

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

7.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Brian Sangha (Chair)
Cllr Harold Craske (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Brian Francis
 Bob Lane
 Lyn Milner
 Diane Morton
 Gurbax Singh
 Denise Tiran
 Frank Wardle

Wendy Lane Assistant Director (Planning)
Vicky Nutley Deputy Head of Legal Services (Place)
Shazad Ghani Service Manager (Planning)
Richard Hart Team Leader (Development Management)
Peter Price Principal Planner
Ben Clarke Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

13. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Gary Harding, Samir Jassal, Emma Morley Elizabeth Mulheran and Tony Rice.

Cllrs Diane Morton, Frank Wardle, Gurbax Singh, Lyn Milner and Denise Tiran substituted.

14. To sign the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 16 June 2021 were signed by the Chair.

15. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

16. Planning applications for determination by the Committee

16.1 20210589 - Garage Block and part of Amenity Space adjacent to Constable Road and Rembrandt Drive

The Committee considered application reference 20210589 in relation to Garage Block and part of Amenity Space adjacent to Constable Road and Rembrandt Drive. The application was for the variation of condition 2 attached to Planning Consent reference number 20190833 being for demolition of 6 garages on Rembrandt Drive and erection of a 1no. one bedroom bungalow and erection of a terrace of 6no one bedroom bungalows along Constable Road with associated off street car parking and improvements to existing

children's playground and amenity space adjacent to Constable Road, to allow; a move of the siting of the detached bungalow 1.50m to the east to provide a clear access during the construction period to the rear access way situated between Rembrandt Drive and Dene Holm Road, so allowing residents to continue to use approved rear accessways, parking and garages and enable ease of any future maintenance to the new dwelling.

The Team Leader (Development Management) introduced the application to the Committee and highlighted key points from the report.

The Committee were informed that the recommendation from Planning Officers was for Members to permit the application subject to conditions.

The Committee heard the views of a public speaker in favour of the application.

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- The public speaker confirmed to Members that the alleyway adjacent to the site was a public access alleyway
- The public speaker confirmed that in the original application, the back of the property would be against the alleyway. With the building moving to the east, a small brick wall along with a fence infill would be installed along the western boundary on the property and continue all the way along the fence line
- The public speaker advised that the tender process was started after planning permission was approved but the need to move the position of the approved bungalow 1.50m (known as site A) to the east wasn't picked up during that process. The successful tenderer noticed the issue while they started to look at the practicalities of building the houses

Cllr Morton abstained from the vote.

Resolved that the application be PERMITTED subject to conditions.

Note: (a) Mr Shaun Berry (Designer – in favour) addressed the Committee.

16.2 20210270 - Albion Waterside Canal Basin Gravesend - Hybrid Planning Application

The Committee considered the application 20210270 in relation to Albion Waterside Canal Basin Gravesend Kent DA12 2RN. The application was a hybrid planning application which comprised of two parts:

Part A - Full planning application for demolition of existing buildings and structures, construction of a mixed-use development comprising C3 and C2 Residential Uses and commercial floorspace (Use Class E), a new river wall, works to Swing Bridge, highway junction improvements at Milton Road and Ordnance Road, associated new public open spaces and public realm improvements, car and cycle parking, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks and ancillary works; and

Part B - Outline planning application with all matters reserved (apart from access) for demolition of all existing buildings and structures and the construction of a mixed-use development comprising C3 Uses and commercial floorspace (Use Class E) with associated

vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, associated infrastructure and earthworks and ancillary works.

The proposed development would consist of up to 1,500 homes and up to 4,500sqm (GIA) of commercial floorspace.

The Principal Planner introduced the application to the Committee, showed Members a short video of drone footage across the canal basin and gave a detailed presentation of key points from the report.

The Committee were informed that the recommendation from Planning Officers was to delegate authority to the Service Manager (Planning) in consultation with the Chair (Planning Committee) to grant conditional permission, **but** subject to:

- Referral to the Secretary of State as a departure from the adopted Development Plan;
- Finalisation of planning conditions and informatives, a draft list of which are included with the main report; and any additional conditions in the supplementary reports
- Completion of a legal agreement under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to maximise the delivery of affordable housing and to deliver mitigation needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

The Principal Planner fielded questions from Members and explained that:

- There was a typo on page 340 of the report, the actual figure for the Section 106 funds was £1.5 million not £1500 million
- The discount, from open market rent, of the proposed fifty affordable rent homes included the service charge

The Committee heard the views of the first public speaker in favour of the application.

