

Plans Panel (City Centre)

Thursday, 13th August, 2009

PRESENT: Councillor M Hamilton in the Chair

Councillors D Blackburn, Mrs R Feldman,
T Hanley, J Monaghan, E Nash and
N Taggart

17 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Members and Officers to introduce themselves

18 Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal/prejudicial interests for the purpose of Section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 8 to 12 of the Members Code of Conduct

Applications 09/02237/OT and 09/02239/CA – Western Campus University of Leeds – Councillor Hamilton declared a personal and prejudicial interest through being employed by the University of Leeds who were the applicants (minute 21 refers)

Applications 09/02237/OT and 09/02239/CA – Western Campus University of Leeds – Councillor Nash declared a personal interest as a member of English Heritage which had been consulted on the proposals (minute 21 refers)

19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Latty and from Councillor McKenna who was substituted for by Councillor Taggart

20 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 16th July 2009 be approved subject to the following amendments:

Minute 15 – Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) and the FAS Design Guide and Vision

- the need to relate the sum of money required for the scheme to the huge number of the city's assets which would be protected and also to consider the impact of flooding on a human scale in relation to the funding needed to help prevent this occurring – add the following – 'and that £100 million costs relative to the number of properties protected is not as significant'

Add additional bullet point under 'Members commented on the following matters:

- that the application for planning permission should include details of defence works for both a 1 in 200 year flood level and a 1 in 100 year flood level so that Members could decide which was appropriate

21 Applications 09/02237/OT and 09/02239/CA - Demolition of the former gymnasium and existing lecture theatre and erection of 3 buildings with ancillary parking and landscaping and separate concurrent Conservation Area consent application for the demolition of the former gymnasium - Western Campus University of Leeds

(Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter, Councillor Hamilton withdrew from the meeting)

Councillor Monaghan was elected to chair this item

Councillor Monaghan in the chair

Plans, drawings, graphics, photographs and a sample of the proposed colour of brick were displayed at the meeting

Officers presented the report which related to the erection of three buildings and associated Conservation Area consent on a site which comprised the former Leeds Grammar School which was a Grade II Listed Building

Building A would be a new law school and for which detailed permission was being sought; building B, an educational building for which outline permission for the scale and layout was being sought and building C a document archive store, with outline permission for the scale of the development only being sought. The site was situated in the Woodhouse-Moorlands Conservation Area and was adjacent to the University Precinct Conservation Area

The scheme formed part of the University's Strategic Development Framework for the campus which had been presented to Members at the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 28th February 2008. An informal, pre-application presentation on proposals for the former Leeds Grammar School site had been made to Panel Members on 26th March 2009

Members were informed that as part of the proposals the greenspace within the site would be enhanced by tree planting to create a collegiate feel to the area. Enhanced connectivity through the site would be provided by a pedestrian and cycle route which would run diagonally across the site

The demolition and construction works would be phased with the Law School being the first building to be erected. This would see the provision of an enhanced courtyard treatment to the south of the Law School, improved pedestrian access and disabled parking spaces, together with a basement car park for 59 cars which would be accessed off Belle Vue Road. The Listed boundary wall surrounding much of the site would be retained, with only a break in this forming the access to the car park which would be softened by the use of structures which would support climbing plants

During the construction of building A a temporary car park providing 77 spaces was being requested; this use would cease upon occupation of building A

A limited palette of materials would be used throughout the site, these being stone-coloured brick, glazing and pre-treated copper which would be used as the

material for the protruding feature of a moot court which would be included on the Law School building

A BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' was being sought for building A, and the provision of a biomass boiler would assist in attaining this. For buildings B and C a rating of 'Excellent' was being sought, with these matters being conditioned as part of any approval

A limited amount of plant would be situated on the roof and this would be screened with louvered cladding for minimal visibility

Regarding building B, this would be set further back from the Belle Vue Road frontage, by 5m to the lower floors and a further 5m to the upper floors

In respect of building C, some flexibility was being sought regarding the siting of the archive. Members were informed that there was also the potential for a hard landscaped seating area outside this building

The development would be screened on the Woodsley Road side through the existing bank of trees which would be retained. The gaps between the buildings would lessen the impact of the development along the Belle Vue Road frontage and to further enhance the scheme a double row of trees around the perimeter of the central green space would be provided

Officers were of the view that in terms of design and scale the proposals respected the character of the Conservation Area and recommended approval of the applications to the Panel

The Panel heard representations on behalf of the applicant and an objector who attended the meeting

Members commented on the following matters:

- the massing of the buildings along Belle Vue Road with concerns they were overdominant
- the roof line of the proposed Law School and whether this could be sloping to reflect the Listed Grammar School and the nearby residential properties
- the use of copper in the scheme, with mixed views on this, but with the majority of the Panel expressing concern at the copper projection on the Law School in terms of it being too much of a contrast with the brick and glazing and that it created a 'solid' element to the building
- the use of copper in the long term, whether this would endure or begin to look dated, so diminishing the visual impact of the scheme
- concerns at the principle of siting an archive building on a green area
- the design of the archive building, that it was too square and was not sited correctly within the scheme
- an acknowledgement of the limitations on the design of archive buildings due to their specific requirements
- concerns regarding the use of copper cladding on the archive building as the primary elevational treatment
- cycle and access arrangements; concerns at the proposed diagonal route across the site and the view this should remain as open space
- concerns that a cycle track was being proposed across Woodhouse Moor
- the car parking being proposed and whether the University encouraged staff to use alternative transport methods

- the height of the wall of the lecture theatre in building A facing onto Belle Vue Road
- the possibility of extending the 'green' wall to add interest to the plain wall
- the images presented to inform Members; concerns that several of the views shown could never be seen from normal viewing points and that it was unreasonable to provide such images

Officers provided the following responses:

- regarding the dominance of the buildings along the Belle Vue Road frontage, that the buildings were largely set back by 3 metres and that there was a 35m space between the proposed Law School and the frontages of the adjacent terraced properties
- that the eaves line of building A was a critical detail, and whilst a sloping roof might not be appropriate, the possibility of introducing a taper to the eaves line could be considered
- that in the design of the Law School the client had wished to make a statement regarding the moot court and that copper had been chosen as the material to visually express this. The Civic Architect, Mr Thorp, stated that there were three expressions, ie brick, glazing and copper, in one elevation and that if Members were unhappy at the use of copper, this could be reviewed. This would also lead to a review of the use of copper on buildings B and C as the intention had been to create some architectural language between the buildings. That the use of copper to the moot court could be enhanced by the use of vertical standing seam copper for added interest, however Mr Thorp stated that for the archive building a more muted material might be suitable together with a textured surface
- that the application provided for enhancements for cycle and pedestrian access within the site only. The Panel's Highways Officer stated that a project existed to improve a network of cycle routes across the city and that currently a track across Woodhouse Moor existed, with the aim being to resurface this. However it was agreed to consult local Ward Members, the Friends of Woodhouse Moor and Councillor Nash on any proposals for works within the Moor arising directly from the development
- that it was part of the University's Strategic Development Framework to erect a multi-storey car park, but that it also had in place a comprehensive Green Travel Plan for staff and students and that no student parking provision was being included in the development
- regarding the height of the wall, that ground levels fell away down Belle Vue Road and that some extra wall height was required to provide a retaining parapet to the courtyard space above
- that the aerial graphics helped to demonstrate the set backs to the buildings and that the architectural images were often helpful in assessing the application and were not intended as views of the scheme from around the site

Members considered how to proceed

RESOLVED –

09/02237/OT

To approve in principle and to defer and delegate final approval to the Chief Planning Officer subject to:

- the conditions set out in the submitted report (plus any others which might be considered appropriate)
- further discussions regarding the eaves line detail on building A
- the use of copper cladding or alternative treatment
- a review of the lecture theatre wall treatment to Belle Vue Road
- the elevations and materials for the archive building to be reconsidered, with the Reserved Matters application being brought to Panel for determination
- reconsideration of the diagonal footpath across the greenspace
- details of any works to Woodhouse Moor arising directly as a result of this development to be referred to Ward Councillors, Friends of Woodhouse Moor and Councillor Nash for comment

together with the completion of a legal agreement within 3 months from the date of resolution unless otherwise agreed by the Chief Planning Officer, to include the obligations as specified in the Appraisal section of the submitted report, Main Issue 5

09/02239/CA

To agree in principle and to defer and delegate final approval to the Chief Planning Officer subject to the conditions set out in the submitted report (and any others which might be considered appropriate)

22 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 10th September 2009 at 1.30pm