

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2023, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Y Estop (Chairman)
Councillors R Buckmaster, R Carter,
S Copley, I Devonshire, G Hill, T Stowe and
S Watson

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A Daar, T Deffley, J Dunlop and
V Glover-Ward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Maya Cullen	- Senior Planning Officer
Richard Freeman	- Interim Development Management Team Leader
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Ellen Neumann Sara Saunders	- Planning Officer - Head of Planning and Building Control
Victoria Wilders	- Legal Services Manager

96 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Hill and seconded by Councillor Carter, that Councillor Watson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee for the 2023/24 civic year.

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

RESOLVED – that Councillor Watson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee for the 2023/24 civic year.

97 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burt, Dunlop, Holt and Marlow. It was noted that Councillor Bull was substituting for Councillor Holt and Councillor Smith was substituting for Councillor Burt.

98 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Councillors Deering and Stowe for their work as the former Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. She said that this was the first formal meeting of the 2023/24 civic year and reminded members to use the microphones as the meeting was being broadcasted via You Tube.

99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Watson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he had two children who attended Simon Balle All-through School. He confirmed that he felt that he was able to determine the application with a clear and open mind.

100 MINUTES - 5 APRIL 2023

Councillor Estop proposed and Councillor Stowe seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. Councillors Buckmaster, Bull, Carter, Copley, Devonshire, Hill, Smith and Watson abstained from voting as they had not been present at the meeting on 5 April 2023.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

101 3/22/2534/FUL - REMOVAL OF FIVE TEMPORARY BUILDINGS, ERECTION OF A SPORTS HALL WITH RECEPTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS, AMENDMENTS TO VEHICULAR PARKING AND CIRCULATION, IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY, TOGETHER WITH HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT SIMON BALLE ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL, MANGROVE ROAD, HERTFORD, SG13 8AJ

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application 3/22/2534/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

The Planning Case Officer and the Interim Development Management Team Leader presented the application to the Committee and summarised in detail the main issues for Members to consider. Members were advised that there would be no harm to the setting of designated heritage assets and the materials proposed to be used in the construction were in keeping with the properties along Mangrove Road and would also be of a high-quality design.

Members were advised that the education, health and community benefits outweighed the limited harm to the green belt and the application was recommended for approval.

Rachel Kirk and Mike Moss addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Councillor Stowe asked for some clarification in respect of the comments from the conservation and urban design team regarding the grass areas and new parking areas having trees and shrubs. He also asked for some clarification in relation to the comments from the landscape officer in paragraph 5.9 regarding tree surrounds in the car parking areas and permeable paving.

Councillor Copley asked for some clarity as to the size of the trees to be removed and also in relation to the size of the proposed replacement trees. Councillor Smith asked if the proposed 12 cycle spaces were in addition to existing cycle spaces.

The Planning Officer advised that the 12 cycle parking spaces were in addition to the existing cycle parking at the school. The Interim Development Management Team Leader said that officers reported to committee the comments from conservation and urban design team and the landscaping officer. He said that a key issue was that the mature trees that fronted onto Mangrove Road were to be retained and there would no significant works near to them as these trees formed a very significant part of the conservation area.

Members were advised that in terms of the proposed planting, the comments from the landscaping officer regarding the indicative landscaping proposals being acceptable had been given slightly more weight in the report. The Interim Development Team Leader said that some of ecological precautionary approaches were aimed at mitigating concerns in respect of trees in car parks.

The Interim Development Management Team Leader referred to the calm garden or soft landscaped area adjacent to the reception and on the route for pupils to take into the school as being a significant benefit of the proposed scheme.

Members were advised that regarding the quality of the tree planting, this was a question of the right tree

in the right place. Whilst planting a semi mature specimen can be helpful for screening purposes, they were less likely to thrive once they were moved. He said that it was preferable to have younger trees planted.

Councillor Carter said that there was a lot of traffic and congestion in the surrounding roads around dropping off time, particularly in wet weather. She noted that there would be a traffic and construction management plan and the transport plan would be updated. She said that traffic management needed some attention due to congestion and it was important that there was sufficient parking for more sports fixtures.

The Chairman said that the application required the school to produce a travel plan. The Planning Officer said that in terms of the parking spaces for the use of the hall by wider community, this would likely be outside of school hours so there would be an acceptable level of parking spaces remaining outside of the school hours.

