

Plans Panel (City Centre)

Thursday, 10th March, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor B Selby in the Chair

Councillors D Blackburn, C Campbell,
G Driver, M Hamilton, S Hamilton, G Latty,
J Monaghan, E Nash, N Taggart and
R Wood

80 Chair's opening remarks

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

81 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

Application 10/04792/FU – 62-64 Sheepscar Street North LS2 – Councillor Monaghan declared personal and prejudicial interests through being a resident of Merchants House which was located above the subject premises and having objected to the proposals (minute 85 refers)

Application 10/04792/FU – 62-64 Sheepscar Street North LS2 – Councillor Martin Hamilton declared a personal interest through being a Ward colleague of Councillor Monaghan who had objected to the proposals (minute 85 refers)

82 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Castle who was substituted for by Councillor Wood and from Mr Sellens, Head of Planning Services

83 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 10th February 2011 be approved

84 Application 11/00755//RM -New Pedestrian Crossing adjacent to Leeds Arena - Clay Pit Lane LS2

Further to minute 51 of the Plans Panel City Centre meeting held on 12th November 2010 where Panel considered reserved matters in respect of the Arena development, Members considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer seeking approval in principle to proposals for the design of the Clay Pit Lane pedestrian crossing

Draft minutes to be approved at the Meeting to be held on 12th May 2011

Plans, graphics, photographs and a precedent image were displayed at the meeting

Members were informed that the statutory advertising period for the application would expire on 22nd March 2011

Officers presented the report and informed Members that due to the significant difference in land levels across Claypit Lane, this had limited the opportunities for siting the crossing where it had been indicated at the time of the outline planning application. Therefore other possibilities had been considered

The proposed crossing would be located in a similar position to that existing, immediately north of the junction of Providence Place and Clay Pit Lane, to the front of Hepworth House. The crossing would be the maximum width permitted by the Secretary of State, this being 10 metres. The outbound carriageway would need to be reduced in width by approximately 1.5 metres to enable the central reservation and the northern footway outside Hepworth House to be widened. To help define the crossing and relate it to the Arena development, green granite chippings were proposed in the carriageway, with new paving being provided throughout the Clay Pit Lane corridor

Members' comments on guard rails had been taken into account. Due to the design of the crossing (which although technically being two crossings, would operate like a single one), guard rails were not necessary

In event mode, timings for the crossing would be pre-programmed and would take account of the size of the arena event; for all other times the crossing would operate similar to other signalised pedestrian crossings

An adjustment to the size of the southern development plot would be necessary to provide sufficient space for movement to/from the arena. To compensate for this reduction, the northern development plot would be increased in scale, although the final form of these would be determined at the detailed planning application stage

Members were informed that the arena operator had requested the Council to decide quickly on the treatment of these plots as, perhaps understandably, the operator did not wish for these to begin to be developed within months of the arena opening

Members commented on the following matters:

- whether there were proposals to amend the design of the zig-zag pedestrian crossing at Woodhouse Lane which would also be used by people going to/from the arena
- the innovative design of the arena and disappointment that views of it would be blocked to drivers and pedestrians by the development plots along Clay Pit Lane
- that the colouration of the granite chippings should be considered in relation to the colours to be used on the arena
- the likely numbers using the crossing; that on arrival, the numbers would be staggered over a period of time but once an event had ended there could be 5000 people needing to cross Clay Pit Lane and whether it was possible to stop traffic for 2-3 minutes to manage the numbers
- the need to clarify what had been agreed in respect of the landscaping including the development plots

- the impact of pedestrian movement on residents of Queen Square and that people going to/from Woodhouse Lane car park should be encouraged to use Providence Place
- that the absence of guard rails in the proposal was welcomed

Officers provided the following responses

- that improvements to the Woodhouse Lane pedestrian crossing would be considered although it was uncertain that a single crossing could be achieved for this site
- in terms of the number of people using the pedestrian crossing, research indicated that for a 60 second green time, it was possible for 720 people to cross per minute and on that estimate, Officers were satisfied that the proposals would cater for the amount of movement likely to be generated by the arena use. However, as part of the traffic management plan there would be a separate signals timing plan for events and this would be closely monitored for the first few events, with adjustments being made if necessary
- concerning the landscaping, Officers outlined the overall scope of what had been agreed as part of the Reserved Matters application (the areas that would be hard and soft landscaped and the design concept for these), but stated that the exact details of the street furniture, material samples and soft planting remained outstanding. In terms of the development plots, it was likely that a decision would be made by December 2011 on whether development would take place on those plots in time for the arena opening. If development was going to be delayed then the areas would be temporarily landscaped
- in relation to pedestrian movement, there would be directional signs provided to discourage people from cutting across Queen Square

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 (and any others which he might consider appropriate) and subject to no new issues being raised prior to the expiry of the statutory notification period

85 Application 10/04792/FU - Change of use of vacant building to Church (Use Class D1) at 62-64 North Street Leeds LS2

(Having declared personal and prejudicial interests on this matter, Councillor Monaghan withdrew from the meeting)

Plans and photographs were displayed at the meeting. A site visit had taken place earlier in the day which some Members had attended

