

Plans Panel (City Centre)

Thursday, 4th March, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor M Hamilton in the Chair

Councillors D Blackburn, T Hanley,
J Monaghan, E Nash, N Taggart,
P Wadsworth and G Wilkinson

63 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly the students on the Human Geography and Planning course at Leeds Metropolitan University who were attending the meeting. For the benefit of the public, Members and Officers were asked to introduce themselves

64 Declarations of Interest

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

Application 09/03230/FU – St Peter's Church Buildings and Chantrell House Kirkgate LS2 – Councillors Hanley and Monaghan declared personal interests through being member of Leeds Civic Trust which had objected to the proposals (minute 67 refers)

Application 09/03230/FU – St Peter's Church Buildings and Chantrell House Kirkgate LS2 – Councillor Nash declared a personal interest as a member of English Heritage which had commented on the proposals (minute 67 refers)

Application 09/03230/FU – St Peter's Church Buildings and Chantrell House Kirkgate LS2 – Councillor Taggart declared a personal interest through being the Chair of West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee which managed West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service which had commented on the proposals (minute 67 refers)

Application 09/03230/FU – St Peter's Church Buildings and Chantrell House Kirkgate LS2 – Councillors Hamilton and Monaghan declared personal interests as a friend lived in St Peter's Church Buildings (minute 67 refers)

Application 09/04625/FU – Southern entrance to Railway Station – Councillor Wadsworth declared a personal interest as a member of West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority as the proposals were to be delivered by Network Rail in partnership with Metro (minute 68 refers)

65 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Feldman, Latty and McKenna who were substituted respectively by Councillors Wadsworth, Wilkinson and Taggart

66 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 4th February 2010 be approved

67 Application 09/03230/FU - St Peter's Church Buildings and Chantrell House Leeds Parish Church Kirkgate LS2 - Position statement

Plans, photographs and graphics including sun path diagrams were displayed at the meeting. A site visit by Members had taken place earlier in the day

Officers presented a position statement by the Chief Planning Officer on an application for a change of use including refurbishment and extensions to two church buildings with two flats to form offices and 20 flats and the erection of a part four, part five storey block comprising office and 31 flats with car parking. Related Conservation Area and Listed Building applications for the demolition of Chantrell House office building and alteration to form new gate to the boundary wall at St Peter's Church also formed part of the proposals

Members were informed that the site was set within the Riverside Area as defined by Leeds UDP (Review) 2006 and the City Centre Conservation Area adjacent to the Grade I listed Leeds Parish Church. The site comprised three buildings; St Peter's Hall and St Peter's House, both red brick late 19th – early 20th century buildings and Chantrell House a red brick 1980s three storey office block, together with part of the landscaped church grounds and the parking area to the east of Chantrell House

The proposals would see complete demolition of Chantrell House and some demolition to St Peter's Hall and House although the most historic parts of these two properties would be retained

St Peter's Hall would be refurbished and extended to provide a four storey building with ground floor office and three floors of residential use comprising three and one bedroom flats together with studio flats

St Peter's House would be refurbished and extended to form a residential development of five storey's and providing one bedroom and studio flats

Chantrell House would be demolished and a new five storey block comprising offices, flats and undercroft car parking was proposed

The proposals sought to create a 'cathedral close' precinct environment around Leeds Parish Church with key views of the church being retained through the existing gaps between the three properties

Flemish Bond brickwork and glazing would be used for all three buildings with deep window reveals to allow the creation of shadow and relief on the elevations. The extensions to the buildings and the new build element would be modern in form with flat roofs

A minimal approach would be taken to landscaping although five trees would need to be removed around Chantrell House although the effect of this would be mitigated by the provision of six trees around the site and a contribution towards further trees on a site on The Calls. Hard landscaping in York stone would be provided for the pedestrian routes

The site was within a flood zone and as part of the scheme it had been proposed to break through the listed boundary wall to provide an escape route, however, it was now proposed to use an existing gateway as the escape route

Whilst the Environment Agency had objected to the initial proposals, Members were informed that comments on the revised proposals were awaited

Concerning affordable housing provision, Members were informed that the applicant had submitted a financial viability appraisal which was still being considered. Affordable housing of 4 units, as opposed to the expected 7 units across the whole development was proposed and this would be located in Chantrell House. Leeds Parish Church was seeking a funding stream for repairs and maintenance to the building. As the Diocese would own the residential units in St Peter's Hall and House, it was hoped that the income these would generate would provide a source of funding to help the church to continue to function as a place of worship; a source of assistance to the homeless and as an important Civic building in the city