The Planning Officer said that a sustainable travel plan would be updated and secured by condition which would promote sustainable travel such as walking and promoting the local bus routes, and this had been recommended by the highway authority.

Officers did not anticipate that there would be any significant increase in traffic generation of traffic movements as some of the fixtures were being held at another site in Ware. Members were advised that the construction and traffic management plan would be

conditioned so that details of construction vehicle numbers and types of vehicles and parking would be detailed in that plan document that would have to be discharged prior to the commencement of the development.

Councillor Hill asked if any consideration had been given to increase or introduce a better cycleway to the school as Simon Balle was hemmed in by the A414 and cycling to the school was very difficult. He asked if any consideration had been given to introducing any shelter or photovoltaic (PV) cells to the parking bays to keep cars cool in the summer and increase the number of PV cells.

The Chairman said that the council was embarking on a local cycling and walking plan. She said that the suggestion about PV cells was something for the applicant to take away as a suggestion. Members could not add this to the application to make it acceptable.

The Planning Officer said that it was considered that the trips generated as part of the application would not be significant and additional cycleways were not proposed as part of the application.

Councillor Buckmaster asked about the archaeological report and referred to condition 5. She asked if this was going to be a desk-based report or an actual dig. The Interim Development Team Leader said that there had already been some works carried at the site as part of the historic development of the wider area.

Members were advised that a fair amount was known about the potential archaeology that might be present and the condition was the standard written scheme of investigation. This was more than desk based. The ground works would be monitored for archaeological impact by the Hertfordshire County Council's historic environmental unit and if works were required, these works would be detailed in that written scheme of investigation.

The Chairman commented on the principle of the development in green belt as the school was in the green belt. She said that Members had to consider the special circumstances which might make this development satisfactory and whether the proposed development would affect the openness of the green belt. She said that Members had to consider whether the development would affect the openness of the green belt.

The Planning Officer said that the very special circumstances centred on the community use that would be of great benefit in terms of other sports groups being able to use the sports hall outside of school hours, which would result in community health and social benefits for the school and the wider community.

Councillor Smith commented that she agreed with the views expressed in the report and thanked the school representatives for the case that they had put forwards.

The Chairman made several comments in respect of the planning conditions and asked for some clarity in respect of some of the conditions. The Planning Officer responded to these questions in detail for Members.

Councillor Watson commented on the loss of grey water storage now being an aspiration that the school might want to add later. He asked if that aspiration remained viable post construction. The Interim Development Management Team Leader said that grey water harvesting was very useful to reduce the need for mains water and as a way of dealing with surface water run-off. He explained in detail how grey water was considered in respect in flooding.

Members were advised that the grey water system had been removed from the surface water drainage strategy because the lead local flood authority could not be confident what impact it would have in terms of managing flood risk.

Councillor Watson asked about the 2 litre per second run off and what this was in relation to. The Interim Development Management Team Leader advised that the flow rate of 2 litres per second was the amount leaving the pipe into the sewer network from a storage tank. Members were advised that the flow rate of 2 litres per second was managed to avoid all the water hitting the wider drainage network at the same time.

Councillor Smith asked about condition 16 and bat and bird boxes. She asked if a specific reference could be added to that condition in respect of provision for swifts. Members were advised that the Herts and

Middlesex Wildlife Trust had not specifically asked for the protection of swifts.

The Interim Development Management Team Leader said that the committee could add that reference to the condition, but Officers recommended that this was not to the detriment of other bird species. He suggested an informative which was advice to the applicant that provision be made for swifts when condition 16 was discharged.

Councillor Stowe proposed and Councillor Devonshire seconded, a motion that application 3/22/2534/FUL be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions detailed at the end of the report and the additional condition detailed in the addendum, with delegated authority being granted to the Head of Planning and Building Control to finalise the detail of the conditions, subject to the following additional informative:

8. Provision of swift boxes

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

RESOLVED –that (A) in respect of application 3/22/2534/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed at the end of the report and the additional condition detailed in the addendum, with delegated authority being granted to the Head of Planning and Building Control to finalise the detail of the conditions, subject to the following additional informative:

8. Provision of swift boxes

102 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; and
- (D) Planning Statistics.

103 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

Chairman

Date