

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 20th October, 2015

MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Aldermen McGimpsey, L. Patterson
and Stalford; Councillors Armitage,
Bunting, Heading, Hutchinson, Johnston,
Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown and Mullan.

In attendance: Mr. P. Williams, Director of Planning and Place;
Mr. J. Walsh, Town Solicitor;
Mr. C. McIlwaine, Area Planning Manager;
Miss N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Campbell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Alderman Stalford

The Chairperson welcomed Alderman Stalford, who had replaced Alderman R. Patterson, to his first meeting of the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mullan declared interests in the following items:

- Z/2015/0336/F (Aquinas Stand, Kingspan Rugby Stadium) – in that a member of her family had been involved in the development of that project;
- Z/2014/1350/F (Retail Unit, Ormeau Embankment) – in that she had had the application deferred at a meeting of the former Town Planning Committee; and
- LA04/2015/0410/F (Modular Classroom at Forge Integrated Primary School) – in that she wished to address the Committee on traffic management issues at the site.

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In addition, Alderman L. Patterson declared an interest in Z/2013/1486/F (Loughside Football Ground at Skegoneil Avenue) – in that she represented the area in which the ground was located and had been consulted on the proposals.

Appeal Decision Notified

The Committee noted the outcome of an appeal in relation to the display of an advertising banner at the SSE Arena, which was formerly known as the Odyssey Arena.

Area of Special Scientific Interest – Bellevue Area

The Committee noted the contents of a report, which had been compiled by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, which outlined the rationale for designating specific areas of woodland, parkland and open space within the Bellevue as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). In addition, the report outlined the measures, which would be introduced within that area to maintain and protect its unique flora, fauna and habitat.

Extinguishment of Public Rights-of-Way

The Committee noted the receipt of correspondence from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which had indicated that, in accordance with the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, it had made an Order to extinguish public rights-of-ways at Battenberg Street, Brookmount Street and Glenwood Street within the Greater Shankill Area.

Item Withdrawn

The Committee was advised that planning application Z/2012/1210/F, that is, proposed development of student accommodation at 1-7 Lennoxvale and at 52 Malone Road; and an associated application for demolition consent at numbers 3, 5 and 7 Lennoxvale (LA04/2015/0896/DCA) had, at the request of the applicant, been withdrawn from the planning process.

Noted.

**Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Listed Building Consultation**

The Committee agreed, in response to a consultation exercise which was being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, to support the listing of the buildings at the following locations:

- the Chapel at Dominican College, 38 Fortwilliam Park;
- the Cavehill Methodist Church, 92-114 Cavehill Road;
- the Newington Presbyterian Church, Limestone Road;
- the Newington Presbyterian Church Hall, Limestone Road;
- the Blackstaff Mill, 77-129 Springfield Road;
- the former Short Brothers' Headquarters, Airport Road;
- the Portmore Trading Estate, 310 Newtownards Road;

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- the Imperial Buildings, 70-74 High Street/19-21 Skipper Street; and
- the building located at 108 North Street and 1 Gresham Street.

Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation - Internal Guidance

(Mr. K. Sutherland, Development Planning and Policy Manager, and Mr. D. O' Kane, Principal Professional and Technical Officer, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report, together with an associated Advice Note, a copy of which was available on the Council's mod.gov website:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Committee endorsement of new internal guidelines the Council to consider when assessing current and future planning applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast City Centre.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree the adoption of the draft Planning and Place Advice Note on Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast and to note that a future report will be brought to committee in relation to associated new Best Practice Guidelines.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

On 18 August 2015, this Committee agreed a series of steps to be undertaken to provide the Council with appropriate tools to deal with the recent influx of planning applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in Belfast City Centre. This included:

- **Long-term (3-5 years) – The inclusion of new policies to address any policy deficiencies within the New Local Development Plan;**
- **Medium-term (6-months) – The preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance to address gaps in the existing policy framework; and**
- **Short-term – the preparation of two guidance documents based on the existing policy framework as follows:**
 - **Technical, internal 'guidelines' to ensure a consistent approach when determining planning applications for PBMSA; and**

