

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Development Control B Committee

13 June 2023 at 6.00 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Ani Stafford-Townsend (Chair), Lesley Alexander, Amal Ali, Fabian Breckels, Lorraine Francis, Katja Hornchen, Guy Poultney, Andrew Brown and Richard Eddy

Officers in Attendance:-

Philippa Howson, John Smith (Executive Director: Growth & Regeneration), Peter Westbury, Simone Wilding and Louise deCordova (Democratic Services Manager)

1 Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and issued the safety information.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Classick and Windows. Councillors Brown and Eddy attended in substitute.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Breckels declared that he was a trustee of We the Curious. He had not pre-determined the application and he had no pecuniary interest in planning application 22/00933/F- U Shed.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2023

Resolved – that the Minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

5 Action Sheet

The Development Management, Team Manager referred to the action to clarify the position regarding covenant payments in respect of 149 Marksbury Road, whilst this was not a planning matter, a written response would be sought and provided to Members.



6 Appeals

Members requested an update on Wyevale Gardens. The Development Management, Team Manager advised that an update had been received by the Planning Inspectorate and a briefing note would be circulated to Councillors.

7 Enforcement

The Chair raised a concern regarding the dimensions of a billboard located on the outskirts of Cabot Circus. The Development Management, Team Manager advised that the enquiry would be referred to Planning Enforcement for a response.

8 Public Forum

Members of the Committee received Public Forum Statements in advance of the meeting. The Statements were published online prior to the meeting. Each statement was heard before the application it related to and taken fully into consideration by the Committee prior to reaching a decision.

9 Planning and Development

To consider the following Planning Applications:

10 21/0376/F - 102 Gloucester Road, Bishopston, BS7 8BN

The Development Management, Team Manager introduced the application which had been returned to Committee for further consideration after a cooling off period. The Officer presented a summary of the Committee's grounds for refusal, as set out in the report.

Officers had concluded that the reasons for refusal would be difficult to defend on appeal, particularly as a similar scheme had previously been approved.

In response to Members questions the following points and clarifications were made:

- a. There was a risk of the Council incurring costs, should the Committee refuse the application, with the likelihood of the scheme going ahead on appeal.
- b. In comparing this application with a similar application that had been approved, it was noted that the key difference in the current scheme was that the retail proposition of the ground floor of the scheme had been significantly reduced in line with the increased residential use.



- c. The location at Gloucester Road was a busy, well used junction and arterial route as well as being a pedestrian crossing. It was important to understand the impact of the proposed changes to current parking arrangements.
- d. In transport terms, removal of the off-street parking improved the safety of the footway. Weekly access to the entrance to the petrol station had been found to be minimal. It was also noted that the junction was one of the widest in the city and the s278 would deal with that.
- e. Locations marked on plan were not the ones that officers had advised which had led to some confusion however, there was nothing on the highway that would not meet a road safety audit and there were no grounds for a road safety objection as everything proposed was manageable within the highway policy agreement.
- f. Section 278 is an agreement prior to commencement of works, a contract between the Council Highway Authority and the development. Parties agreed the extent of work and estimated costs and a bond was put in place. The scheme would then be delivered with a series of technical approvals at every stage to ensure the works met the adopted road safety standard. Officers were confident that the right road safety work covered the entrance to the petrol station.

There were no further comments and Councillor Stafford-Townsend moved the reasons for refusal in relation to PA No. **21/0376/F** and this was seconded by Councillor Eddy. On being put to the vote it was:- **RESOLVED (1 for, 8 against) that the reasons for refusal be rejected.**

Councillor Stafford-Townsend then moved the original officer recommendation in relation to PA No. **21/0376/F** and this was seconded by Councillor Breckels. On being put to the vote it was:- **RESOLVED (7 for, 2 against) that the application be granted**

11 22/00933/F - U Shed

The Development Management, Team Officer presented the application, summarising the key issues, and confirmed the Officer's recommendation for refusal as set out in the report.

In response to Members questions, the following points and clarifications were made:

- a. With respect to the public consultation, a common feature of the objections received were with regard to constraints of trade or contractual issues in respect of ZaZa Bazaar, which were material planning considerations reflected by officers comments in the report.
- b. Neither the number of objections received nor the time the objections had been received during the public consultation should determine the weight the Committee gave to them. Members should be cognizant of the quality of the reasons rather than the quantity received.
- c. With respect to the objections that related to the impact of the height of the proposed development on neighbouring views it was noted that the aquarium was significantly higher than the proposed development. However, the aquarium was shielded from view by U shed and V shed. The key matter was that the proposed development interrupted the consistent 2 storey maritime shed view on the waterfront and would be significantly taller.



- d. The conservation character appraisal considered that the view of the Grade 1 listed cathedral was important and that the harm that should be attributed to the development was great.
- e. Historic England considered that some of the issues could have been addressed by a smaller scale development and deferred to the conservation officer to determine the harms and impacts on the conservation area. The conservation and planning officers were clear that the development would harm the conservation area and in this instance there were insufficient public benefits not to recommend refusal.
- f. Referencing relevant policies in the report pack, it was noted that the submission from the council's economic development team considered that the proposal would create new jobs. Economic Development Officers were not in attendance and Planning officers were not in a position to provide further information on the research or assumptions that supported the submission.
- g. The economic development team had commented that the development would contribute towards addressing the lack of grade A office supply in the city centre market. Heritage and Planning Officers were required to consider the development's impact within the conservation area, on several listed buildings and the setting of 2 other conservation areas. Officers weighed the public benefit of increased office space against the impact, noting that whilst there may be a need for office space there may be more suitable locations in the city centre which had less of an impact on the heritage assets. Overall in this instance there was not enough public benefit to outweigh the harms identified.
- h. An equalities assessment had been carried out to ensure level access was available to the new units and offices. The representations received in relation to Za Za Bazaar had outlined that a diverse range of groups were using the building, however officers had no further information regarding this.
- i. There was no data available at the meeting to understand the level and proximity of empty office space in that location.
- j. The entrance to the walkway under the building measured 3m to the ceiling, passed the entrance, the measurement to the ceiling increases to 3.7m.
- k. Comments from the urban design team regarding adaptive reuse, referred to the ability of the building to be adapted and reused in its current form.
- l. It was understood that options to retrofit the building had been investigated by the applicant but due to the building construction it could not be retrofitted. The frame of the existing building would not have been suitable for the size and scale of the development. The way the floors inside of the building were designed did not make it possible to retrofit it to the ceiling height of grade a offices and have four floors within it.
- m. This was a car free development with sustainable transport options available. The Transport Team had not raised objections noting that there are 2 large car parks and various bus stops nearby.
- n. There is a demand for high quality office accommodation which has held up post covid and is reflected in comments from the Economic Development Team
- o. The conversation area character appraisal is clear that this area has had an important leisure function for many years. It was key to attracting tourists and to the area remaining vibrant. It is a dedicated leisure frontage which means that the policy assessment is looking to see leisure use and active use situated on the ground floor.



During debate, Councillors made the following comments:

- p. This was a critical area for city with a large number of jobs linked to its day-to-day operations as well as the knock-on impacts to supply chains. As heard from public forum statements received from local businesses a number of jobs hang in balance. This is a key tourism site and part of the key local offer, one of the few premises that draws people in from all over the city from a huge range of backgrounds. The data supporting the economic development benefits were unclear and it was not clear what the economic impact of working from home had done to office supply. The economic promises this development made versus the significant loss of jobs in short term was of concern.
- q. This was a fairly new 30-year-old building and the reasons for taking it down were unsubstantiated. The heritage of the area should be supported and didn't need another luxurious office block.
- r. The representations heard with regard to the public realm at the rear of V shed were that this was a dismal place to be, and improvements there would be welcome. There was agreement with officers' presentation that the series of buildings that made up the waterfront conservation area profile deserved to be retained.
- s. The only reason to demolish a 30-year old building would be due to structural damage. A significantly larger building would be disruptive to the area. There was no reason why the landscaping suggested couldn't happen anyway, with pavements widened and trees planted to create a welcoming presence. It was not clear that the leisure area was the right place for new office space. The footfall that Za Za received was significant and the loss of this would have an impact on surrounding businesses. The recommendations and reasons for refusal were sound.
- t. Similar concerns had been flagged by officers on conservation and heritage grounds about the development of the Arc and We the Curious and Members had unanimously supported the side of progress deeming that there was zero to marginal damage to the conservation site against the economic cost benefit to the leisure industry. This decision would be a key precedent. It was important to honour Bristol's rich history whilst acknowledging that Bristol was a living, breathing city where people needed to work rest and play. It was important to house people and create jobs and acknowledge that this was not a working commercial dock. The enhancements to the public realm and landscaping were all positive things and 500 jobs would be preserved in the long term.
- u. Others deemed that this proposal was very different to the Arc which would have been a movable structure and with significant contribution to the leisure offer. The proposed development was considered a static office building.
- v. It was important to support the leisure industry at this time. There was a need for a range of jobs, not just office-based jobs. The draw to the area the current business provided was considered significant in comparison to that of an office.

Councillor Stafford-Townsend then moved the officer recommendation in relation to PA No. **22/00933/F** and this was seconded by Councillor Brown. On being put to the vote it was:- **RESOLVED (7 for, 2 against) that the officer recommendation for refusal be upheld.**



12 22/03645/F - Inns Court Open Space, Hartcliffe Way

The Development Management, Team Officer presented the application and summarised the key issues of the report.

In debate, the following points were made:

- a. This was a great scheme and it was positive to see youth provision in this area of the city
- b. This would be of significant benefit to south Bristol where there are particular challenges and would benefit the young people who use it
- c. The location of the scheme would service 4 wards immediately adjacent to it and which contain some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city. There should be similar provision of sites across the city
- d. It would have been useful for the equalities impact assessment to explain the equalities benefits to this underrepresented group. The consideration which had been given to enabling disabled young people to use the site was welcomed
- e. Maintenance of the current tree cover was welcomed

Councillor Stafford-Townsend then moved the officer recommendation in relation to PA No. **22/03645/F** and this was seconded by Councillor Poultney. On being put to the vote it was:- **RESOLVED unanimously that the application be granted with delegated policy decisions to officers.**

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2pm on Wednesday 19th July 2023 in the Council Chamber, College Green, Bristol.

Meeting ended at 7.35 pm

CHAIR _____