The Civic Architect, Mr Thorp stated that a scheme had been under consideration for many years but the inclusion of Chantrell House in the scheme had afforded the opportunity to consider a larger building on the site of what had been a large school, so reinstating the precinct to an earlier form

To address the challenge of the presence of several different architectural languages, a simple, vertical rhythm had been chosen for the scheme

Members commented on the following matters:

- that the proposals for Chantrell House were contrived; overdeveloped; block-like; were too high; were too close to the Parish Church and overdominant leading to a loss of amenity to existing residents of Chantrell Court and would be out of character in the area
- the demolition of a 1980s building with mixed views on the appropriateness of this
- that the proposals for Chantrell House were not good enough for this high quality site, adjacent to a Grade I listed building
- concerns about car parking in the area and the impact of the development on this
- the flat roof design of the new building; that this prevented the use of roof space and was out of keeping amongst the surrounding pitched roofs
- the proposals in lieu of the full affordable housing contribution; the need for consistency across the city and concerns that whilst affordable housing was for everyone, Leeds Parish Church was a Christian church in a city which contained diverse beliefs and views

The Head of Planning Services referred to the specific points in the report on which Members' views were sought and noted the following responses:

- that the Panel was supportive of the extent of the demolition and alteration proposed to St Peter's Hall and House, with the majority of Members accepting of the demolition of Chantrell House provided that its replacement was superior
- relating to the new build elements of the scheme:
 - concerns that the design of the extension to St Peter's Hall was not good enough given its setting
 - that the extension to St Peter's House did not relate well to the host property and that again the quality of design was not good enough
 - the concerns set out above relating to Chantrell House

- regarding the car parking, that concerns had been expressed on this matter
- having noted the comments on the affordable housing contribution, The Head of Planning Services stated that rather than viewing this as funding for a church, it was more appropriate to consider this as funding for the upkeep of a Grade I listed building, which was a valid consideration as set out in PPG15

RESOLVED - To note the report and the comments now made

68 Application 09/04625/FU - Addition of new southern entrance with access walkway and new footbridges to railway station at Leeds City Station New Station Street LS1

Plans, photographs, drawings, graphics and sample materials were displayed at the meeting. A Members site visit had taken place earlier in the day. It was noted that Members had received a pre-application presentation on the proposals on 13th August 2009 and the Chief Planning Officer's report sought to address issues raised by Members on that occasion

Officers presented the report which sought approval for a new southern entrance at Leeds Railway Station. The proposals would require widening the existing station western footbridge and providing escalators, stairs and lifts to a partial deck over the River Aire which would then provide pedestrian access to either side of the river to the south east via Little Neville Street or south west via Granary Wharf and the Holbeck Urban Village area. This would be enclosed in a distinctive 'hood' rising from the southern elevation of the arches, rising back to a peak where it meets the junction with the existing roof-form and the end of the western bridge

The material for the 'hood' would be copper alloy shingle in a golden colour, samples of which were provided for Members' consideration

Members' previous comments regarding the siting of a new entrance on Sovereign Street had been considered but the Panel was informed that this site would not provide the reduced journey times that the provision of funding was reliant upon. In addition the cost of siting the entrance at this location would be significantly higher and there would be health and safety reasons due to the narrow width of platform 16 which could not accommodate all southern access bound passengers alongside travellers for the Transpennine westbound service

Details of the comments which had been received on the application were provided and Members were informed that the Environment Agency had lifted their objection, having accepted the flood risk assessment

Officers commended the scheme to Members and stressed the increased connectivity this would provide and the wider regeneration benefits it would bring to the south of the city

The Panel heard representations on behalf of the applicant and the adjacent hotel, City Inn, who whilst supporting the proposals had raised concerns at the impact of significantly higher footfall on the public realm within their development and the need for this to be properly addressed

In response to a point raised by Panel, Members were informed that although the graphics showed public access to the front of the structure, this was incorrect and that this access would be for maintenance only

Members commented on the following matters:

- the height of the structure and whether this could be reduced

- whether by amending the top of the 'hood' this could lessen its impact on nearby residents and enhance its appearance
- concerns that by altering the design of the 'hood' this could be detrimental to its effect
- the lack of cycle facilities at the new entrance; that the development could encourage cycle use and the possibility of using one of the Dark Arches as a cycle park
- that this was a secondary entrance and that cyclists were more likely to use the new cycling hub by the Rotunda at the front of the station, once it was available
- pedestrian access through the Dark Arches and health and safety concerns at the number of cars also using this area
- access arrangements for people in wheelchairs
- concern at the impression given to visitors to Leeds by having to use the Dark Arches as an access point
- whether any drop-off points would be provided
- that the proposals were sited in the wrong place; that the development did not address the existing problems with taxis, buses and private hire vehicles dropping off at the station
- that other major cities had impressive entrances to their main railway stations but this was lacking in Leeds
- that the development would have a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of some residents of the Blue and Watermans Place developments, who perhaps had not realised the full impact of the proposals
- that an entrance on Sovereign Street was the best location and concerns that the arguments against this which had been put forward on behalf of Network Rail were incorrect
- that the proposals were not for the benefit of people in the wider South Leeds area but for residents of Holbeck Urban Village
- that the cost of the scheme - £15m – would be better spent on re-opening the station at Marsh Lane

Officers provided the following responses:

- that the height of the 'hood' incorporated the amount of space needed for the escalators
- that altering the top of the structure would have minimal effect on improving the situation for those residents most affected by the development and would significantly affect the integrity of the design
- regarding parking facilities for people not wishing to take their cycle on their onward journey, there would be the cycle hub at the front of the station being provided by Network Rail; also there was limited space available in the southern entrance to accommodate a number of cycles
- that there would be shared pedestrian/vehicular use of Dark Neville Street and that more pedestrians using this access would lead to greater safety due to cars having to adjust their speed accordingly
- in relation to taxi drop off points, that Little and Dark Neville Streets had been considered. There was currently heavy use of this area for service vehicles, and whilst those operations had to continue, Officers felt it was inappropriate to be formally encouraging drop offs

The Chair stated that having considered the proposals and the alternative location of Sovereign Street which had been suggested by some Members, he was of the view that the proposed new entrance was in the correct place, particularly as all the platforms could be accessed from this entrance.

Although a scheme which would result in improvements to the overall design of Leeds station and resolve the current issues relating to drop off/pick up points was desired, this was not the scheme before Panel

Members considered how to proceed

In response to the points raised by City Inn, the Head of Planning Services suggested that further details be requested from the applicant on this matter once the land deal had been completed

RESOLVED -

(i) To approve the application 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 in order to resolve the following detailed matters:

- detailed highways matters including pedestrian improvements
- resolution of management plan by negotiation with British Waterways
- formal removal of holding objection by Environment Agency on updated flood risk assessment

(ii) That prior to the planning permission being signed off, that the Chief Planning Officer be asked to submit a further report to Panel setting out how cycling facilities could be improved, including the possible use of one of the Dark Arches to provide additional parking and the impact of the increased footfall through the development on the public realm at Granary Wharf

69 Application 09/05605/FU - Retrospective application for change of use from garage to Place of Worship (D1 use) at former Alton Cars - Saxton Lane LS9

Plans of the site were displayed at the meeting

Officers presented the report which sought retrospective permission for a change of use of two former vehicle repair workshops with car parking area to Place of Worship

A previous application for change of use to church and community centre had been refused under delegated powers on highways and noise nuisance grounds

The application before Panel was solely for church use, with Officers recommending approval of the application subject to an additional condition to grant a personal permission to the Living Hope Church; the signing of a S106 legal agreement and subject to the legal requirement for the applicant to serve a notice of development on the current owners of the site

In response to questions from the Panel, Officers stated that the Green Travel Plan would provide £2500 monitoring fee and that both of the buildings on the site would be used by the applicant

RESOLVED – To approve the application in principle and to defer and delegate final approval to the Chief Planning Officer subject to the conditions set out in the submitted report, an additional condition granting a personal permission to the Living Hope Church (and any others which he might consider appropriate) and the completion of a legal agreement within 25 days from the date of resolution unless

otherwise agreed in writing by the Chief Planning Officer, to include the following obligations:

1 Travel Plan Monitoring

2 Contribution to local Traffic Regulation Order enhancement within two years of grant of planning permission if significant on-street parking problems occur as a result of the operation of the site as a place of worship and subject to the legal requirement for the applicant to serve a Certificate B under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 on the current owners of the site

70 Date and time of next meetings

Monday 22nd March 2010 at 2.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds

Thursday 1st April 2010 at 1.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds