

NORTH AND EAST PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Akhtar in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J Heselwood,
D Jenkins, R Jones, M Millar, N Sharpe
and K Renshaw

SITE VISIT

The site visit was attended by:
Cllrs Akhtar, Jenkins, Jones and Renshaw.

89 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

90 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

91 Late Items

There were no late items.

92 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were made at the meeting.

93 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr McKenna and Cllr Stephenson.
Cllr Renshaw was present at the meeting as substitute for Cllr McKenna.

PRE - ELECTION ADVICE

The Legal Adviser to the Panel read out the following statement:
Before we start today's meeting, as members know, as a result of local and regional elections being called for the 2 May, currently we are in the pre-election period of heightened sensitivity period.

The Chair has asked me to advise members that the purpose of the pre-election period is not to prevent the Council carrying out its normal business, but it is to prevent the business conducted by the Council being used or having the potential to be perceived as being used, to secure any electoral advantage.

As such, please treat this as normal Plans Panel meeting but be mindful of debate that amounts to or could reasonably be perceived to amount to electioneering.

94 Minutes - 28th March 2024

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th March 2024, be approved as a correct record.

95 19/07024/FU – Demolition of existing industrial buildings, repair and retention of existing boundary wall, and redevelopment of site with five multi-storey apartment blocks providing 371 dwellings (comprising 132 x 1 - beds, 198 x 2 beds and 41 x 3 beds) with associated ancillary community facilities; children's play area, public and private open spaces; basement under - croft and surface level car parking; landscaping; upgrading of vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Buslingthorpe Lane; internal roads and footpaths; wind mitigation measures and other infrastructure at Hilltop Works, Buslingthorpe Lane, Meanwood, Leeds, LS7 2DB

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented an application for the demolition of existing industrial buildings, repair and retention of existing boundary wall, and redevelopment of site with five multi-storey apartment blocks providing 371 dwellings with associated ancillary community facilities; children's play area, public and private open spaces; basement under - croft and surface level car parking; landscaping; upgrading of vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Buslingthorpe Lane; internal roads and footpaths; wind mitigation measures and other infrastructure at Hilltop Works, Buslingthorpe Lane, Meanwood, Leeds, LS7 2DB

Earlier in the day Members of the Plans Panel had visited the site, photographs and slides were shown throughout the presentation.

The Planning Officer provided the following information, including an update to what was in the report:

- The description in the report was amended to:
 - 140 x1 bed
 - 176 x 2 beds
 - 53 x 3 beds
- The affordable housing mix:
 - 6 x 1 bed at 21%
 - 19 x 2 beds at 73%
 - 4 x 3 beds at 14%
- The contributions had changed with a contribution of £851,500 towards capacity mitigation on the A61 corridor with a proportion of this used for improvements of the adjacent junction of Buslingthorpe Lane and Scott Hall Road. It was noted that this improvement was required as a result of the proposed development.
- There were to be two additional conditions imposed:

- To revise the methodology report submitted to meet policy EN1 and EN2.
 - A verification report relating to compliance with policies EN1 and EN2 as contained in the Core Strategy.
- The proposal now was for 371 apartment dwellings spread across five buildings of varying heights. It was noted that significant negotiations had taken place between the applicant and officers to reduce the roof levels on certain buildings.
- It was advised that significant excavations would be required for the under-croft car park. This would provide two levels of parking.
- All buildings would have a centralised corridor with apartments to both the left and right. The design of the buildings would reflect the heritage of the site with the design of the front boundary wall referencing the cottages that are to be demolished. It was noted that sections of the stone wall and the chimney were to be rebuilt. The chimney would be reconstructed to be taller than it is currently, so would be more visible.
- On the largest of the buildings the fenestrations and balconies were to be recessed back into the building to reflect the historic nature of the site.
- The lower part of the site would have buildings in a more modern style in white/ off white material to contrast with the higher levels of the site and compliment the conservation area and the evolution of the site.
- At the previous meeting when this application was brought as a position statement in 2022, the Members had raised concerns in relation to the gap between the two larger buildings as they were of the view that it resulted in flats overlooking each other causing a lack of privacy. Therefore, the applicant had now amended the design of windows in the side and facing elevations so that the windows no longer overlook each other and so providing more privacy for future occupiers.
- Members had also requested an E Bike Station, and this was now proposed to be at the entrance nearest to Meanwood Road.
- Members had concerns that the geography of the site would not enable usable amenity space for residents. However, due to the excavations of the site this would now provide more usable amenity space with terracing for resident's use.
- It was acknowledged that site was an historic asset for the city. However, the buildings were in a poor condition so would have to be demolished. The applicant had demonstrated that the buildings were not suitable for refurbishment.
- Members were advised that the cottage buildings at the Meanwood Road end of the site were not of architectural importance and would be demolished as they were beyond economic repair.
- In response to comments provided by Members at the 2022 meeting, the applicant had provided:
 - More affordable housing for the larger apartments, now up to 14%.

- The scheme had been altered to make the chimney more prominent and the gap between the two buildings in the southern part of the site wider to allow greater views of it.
- Accessible housing was to be provided and would exceed policy requirements.
- Provided a dedicated children's play space. The equipment for the play space would be secured by condition.
- Members were informed that materials would be agreed through conditions including the treatment of the penthouse levels. It was recognised that this scheme was proposed as 100% apartments, although Members would have preferred to see a mixed housing development. The applicant had submitted a report which showed that this area was not conducive to houses and that there would not be the necessary usable garden space due to the geography of the site.
- Officers were of the view that the applicant had responded positively to comments from the Members and suggestions from officers.

A resident of the area attended the Plans Panel in objection to the application and provided the Panel with the following points:

- She said that she had been a resident in this area for 14 years and was not opposed to new housing in the area. However, she was of the view that this development was not age friendly or child friendly.
- The 10 storey block would feel oppressive and there would be light and noise pollution for the residents.
- The residents in the vicinity of the scheme would not be able to enjoy privacy in their gardens.
- There was already a lack of infrastructure in the area, with no doctors, schools, shops or bus service. She said that shopping was not easy in this area if you did not have a car.
- There would be an impact on the green space, and the woodland nearby, which was the start of the Meanwood Valley, and she had seen deer and heard owls.
- She raised her concerns in relation to the site being at risk of flooding, due to the beck at the bottom of the site which had become overgrown.
- Buslingthorpe Lane is a busy road with narrow pavements. The development would mean that more traffic would be using that road.
- The development would have an impact on the cityscape.
- It was her view that the development being proposed was for profit over people.

The Panel had no questions for the objector.

The applicant, the agent and representatives attended the meeting and informed the Panel of the following points:

- This is a derelict brownfield site which has been allocated in the SAP for housing. Development of this site would offer a unique and significant opportunity to enhance and regenerate this site, providing benefits for the wider area and the conservation area.

- The development would provide a significant contribution towards housing need in a highly sustainable location.
- The development would also provide Section 106 contributions of approximately £1.5m to improve local infrastructure. It would allow for the widening of Bustlingthorpe Lane, footpaths, a footbridge, and £0.5m for enhancement of sustainable travel options in this area. A further £1m was to be contributed to fund restoration of the key heritage features and the upkeep of them.
- The scheme would provide 29 units of affordable homes which was over the policy requirement.
- Members were advised that given the comments at the previous meeting to consider alternative types of housing such as townhouses, an assessment had been undertaken and subjected to a detailed viability appraisal, which was found to be unviable.
- In response to Members request that the scheme allow family units, the scheme is now fully policy compliant with H4 comprising of 140 x 1 bed units, 176 x 2 bed units and 55 x 3 bed units. This is across the affordable homes and accessible homes proposed, with all meeting M4(2) accessible homes and eight would meet the standard of M4(3) for wheelchair users.
- The design of the scheme was carefully considered in relation to the hillside and trees behind and the industrial heritage of the site to incorporate the main features of the site such as the chimney.
- Landscape proposals had been submitted along with a biodiversity net gain assessment which confirmed that there would be an uplift of over 30%.
- The design and materials used would minimise energy use and carbon emissions and would include 100% passive provision for EV charging and an E- bike hub. It was noted that the developer was willing to commit to ensuring that the centralised heating and power system would be future proof to enable links to the district heating system in the future.
- The developer as well as contributing to an open space nearby, also committed to providing a play space on site for use by future residents and the wider community.
- Members were informed that detailed reports had been provided on the condition of buildings currently on site and of proposals to restore or reconstruct some of the key features of this historic site.

Responding to questions from Members the Panel was provided with the following information:

- It was noted that the narrow points of Buslingthorpe Lane would be made wider, with crossing points to access the Meanwood Valley Trail.
- £1m was to be made available to rebuild the chimney and the stone wall which were considered to be key features of this historic industrial site, and this would include the maintenance of these features.
- The Highways Officer explained that the road would be widened at the 'pinch points' and traffic calming measures were to be put in place. It was noted that there was adequate visibility at the access to the site.

- In relation to the suggestion from the Panel for the developer to engage with residents in the area and form a resident's group. The Developer welcomed this suggestion and said it would be discussed with officers. It was noted that the developers had held a consultation meeting with local residents, local Councillors and the MP.
- Members did have concerns that the scheme did not seem child friendly and raised concerns about the road through the middle of the development being busy. The developers said that they had taken on board the comments of Members and that officers had been challenging in relation to this scheme. The developer said that they wished to create a small community with a mix of housing and different occupants. There would be a play area on the site as well as a multi-functional indoor space for use by the community for both younger and older occupants. The road through the middle of the scheme was not a main road and therefore should not be busy. It had been created to allow the refuse vehicle to gain access to the development. Landscaping would be arranged along the route, and it was envisaged that this would be a low speed, low traffic environment. Members were informed that the suggestion to expand the play area would be considered or for more areas to be created and dispersed through the development.
- In relation to the development also being age-friendly the Panel were informed that the development was M4(2) compliant, with lift and ramps. There was proposed pedestrian routes. The under-croft parking would be accessible via lifts. Pockets of open space could be made for both younger and older people. The multi-functional room was not just for young people but could be used by all residents.
- It was the view that the road through the development had the potential to be used as a 'rat-run' and there was a suggestion that the road only be one-way traffic. It was the view of the Highways Officer that this would not become a 'rat-run' unless there was a blockage on Bustlingthorpe Lane. However, with the planned widening of this road it was not thought that this would be an issue, but consideration could be given to the one-way traffic through the middle of the development if Members thought appropriate. Officers were working to look at solutions in relation to speed limits and reduce 'rat-runs'.

The Area Planning Manager informed the Panel that this scheme had first started in 2019. It was a complex site which had raised issues and concerns. From the position statement presented to Members in 2022 there had been more issues identified for discussion. It was the view that the developers had responded positively to issues from that Plans Panel meeting. There had been a delay in this application being brought back to Panel as the applicant had to undertake a wind study. It was noted that an earlier proposal for 228 dwellings had not been viable. A viability statement had been submitted for the current scheme and checked by the District Valuer who was of the view that this scheme was viable with a 7% profit.

The Panel welcomed how the developer had responded to their comments to move this development forward and although this was not a perfect scheme, officers had given reasons why the scheme should move forward, with the additional conditions that had been suggested.

RESOLVED – To defer and delegate to the Chief Planning Officer for approval subject to the conditions specified in the submitted report and the following additional conditions:

- Delivery of verification in relation to reducing carbon dioxide, EN1 and EN2
- Verification for units to be of within policy for space standards and accessible housing.
- Amendments to Section 106 contributions for £851,500 towards mitigation on A61 corridor and wider highway improvements.

Condition to be added for formal consultation with residents especially during the construction process.

96 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the next meeting of the North and East Plans Panel will be on Thursday 30th May 2024, at 1.30pm.

Meeting concluded at 2:50pm