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- **A 'Best Practice Guide' to encourage the development of good quality PBMSA in the right locations.**
- 3.2 This report relates to the first of these short-term actions and committee are requested to approve the adoption and immediate use of the draft 'Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast – Planning and Place Advice Note'.**
- 3.3 As technical internal guidance, this document is intended to the Council with advice for considering proposals for PBMSA in Belfast. It represents non-statutory planning guidance and gives detailed advice around the Citywide approach to PBMSA and how to encourage good quality development in the right locations. It contains a summary of the current context an existing planning policy framework and sets out guidance in relation to six key criteria that will be considered when assessing applications for PBMSA, including:**
 - A. The development should be at a location which is easily accessible to university/college campuses by sustainable transport modes;**
 - B. Policy designations specific to the City Centre;**
 - C. Layout, design and facilities provided within the development are of high standards;**
 - D. The development should be designed in a way that does not conflict with adjacent properties or the general amenity of the surrounding area;**
 - E. The development has appropriate management in place to create a positive and safe living environment for students whilst minimising any potential negative impacts from occupants; and**
 - F. The development meets and identified need for the type of accommodation proposed.**
- 3.4 The document also provides guidance in relation to the use of planning conditions and/or legal planning agreements to mitigate perceived problems, such as noise or anti-social behaviour, etc. arising from student occupation.**
- 3.5 It should be noted that these guidelines are not a statement of policy as to where PBMSA can or cannot take place, but rather articulate the Council's position on student accommodation in the city, highlighting the relevant planning policies and other material considerations to be referenced when considering proposals for PBMSA. It should therefore be read in the context of the existing Planning Policy framework, including the new Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for NI (published September 2015), the suite of other relevant**

regional Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015.

- 3.6 It should also be read alongside an associated ‘Best Practice Guide’ which is currently being drafted to encourage the provision of good quality PBMSA in suitable locations by providing prospective developers with guidance to help shape proposals from the earliest opportunity. This related Guide will be brought for endorsement to a future committee meeting.”**

The Director clarified a range of issues which had been raised within the report. He explained that the Advice Note, as presented, had sought to consolidate prevailing guidance and policies to enable the Council to establish firm principles to manage the issue effectively over a short, medium and longer-term period. He emphasised that it was imperative that the Council would, as the planning authority, establish robust and evidence-based policies to manage the future development of purpose-built managed student accommodation (PBMSA) in the City.

The Committee welcomed the contents of the report and the point was made that it would be essential for the Council to measure accurately the projected demand for student accommodation in Belfast. In response to a range of Members’ questions, the Development Planning and Policy Manager undertook to provide information in respect of the following matters:

1. an updated figure regarding the number of Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation bed spaces which had already been approved by the Council;
2. the number of applications which were currently under consideration, together with their locations; and
3. the number of Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation spaces which would be created should all pending applications be approved.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)

- 1. Z/2015/0182/F - Lands adjacent to East Bridge Street and accessed off Laganbank Road, located between the former Maysfield Leisure Centre and Central Station.**

The Committee considered an application for a six-storey office development (with roof plant), the realignment of an existing car park, the infilling of slipways and the refurbishment of marina steps, the creation of new cycleway with new open spaces and associated landscaping.

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The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

2. LA04/2015/0545/F - Windsor House, 9-15 Bedford Street

The Committee considered an application for the part demolition, refurbishment, rebuilding, extension, and change of use from an office building to a hotel at Windsor House. The proposal would include also the provision of serviced hotel apartments, together with new retail outlets. In addition, the proposal would include the retention, refurbishment and extension of the upper floors for office use, together with the undertaking of all associated site works and access servicing.

During discussion, a number of Members welcomed the proposal as presented since it would transform one of the City's best-known landmarks and, in turn, assist in the rejuvenation of the Bedford Street area.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report and subject to the Director, in conjunction with the Town Solicitor, being granted delegated authority to attach further conditions, if deemed necessary, on receipt of the outstanding consultation response from Transport NI.

3. Z/2013/1486/F – Loughside Football Club at Skegoneil Avenue

(Alderman L. Patterson left the table whilst this application was under discussion.)

The Members were advised that Loughside Football Club had submitted a application to carry out improvements to an existing football ground at Skegoneil Avenue, which would include the installation of a 3G pitch, floodlighting, a 200 seated stand, dugouts, fencing, new turnstiles and vehicular access at Jellicoe Avenue with associated off street car parking.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

(Alderman L. Patterson returned to the table at this point.)

4. Z/2014/1539/F - St John Paul II Primary School, Whiterock Road.

The Committee was advised that the above-mentioned application sought permission for a new-build single block, to incorporate classrooms, stores and a resource area. In addition, work would be undertaken to realign existing gradients to accommodate the new block and play areas, new external ramps, steps and an external store.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

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5. Z/2014/1693/F Lislea Drive PSNI - 2 storey office building and associated site works.

The Planning Officer outlined the principal aspects of the application and indicated that permission had been sought for the erection of a detached two-storey office building. It was explained that two main blocks would be adjoined at right angles.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

6. Y/2014/0401/F – Housing development at the former Belvoir Park Hospital.

The Committee considered an application for a housing development at the site of the former Belvoir Park Hospital, which would include the restoration of listed and unlisted pavilions through their change of use and conversion from hospital wards to dwellings. The proposal would include the sub-division of buildings, removal of non-original features, amendment to the external envelope to allow new doorways, minor extensions, new external steps, railings and walls. The development would include also the erection of nine new-build dwellings comprising of two detached, two pairs of semi-detached and three town houses, with an amendment to provide access to the Hospital Road.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

7. Z/2015/0336/F Aquinas Stand at the Kingspan Rugby Stadium.

(Councillor Mullan left the table whilst this application was under discussion.)

The Committee considered an application for retrospective approval for changes to the rear and side elevations of the Aquinas Stand and the erection of a basement gym and mezzanine floor, to include minor elevation changes and the conversion of a toilet block to provide bar facilities.

Concern was expressed that the Committee was being requested to approve the application retrospectively. It was suggested that the proposals outlined should have anticipated the creation of additional bar facilities at the stadium and been included within the original application for the development.

The Director emphasised that all applications presented to the Committee seeking retrospective approval were submitted at the risk of the applicant. He pointed out that the Committee retained the power to refuse, if appropriate, any application for retrospective planning permission and the Council would take enforcement action, if necessary.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

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(Councillor Mullan returned to the table at this point.)

8. Z/2015/0196/F - Lands bounded by the Shankill Road, Lawnbrook Avenue, Azamor Street and Brookmount Street.

The Committee considered an application, which had been submitted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, for the temporary use of a former housing site as an open grassed space.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

9. Z/2014/1350/F Storage facility at Ormeau Embankment.

(Councillor Mullan left the table whilst this application was under discussion.)

The case officer outlined the principal aspects of an application for the erection of a storage and distribution centre, associated retail unit, customer cafe and car parking on land between Ravenhill Reach and the Helm Housing Association building at the Ormeau Embankment.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

(Councillor Mullan returned to the table at this point.)

10. S/2014/0624/F – Hot food outlet at 185 to 187 Kingsway, Dunmurry.

The Committee considered an application for the change of use from a grocery store to a restaurant and hot food carryout at the above-mentioned location.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

11. Z/2014/1734/F - Land on Bloomfield Walkway at the Comber Greenway.

The Committee considered an application for the construction of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and playground, which would include the erection of perimeter fencing.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

12. LA04/2015/0410/F - Forge Integrated Primary School at 20 Carolan Road.

(Councillor Mullan left the table whilst this application was under discussion.)

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The Committee considered an application for the erection of a modular classroom building with integrated toilets, external steps, ramp access, and a path.

Councillor Mullan addressed the Committee and indicated that, whilst she had no issues with the application for the classroom, concerns had been brought to her attention by residents regarding traffic safety and congestion at the site, especially during morning rush hours.

The Committee noted the comments of Councillor Mullan and granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the report.

(Councillor Mullan returned to the table at this point.)

Chairperson