Officers presented the report which related to a change of use of two former retail units to a church with ancillary café and book shop at 62-64 North Street which formed part of a residential building known as Merchants House

The proposed opening hours were 06.30 – 22.30, with 4 services being held each day. Whilst current congregation numbers stood at 80, the building could accommodate approximately 176 people

The recommendation to Members was to refuse the application with a possible reason for this being included in the submitted report

The Panel heard representations from an objector and a representative of the applicant who attended the meeting

Members discussed the following matters:

- the number and type of services being held at the church and the likely numbers attending the services throughout the day
- the existing levels of noise due to the current ground floor uses which included a bar
- whether on-street parking would be an issue
- whether a disused church might be more appropriate for use by the applicant
- that consideration should be given to including the impact of non-retail uses on the area in the reason for refusal
- the impact of the proposal on residential amenity
- the concerns regarding noise transference and that despite the applicant including floor insulation, that the effectiveness of this had not been proven
- whether there was adequate egress in the event of a fire and concerns that the proposals as presented did not suggest this was the case

The Panel considered how to proceed

The Central Area Planning Manager stated that a reason for refusal based upon the impact on the retail frontage could be difficult to sustain as even if the application was approved there would be over 50% retail use of the properties along that frontage which would be acceptable in policy terms

The Panel's Highways Officer informed Members that car parking had been carefully considered and that the site had been inspected on a Sunday morning, the day when the largest number of users of the church could reasonably be expected. Whilst there was some on-street parking, it was felt there was sufficient parking around the site, including a multi-storey car park and because of this, it was felt that a reason for refusal based on car parking could not be sustained

RESOLVED - That the application be refused for the following reason:

The Local Planning Authority considers the proposed change of use to a church would result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby premises, particularly the residents in Merchants House. The applicant has not sufficiently demonstrated there will be no adverse impact from structural borne noise transference whilst the hours of use and potential number of people visiting the premises could adversely impact upon the general amenity of the area. For the reasons outlined above, the application is considered contrary to policy GP5 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review) 2006

(Councillor Taggart joined the meeting during consideration of this matter)

(Following consideration of this matter, Councillor Monaghan resumed his seat in the meeting)

Members considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer on the Sovereign Street Draft Planning Statement which set out development potential for the site of the former Queen's Hall, which was currently operating as a car park. A copy of the Draft Planning Statement was appended to the report

Plans, photographs, architect's drawings and graphics were displayed at the meeting

Officers presented the report and provided some background information on the area which had been the site of a proposal known as 'The Kissing Towers' which had been withdrawn by the developer in 2008. Executive Board had twice considered the future of the site and had resolved that the site had the potential to integrate the first element of a high quality green space in the City Centre in line with the aspirations for the area which had emerged from the Leeds City Centre Vision Conference in 2008. On this basis a draft Planning Statement had been prepared which was currently out for consultation, with Plans Panel City Centre Members' comments being sought as part of this process which ended on 18th March

Three plots had been identified for development with some indication of the scale of buildings being included, with these plots being set around a central area of green space to realise the key aspiration of improving connections into the South Bank and the proposed city centre park. A connection northwards towards City Square was envisaged through opening up a disused railway arch as a pedestrian route. A further connection from a bridge link across the river was envisaged, although the land in question was not owned by the Council

Members commented on the following matters:

- that the land was a development site, not a park
- that the site was in close proximity to a high proportion of office development in Leeds and that car parking was needed as evidenced by the reaction to the Inspector's decisions last year on unauthorised long-term parking around Holbeck Urban Village
- that too much of the site was proposed for buildings, leaving insufficient space for city centre residents and workers to enjoy an open, green area
- the possibility of deleting block C, increasing the height of block B to compensate, so long as what was built was something special and then increasing the amount of open space
- that a bridge over the river was crucial to what was done on the site as the bridge link to a possible city centre park on the Tetley's site would provide an appropriate avenue to take people to the park
- that the existing car park use was not tenable
- the importance of the site particularly in view of the funding which had been secured for the southern entrance to the railway station and the need for the right impression of the city to be created on that site
- that the site would never be a park in the way one was envisaged but it would be a significant attraction to those in the area and that the site would be better without buildings
- that a decision was needed on the Brewery site which had been considered as a potential city centre park site, although there were drawbacks with that site due to its relatively isolated position from offices and residential development. Sovereign Street was closer to residential development and employment uses and if this was

developed as a green area, the Brewery site could be considered for different forms of redevelopment

- that if buildings were to be sited there they should respect the historic buildings surrounding the area, especially those on Swinegate
- the need to make connections to the south of the city to maintain interest in that area
- the need to consider how the site linked into the Waterfront Strategy and for access to the river to be improved to provide facilities for water sports

The Civic Architect informed Members that the announcement by Carlsberg Tetley of their withdrawal from Leeds had provided the opportunity for discussions with adjacent landowners and had led to the draft South Bank Planning Statement being drawn up which included at its heart, proposals for a city centre park. The draft South Bank Planning Statement which complemented the Sovereign Street Draft Planning Statement. In relation to the Sovereign Street site, it was felt that a 'soft green space' would better describe this area rather than a park

RESOLVED - To note the report and the comments now made

87 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 7th April 2011 at 1.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds