamed on YouTube.

276 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

277 MINUTES - 4 NOVEMBER 2020

Councillor Beckett proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

278 3/20/1814/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING EXTENSION TO LEISURE CENTRE AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW 2 STOREY EXTENSION INCORPORATING EXERCISE STUDIOS, GYM, SOFT PLAY AREA AND CAFÉ WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING REARRANGEMENT OF CAR PARK AREA, CYCLE PARKING AND ANCILLARY EXTERNAL PLANT. PROVISION OF 120SQM TEMPORARY STUDIO AT HARTHAM LEISURE CENTRE, HARTHAM LANE, HERTFORD, SG14 1QR

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application 3/20/1814/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report submitted. It was also recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Building Control to finalise the detail of the conditions.

The Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning and Building Control, referred to the late representations summary and said that there had been an error in the report and a further condition regarding the removal of a temporary studio building.

The Committee was reminded that the lead local flood authority had reiterated that they had no objection and had suggested an alternative wording to condition 16. The Principal Planning Officer requested that this alternative wording be included in the recommendation.

The Principal Planning Officer said that she had received formal comments from the conservation and urban design team and they had generally praised the quality of the design and had confirmed that they had no objections subject to conditions. She presented a selection of plans to the Committee, for the application site that was located on the edge of Hartham Common in between the River Beane and the River Lea.

Members were advised that the site was in a green finger of land that was in flood zone two and was also located within the Hertford Conservation Area. The site was close to the town centre and was well connected in terms of bus routes and there were also good pedestrian and cycle links.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the plan was to demolish the later extension to the building and to replace this with a two storey extension to provide a larger gym and studio space plus a café and a soft play area. Members were shown the elevation drawings and in particular the south west elevation for the shape of the proposed extension. The Principal Planning Officer drew attention to the existing corrugated green roof and highlighted a number of features of the proposed development including the curved aluminium roof.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the plans showed the landscape concept in terms of how the development would be accommodated into the common area of the park. She said that the plan detailed the trees that were to be removed and the

proposed living wall which served to soften and integrate the building into its setting. The living wall would serve to reduce solar gain and would assist with cooling requirements.

The Principal Planning Officer said that a new proposed footpath from the north south footpath through Hartham Common would lead to the café entrance at the rear and the proposed pergola between the trees would emphasise the entrance and provide a good linkage to the park.

The Principal Planning Officer covered a number of other key features of the design including timber effect cladding and a roof that sloped down to the south which would be ideal for photo voltaic cells. Members were reminded of the planning history and were advised that this was now a well-designed and sustainable building where any harm was outweighed by special circumstances.

Mr Lindus addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Councillor Beckett congratulated Officers and the design team on the improvements to the design and he believed that this would be a scheme to be proud of going forward. He said it was important that any extra plant noise was attenuated via the breeam strategy to avoid a dramatic effect on people using the park.

Councillor Redfern referred to condition 16 and asked for some clarity in terms of details of replacement trees. She said that this was a 100 percent

improvement on the previous design. Councillor Devonshire commented that he did not believe that 2 vehicle charging points was sufficient.

The Principal Planning Officer said that a condition requested by Environmental Health would ensure that there would be adequate noise attenuation. She said that there was unfortunately insufficient space within the site for planting significantly larger trees and she advised that the trees being lost were not of the highest quality.

The Principal Planning Officer said that as no additional parking spaces were proposed, it would be difficult to justify retrofitting for a significant number of charging points as an increase in parking provision was not part of this application.

Councillor Andrews stated that curves were good in nature and this application was now a much improved project and would help to diffuse the impact of this building. He said that cabling should be put in place so that infrastructure for car and bike charging could be facilitated in future.

Councillor Ruffles said that he was reassured by the concerns aired by the Members of the Committee at the previous meeting. He said that everything about the current application was an improvement on the previous scheme and was more in accordance with the modern age. He commented on the significant value the wider population placed on the openness of Hartham Common.

Councillor Kaye said the living wall was an excellent proposal and he liked the proposed timber finish. He agreed that rapid chargers or the cabling to facilitate this should be installed on this site.

Councillor Kemp said that he was very pleased with the new design which included curves and gentle slopes, which was much more in character with the existing building and the parkland setting. He said that he was also pleased to see the proposed solar panels and the air source heat pumps, as well as the living wall and the aim to reach breem excellence standards.

Councillor Kemp asked what measures were being considered to ensure the upkeep of the living wall. He also commented on whether there was a backup plan should the green wall need to be replaced in the future. He said he hoped that more electric vehicle charging points could be added as soon as possible.

The Principal Planning Officer said that a condition could be applied in order to secure wiring for future electric vehicle charging points. The Service Manager (Development Management) said that condition 11 regarding the car park management plan could be amended as part of the delegated authority being sought regarding the conditions.

The Principal Planning Officer said that there was a condition requiring that a landscape and environmental management plan be put in place regarding the upkeep of the living wall. She said it would be simple and inexpensive to replace this feature with cladding in future if circumstances

changed.

Councillor Page said that rapid charges were important due to people attending on a limited timed basis for exercise and he asked whether rapid charges could be conditioned. He said that he was pleased that the conservation and urban design advice had been acknowledged.

Councillor Crystall commented on the importance of electric vehicle charging in light of the impending ban on petrol and diesel vehicles. He said that the original plans had included a grass meadow in the car park and he wondered if this could be reinstated in the plans for this site. He said the trees to be planted were ornamental small growing species and these could not be compared to 25 metre high Willow and Hornbeam species.

Councillor Buckmaster expressed a minor concern regarding the gazebo area being adjacent to existing plant machinery. She asked whether this would be screened off by more than the existing metal fence.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the Conservation Officer was satisfied with the gabion features in terms of the design in a conservation area. She said that she did not believe that the Landscape Officer had understood that these features were to be seating with a timber finish and would be an important part of the overall sustainability of the design.

Members were advised that Officers could encourage the planting of more trees but could not require this to

happen as the meadow area was not part of this site. Councillor Page said that there would be a need for rapid charging in this location. The Service Manager (Development Management) said that most public use car charging facilities were now rapid chargers.

Councillor Andrews commented on the benefits of the proposed seating area for the local flora and fauna as part of the wider sustainability system. He said that motorway service station style chargers were not required due to the short journeys people would be making to visit Hartham.

Councillor Kemp said that it was really good to see the plan for this building and be able to believe that this was the best that could be achieved in the sense that it was a building that did not need to be screened.

Councillor Kaye said that 7 kw charges were fine for domestic use or at conference centres where a 7.5 hour charge was fine. He said that rapid charges would be more appropriate here and the wiring would need to be put in place to facilitate this. Councillor Deering commented on whether the site would be screened off in some way as it was open when viewed from Folly Island. He said that fencing would affect the openness of the area.

The Service Manager (Development Management) said that he had noted the comments of Members regarding electric vehicle charging points and Officers would take this matter forward for discussion with the applicant. The Principal Planning Officer commented on the proposed timber screening which was to be

erected around the sub-station and the air source heat pump. She said that there was no intention for the whole site to be screened from the front.

Councillor Andrews proposed, and Councillor Buckmaster seconded, a motion that application 3/20/1814/FUL be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report, subject to the amended condition 16, and with authority being delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control to finalise the details of the conditions.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED –that (A) in respect of application 3/20/1814/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report now submitted, subject to the amended condition 16; and

(B) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control to finalise the details of the conditions.

279 ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

- (A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non-determination;
- (B) Planning Appeals lodged;

(C) Planning Appeals: Inquiry and Informal Hearing Dates

(D) Planning Statistics.

280 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business. The Chairman wished Members and Officers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The meeting closed at 8.11 pm

Chairman
Date