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- To engage with the local residents and businesses, three newsletters were prepared and distributed widely throughout the local community on three separate occasions averaging 2000 leaflets delivered each time. Online webinars were held, and a website was created which could be accessed by anyone and was continually updated to have the most up to date information. It had been demonstrated to the community that the team had changed aspects of the proposed scheme to address local comments. A few examples of significant changes being made to the scheme following comments were the relocation of the tower further east away from the marina, increasing the amount of open green space within the scheme and the route of the east/west lateral Saxon Shore Way being increased
- Joseph Homes were committed to ensuring a post box was installed on the site of the development and discussions were ongoing to get one installed
- The homes being built would be advertised locally and Joseph Homes were committed to ensure local people were able to take up residence on the development
- A significant number of jobs would be created through the construction of the scheme and there was a commitment to use a local apprenticeship scheme

- The aim was to have a mixed community living in the development so there would be a broad range of homes available including studio, one beds, two beds etc and homes that specifically came with space for parking work vans. When designing the scheme, climate change was a big issue to consider which is why there was a smaller amount of parking spaces and a push within the scheme to get residents to use more sustainable forms of transport
- Discussions were ongoing concerning opportunities for further moorings in the development and the team were open to exploring the option of river transport. With regards to parking in similar developments, a number of high-density developments along the river had been created by Joseph Homes before and they had all been built with less than 1:1, and rather was 1:0.5 or 1:0.6 parking levels
- Government guidance stated that green walls should no longer be attached to buildings as they posed a fire risk, but the amount in terms of sustainable development, of green space had been maximised in the proposed scheme with open parks that could be accessed easily by everyone
- The application was split into two parts as it was a very large application developed over a number of years and it allowed changes to be made more easily and with more flexibility in the future. The scheme was controlled by the design code which upheld the quality, size and quantum of the scheme
- A detailed fire safety strategy was submitted as part of the application and it ensured that all parts of the buildings complied with building regulations such as having a means of escape in case of fire, sprinkler systems installed and using materials that required minimal maintenance
- The buildings in the development were designed with a range of different heights and styles to reflect the character of Gravesend and the marina surrounding the site. It was felt important to have articulated, bold and prominent buildings in the skyline facing the Thames; Joseph Homes were confident in the transformational design as residents had been consulted and through that consultation the heights of several buildings were stepped down where appropriate and other buildings were moved towards the centre of the site

The Committee heard the views of the second public speaker in favour of the application.

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- In terms of sustainable development, the proposed development was on a brownfield site which meant that no green belt land had to be used and the development would consume at least 50% less energy specified in current building regulation standards. To make the site more sustainable, parking was kept at 60% capacity and as mentioned previously, there would be a number of specific spaces designed for residents who also had work vans. It was anticipated that there would be a portion of people such as retirees or much younger who would not have their own vehicles and would rely on the more sustainable forms of public transport
- As part of sustainable transport, talks had been held with Arriva to install a bus stop at the site; £1.5 million had been set aside for that bus service route so it could operate from day one. The frequency of that bus route would be one bus every twenty minutes and then once everything was completed, the bus stop would see one bus every ten minutes
- River transport had been looked into and the team were aware of the Thames Clipper aspirations in the area; the team had not precluded the use of river transport however there was nothing current being used in the area which could be attached

too. The team would be happy to revisit the possibility of including river transport at a future stage of the process once there was an established form of river transport

- As a result of the scheme moving ahead, 172 jobs would be created on site which were sorely needed after the numerous lockdowns; home working had also increased due to the pandemic and each of the proposed apartments would have an amenity area where a home office could be set up or residents could set themselves up in one of the communal workspaces within the scheme
- The issue of car parking spillage into nearby residential areas due to lack of parking had been investigated and the team had spoken with Gravesham Borough Council and KCC Highways. The intention was to extend the controlled parking zones to prevent that overspill and the car parks would be closely monitored by the site so that if there was a constant issue then there was the potential to increase the ratio of parking and provide more spaces
- The Transport Review Group consisted of representatives from the site, KCC Highways, Gravesham Borough Council, local residents, the management company, and the local bus company. The group would debate various issues and decide where the pot of money would be distributed to other sustainable transport options

The Committee heard the views of the third public speaker in favour of the application.

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- With regards to subsidized housing, the team looked at the issue in real detail and assessed the priorities of the Borough; as such, 150 affordable homes including 50 affordable rented properties had been committed to be brought forward in the development. There were also further commitments to a review mechanism if additional grant funding was secured from Homes England which would allow further affordable homes to be delivered. Discussions with Homes England were ongoing, but Joseph Homes were confident in the current figures outlined in the report
- The plans for the Canal had been looked into in greater detail and it brought a lot of benefits to the site but it came at a cost. If more funding became available at a later date then the aspiration would be to restore the canal further as it was in line with the policy objectives and would provide further opportunities in the future. This is facilitated by the design including maintenance of the width needed for future restoration if funding becomes available in the future with servicing run through the roadway. The waterbody would also provide sustainable drainage for the site and reduce silting in the Canal Basin.
- The team had been in talks with the Sailing Club since the start of the process as they were the nearest local amenity and were an asset to the area; through the talks, adjustments had been made to the proposed scheme such as moving the tallest building further to the east of the development. One of their biggest concerns was the impact to the wind that the development would cause so modelling was undertaken for wind which was an expert subject. There would be a slight impact to the wind conditions if the development was built however there was already high winds impacts due to the prevailing south westerly winds.
- A suite of benefits had been looked into for Gravesend Sailing Club such as the offer of £50K to provide them with new equipment for the club and adjustments to improve the disabled facilities. In addition, the offer of moving the mooring, in discussion with the PLA, had been explored as that was the point where the wind impacted the most at certain times of the days. The PLA had suggested a conditions for the submission of a Navigational Risk Assessment that would then guide where the mooring could be moved to and which are currently located 150m offshore.

- Land assembly had been a difficult task but over the last two years, the team had worked hard to bring all the land parcels together and they were at a point where they were in majority control. The team were working with the last few landowners to secure the last parcels of land on the site however if they were resistant then CPO powers could be utilised as a last resort
- There was a lack of supply locally of apartments so that there will be local demand. There was a commitment to advertise the homes to local people but the prices of those homes would be driven by the market at the time
- Any redevelopment inevitably caused noise but to mitigate that, a Community Liaison Officer would be on site at all times and would be used to communicate when work would be starting/finishing to nearby residents. Residents would be able to contact the officer and there would also be a dedicated phone number for anyone to use to raise issues they may be having. A neighbourhood forum would also be set up for local residents to talk to the developers and raise any concerns they may have. The site developers would be in discussions with the developers of the other nearby developments such as Clifton Slipways and the Charter so that there was coordination between developments and roads didn't become blocked
- The area looked dilapidated but there were active businesses on the site; the landowners managed the existing tenants and the team were in discussions with the landowners to try and secure other sites for the existing businesses to move to
- The team were in ongoing discussions with the PLA regarding the timeline for the Navigational Risk Assessment
- The ten year construction was split into phases; the first phase would start on the west site, then move in an easterly direction and conclude in the south; a significant amount of properties would be delivered in phase one with the hope being that two hundred homes could be completed at any one phase. The developers could revisit the phasing but this would be down to construction access but the intention was to complete each phase entirely.
- Technology was constantly changing and would factor into the modular construction process
- There had been detailed negotiations with the Environment Agency since the start of the process; it was agreed that the river wall would be increased to eight metres which provided one hundred years of protection to the development and the wider area

The Committee heard the views of the first public speaker against the application. The public speaker requested that the final clause of the developer's section 106 agreement be amended to make specific reference to the commitment to using sustainable forms of transport and enhancing public transport access in the area, including tram access.

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- Kenex - Thames Gateway Tramlink Ltd had been in contact with the applicant previously and discussed transports mitigations, the tram proposal and improving transport access in the area

The Deputy Head of Legal Services (Place) confirmed to Members that it was within the remit of the Committee to discuss areas of mitigation for Section 106 agreements such as within affordable housing and green spaces but the actual amounts and bidding process were dealt with by officers of the Council.

The Committee heard the views of the second public speaker against the application. The public speaker corrected an earlier point raised by the Principal Planner: the Sailing Club were not seeking a new site, only an additional dinghy park as the dinghy's were what the proposed development impacted the most.

The Principal Planner explained that his earlier comment was based on the submission provided by the Sailing Club as it indicated, in his opinion, the potential for moving the Sailing Club from its current location.

Gravesend Sailing Club requested that if planning permission was recommended for approval, it was done with a condition of resolving the objection with GSC, possibly via the inclusion of the alternative sailing area within the proposed Section 106 agreement or similar legal safeguard

Following the address by the public speaker, Members had their questions answered:

- The developers first engaged with the Sailing Club last September; since then there had been several meetings, a site visit and the developers were taken on a sailing trip to better understand the impact the development would have on sailing in the river
- There wasn't an unwillingness to engage with the developers but timing was an issue as the Sailing Club was run by volunteers who also had full time jobs. Due to the timing issue there hadn't been time to further discuss the analysis of the site, its impact to the river and what mitigations were necessary

The Chair thanked the speakers for their presentations and adjourned the meeting for a short break at 21:10pm.

The meeting reconvened at 21:22pm.

The Committee debated the planning application, its positives/negatives and the points raised during the public speakers presentations.

The following points were made during the discussion:

- There was not enough parking for the amount of people that would be living on the development; many people had cars as well as work vans and visitors would need to be able to have somewhere they could park on the development. Not everyone worked from home and it was likely that cars/vans would still be needed by the majority of people for the foreseeable future
- Gravesend and the Canal Basin development should be more connected; it shouldn't be seen as a separate development but rather as an additional part of Gravesend Town Centre
- Further affordable housing was needed in the Borough and it was essential that the development had a bus route installed as several areas in the Borough did not have a bus route which impacted local residents
- Further investigation needed to be carried out on modes of sustainable river transport as a means of travelling up the river to Gravesend, Greenwich and London etc
- Heritage was very important to Gravesend and aspects of heritage near the site needed to be preserved including the crane on the site and the crash site of the World War II pilot; the Saxon Shore way river walk was important and used by many cyclists/walkers

- The density of the development was a concern as it indicated that it would house roughly 3500 people although it was felt that the actual figures would be around 5000 people. Members were encouraged that the development would be constructed in stages so that the population levels and amount of transport going in and out of the area could be monitored
- The riverside walk and the restoration of the canal would provide local people with much better accessibility to the canal basin area
- In response to the Chairs question around wind modelling, the Principal Planner advised that a significant amount of work had been completed by the applicant and they used experts to undertake the wind modelling. The report gave a detailed analysis of the wind impact and its effect on the Sailing Club if the development was built but it should be noted that without the development there was already some impact on sailing quality with regards to the wind effects. The second supplementary report outlined a navigational risk assessment by the PLA which would assist with any relocation of the current moorings. The applicant was also offering provision for improving the current car parking for the Sailing Club by resurfacing the parking area along the promenade. He also pointed out that previous permitted developments would have resulted in wind effects to recreational activity on the river without offering any mitigation.
- Members were encouraged to see the studies and risk assessment undertaken but concern was raised that with global warming and shifting temperatures, there could not be wholly accurate predictions of the weather over the next ten years
- Members were happy to see that carbon emissions had been taken into account for development of the site
- Overall, Members were generally happy with the project as it delivered affordable homes and made improvements to the existing area

The Chair summed up the details of the application, concerns raised by Members, the main objections that were originally raised, the applicant's engagement with the local community and the work that the applicant had completed to mitigate the issues. He noted that the officer report had indicated that the issues were finely balanced. He also noted that the outstanding objections had now largely been dealt with and there was a desire to ensure that the Gravesend Sailing Club could continue to prosper and grow. He reminded the Committee that the business case for the tram was not there and was not part of the consideration for the Committee.

The Vice-Chair thanked the officers for their hard work in creating the report and spoke of the benefits that the development of the canal basin would bring to Gravesend.

Resolved that authority be DELEGATED to the Service Manager (Planning) in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair (Planning Committee) to grant conditional permission, **but** subject to:

- Referral to the Secretary of State as a departure from the adopted Development Plan;
- Finalisation of planning conditions and informatives, a draft list of which are included with the main report; and any additional conditions in the supplementary reports
- Completion of a legal agreement under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to maximise the delivery of affordable housing and to

deliver mitigation needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

- Note:
- (a) Ian Fenn (JTB Architect - in favour) addressed the Committee
 - (b) Paul Landsberg (Barton Willmore – in favour) addressed the Committee
 - (c) Craig Carson (Joseph Homes – Applicant – in favour) addressed the Committee
 - (d) Simon Johnson (Kenex Thames Gateway Tramlink Ltd – against) addressed the Committee
 - (e) Harriet Davies-Mullan (Gravesend Sailing Club – against) addressed the Committee

17. Planning applications determined under delegated powers by the Director (Planning & Development)

A schedule showing applications determined by the Director (Environment) under delegated powers had been published on the Council's website.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:58pm.