

# **DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

# **TUESDAY 23RD MAY 2023 IN THE GUILDHALL**

Present: Councillors G Allen, L Auletta, T Bennett, J Cummings, J Hodgson and L Smallridge.

Apologies: Cllrs Collinson and Cooper.

In Attendance: Four members of the public, representatives of Acorn Property Group, BeaconComms and Carless Adams Architects, Cllrs Beavis and Presswell, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.**

Cllr Allen read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

The apologies were received and accepted.

*The Committee will adjourn Standing Orders for the following items:*

### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A member of the public from the Camomile Lawn development requested the Committee’s support in objecting to application 4021/21/VAR on the basis of concerns previously raised: over massing, including height of the building and retaining wall; flooding; foul water; lighting; excavation of soil and its transportation away from the site; concerns about parking in residential roads; impact on local infrastructure, particularly GP and ambulance services.

*The Committee reconvened Standing Orders.*

### **2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY**

**To**

**a. Make a recommendation to Full Council for the Chair of Council Matters Committee for 2023/24; and**

Cllr Allen proposed Cllr Bennett, seconded by Cllr Hodgson which was supported unanimously. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Cllr Bennett becomes the Chair of the Planning Committee.

**b. Elect a deputy chair for the Committee.**

Cllr Bennett proposed Cllr Smallridge as Deputy Chair which was **AGREED** unanimously.

Cllr Bennett took the Chair.

**3. STEAMER QUAY CARE HOME**

**To update on the latest proposals for the care home site on Steamer Quay Road from the developers Carless.**

Carless Adams Architects explained that many of the changes in the variation application (which continues to be for a 68-bed care home as per the original approval) reflects lessons learned from care home operations during Covid, for example prevention rather than reaction to health problems, and making the care home as independent as possible. The variations applied for include: lowering the building into the ground by a metre to reduce the overall height of the building – site has undergone ground investigation and this is above the water zone; addition of an external green wall; extending the basement; updated lighting strategy; oxygen room (to enable oxygen provision to all rooms); larger staff room and facilities to aid infection control (individual lockers, staff uniform washing facilities).

The Committee asked about: the height of the retaining wall; what constitutes the footprint of the building (for example, does it include balconies); proximity of the building to bat pinch points along the river and hedgerow; irrigation of the green wall.

**4. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INSTALLATION**

**To update on the proposed telecommunications installation on Babbage Road from the applicants BeaconComms.**

BeaconComms explained that the proposed 23 metre mast would replace an existing mast on the industrial estate. The mast would support the Government’s Emergency Services Network roll out for Totnes and could potentially be used by the four main mobile networks in the UK to increase coverage in the town. The base of the tower would be 1.2 metres wide and of a lattice construction.

The Committee asked: where alternative locations had been looked at; would additional masts be required in the future; the lifespan of the tower; emissions monitoring, health checks and the guidelines being followed.

The Committee were updated that application 1363/23/COM for this mast has been removed from the South Hams District Council (SHDC) website.

**5. BALTIC WHARF PHASE 2**

**To update on the latest proposals for Phase 2 of the Baltic Wharf development from the developers Acorn.**

Acorn Property Group updated that they are looking for revised permission for the site to that set out in the Joint Local Plan, which is no longer viable. Since the initial scheme in 2013 three factors have changed: flood criteria has increased; retirement community demand no longer exists (acknowledged by SHDC) therefore the proposed 80 retirement apartments have gone into the overall housing numbers; and the removal of 1 acre of hillside has been rejected as it is not environmentally sustainable and would involve too may lorry movements to remove the soil. The 2023 proposal is for 192 houses and apartments, a boatyard, 42,000ft of commercial space (offices and workshops) and a care home, incorporating car and bicycle parking and bin storage under buildings, a public amenity space and access to the river. The inclusion of affordable housing is being explored with a housing association.

The Committee asked: if the river pontoons will impede the river boat turning around; vehicle access to the boatyard; public realm space; the footprint of the boatyard.

### **6. CONFIRMATION OF** **MINUTES**

**To approve the minutes of 24th April 2023 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

### **7. TREE WORKS APPLICATIONS**

**To make recommendations on the following tree works applications:**

7a. 1440/23/TPO - T517: Quercus robur - Fell due to safety reasons, T326: Phillyrea - Fell due to safety reasons, T504, T508, T331, T527: Fraxinus excelsior- due to safety reasons, T516: Pinus nigra - due to safety reasons -L8& 529: Leylandii x9 - Fell due to safety reasons, M1: Monterey Cypress- Fell for management reasons & T357: Monterey pine - Fell due to safety reasons. Endsleigh, Jubilee Road, Totnes, TQ9 5BP.

The Committee requests to defer comment on this application until they have had a site visit with the SHDC tree officer given the number of TPO trees affected and the current amenity value of these trees.

7b. 1540/23/TCA – T1: Fraxinus excelsior – fell. Applecroft, The Lamb, Totnes, TQ9 5SE.

The Committee would welcome the thoughts of the SHDC tree officer and if they believe that the work is required.

### **8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**To make recommendations on the following planning applications:**

*Note: Cllrs Allen and Hodgson observes and do not vote on any applications which would potentially be discussed at a Development Management Committee meeting at SHDC.*

8a. 4021/21/VAR - READVERTISEMENT (new plans and documents) Application for variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) of planning consent 4165/17/FUL. Development site at SX 809597 Steamer Quay Road, Totnes.

Object. The Committee continues to have concerns as raised in January 20233, namely:

* Overmassing of the site in the revised extension plans which seem too significant a change to be a variation to an application that has expired in terms of the volume of the building (rather than footprint), and the Committee would suggest that a new application is submitted given timing and the scale of the changes applied for.
* Flood risk;
* The sensitivity of the area for wildlife and the impact of the extension on light pollution;
* Work on the site starting before all conditions of application 4165/17/FUL had been met.

On reviewing the current plans and following a presentation from the architects the Committee also has concerns about:

* Biodiversity - whether the current variation application conforms with the targets as set out in SHDC declaring a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency. The revised plans seem to have moved the building nearer to the wildlife corridor which is not only an important area to avoid light spill but also this is a known commuting route for the protected Greater Horseshoe bat and this particular point of the River Dart is a pinch point in that commuting route such that additional care with the duty of protection for this endangered species needs to be ensured in the planning conditions.
* Car Parking – there are very few spaces (19) provided for the number of staff and visitors which will exacerbate parking on neighbouring residential roads.
* Roof - loss of biodiversity in splitting the sedum roof over more areas and reducing its proposed extent. The proposed green walls do not mitigate for this and will require extensive irrigation and maintenance which is not considered sustainable.
* Design – the building will look very monolithic from the river which is a tourist access point to the town (contrary to DEV20 Place shaping and the quality of the built environment). The previous stepping down of the top storey at the South Eastern end towards Paradise Walk was critical to ensuring that the building form responded to its landscape context, this has now been lost.
* Drainage – concern that the most up-to-date data from 2022 has not been used.

8b. 1234/23/HHO - Householder application for front dormer & 2 roof windows to existing rear dormer. 27 Lansdowne Park, Totnes, TQ9 5UW.

Support, but the Committee would request the use of hung slate on the dormer to complement the neighbouring property.

8c. 1273/23/HHO - Householder application for proposed single storey extension (resubmission of 3539/22/HHO). 9 North Street, Totnes, TQ9 5NZ.

The Committee does not object to the increased footprint but they would suggest modifications to the elevation to suggest a single door to align with the sash window on the first floor to complement neighbouring properties.

8d. 0715/23/HHO - Householder application for loft conversion, front porch, external insulation and balcony steps. Coromandel, Kingsbridge Hill, Totnes, TQ9 5TA.

Support.

8e. 4180/22/HHO - Householder application for proposed extension. 36 Follaton, Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5ND.

Support.

8f. 1235/23/HHO - Householder application for conversion of internal garage into a room. Internal alterations to create open plan kitchen/dining area. 8 Birchwood Close, Totnes, TQ9 5GB.

Support.

8g. 0804/23/LBC - Listed Building Consent for the replacement of rotten rafters to outbuilding roof, replace non-original battens, replace defective non-original roof tie & replace missing T&G board on end courtyard wall. 6 Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5PH.

Support, but with the comment that the slates that are used match those on the adjoining neighbouring outbuilding roof.

8h. 1283/23/FUL - Application for proposed alterations to dwelling (Flat). Flat 74c High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5SN.

Object. The Committee notes that the Heritage Impact Assessment identifies a number of historic features which has generated the following comments for the objection:

* Removal historic roof timbers above the garage and the proposed roof raising and profile would lose the hip roof shape of the historic roof;
* Removal of the historic window in the workshop – this should be retained to maintain the character of the dwelling.
* Moving the main entrance door erodes the blank side wall on South Street which does not enhance the listed building. If moving the door is considered acceptable, it should be located where the side wall is thin, to minimise loss of historic fabric (thick stone wall).

Whilst the application is not retrospective, it would appear that the mezzanine floor in the garage has already been installed without permission.

8i. 1157/23/HHO - Householder application for timber build office & car parking space with charging point. 72 Higher Westonfields, Totnes, TQ9 5QZ.

Object. Overdevelopment of a domestic garden in terms of footprint and height (the estimated floor area is much larger than the figure shown).

8j. 0747/23/FUL - Installation of 4no. External Air Conditioning Units. Seymour Vets, Steamer Quay Road, Totnes, TQ9 5AL.

Support.

8k. 1392/23/ADV - Advertisement consent to replace existing double-sided internally illuminated 6-sheet bus shelter advertising displays with double-sided digital displays. Bus Stop, Station Road, Totnes.

Object. The Committee has safety concerns about digital advertising on the shelter with changing images so close to a junction, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which states no distractions at road junctions.

8l. 1338/23/COM - Notice of intention to install a telegraph pole at 10.5m high (9m above ground) for the provision of FTTP. Land at SX 798 060, Totnes, TQ9 5PS.

### Overtaken by events – this application has been refused by SHDC.

### **9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**To consider the Examiner’s Report and modifications for the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan and make a recommendation to Full Council.**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts the modifications in their entirety as set out in the Examiner’s report on the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan, and that the Council supports the plan going forward to referendum.

### **10. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT FORUM**

**To consider any recommendations from the Traffic and Transport Forum Steering Group held on 26th April 2023.**

Noted.

### **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Planning Committee – Monday 19th June 2023 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

Sara Halliday

Governance and Projects Manager

May 2023