

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 24 APRIL 2024

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Yeo (Vice-Chair), Cresswell, Davies, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Moore, Robinson, Rowland and Williams

RESOLVED ITEMS

115. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rowland declared a prejudicial interest in Item 123 (240073/REG3 – Victoria Park Recreation Ground, George Street) on the grounds of predetermination. Councillor Rowland was Ward Councillor for the area and had expressed her views in favour of an improved playground.

117. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee considered a report setting out a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications. The report also listed previously agreed site visits which were yet to take place.

Resolved - That no additional sites be the subject of a site visit.

118. PLANNING APPEALS

The Committee received a report on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decisions made and providing summary reports on appeal decisions of interest to the Committee.

Appendix 1 to the report set out details of one new appeals lodged since the last Committee. Appendix 2 to the report set out details of eight appeals decided since the last Committee. Appendix 3 to the report set out a report on the following appeal decisions:

2220564/TPO – 7 PORTWAY CLOSE, TILEHURST

Application to fell one Lime tree in the rear garden.

Written representations.

Appeal allowed.

220637/FUL – SCOURS LANE, TILEHURST

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Proposed is drive-through restaurant (Use Class E (a,b)) and sui generis hot food take away, car parking, enhanced landscaping and access arrangements.

Written representations.

Appeal allowed.

Resolved –

- (1) That the new appeal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;
- (3) That the reports on the appeal decisions in Appendix 3 be noted.

119. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Committee received a report on the types of development that could be submitted for Prior Approval and providing a summary of applications received and decisions taken in accordance with the prior approval process as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015) as amended. Table 1 set out four prior approval applications received, and Table 2 set out four applications for prior approval decided, between 14 March and 12 April 2024.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

120. CONSULTATION ON SPEEDING UP PLANNING DECISION MAKING

The Committee considered a report on a current consultation by the Government on ideas to speed up the process for making planning decisions, for which the deadline for responses was 1 May 2024. An update report was tabled at the meeting containing suggested responses to the consultation questions.

The report stated that the consultation paper was generally looking at ways to restrict the use of extensions of time to the long-established 13 weeks for major applications and eight weeks for all other types of application, with a penalty requiring local planning authorities to refund fees if the target date was not met. The report explained that the consultation sought views on proposals for the following and explained them further:

- Introduce a new Accelerated Planning Service for major commercial applications with a decision time in ten weeks and fee refunds if this was not met.
- Change the use of extensions of time, including ending their use for householder applications and only allowing one extension of time for other developments, which linked to a proposed new performance measure for local planning authority speed of decision-making against statutory time limits.

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- Expand the current simplified written representations appeals process for householder and minor commercial appeals to more appeals.
- Implement section 73B for applications to vary planning permissions and the treatment of overlapping permissions.

Resolved -

That the proposed responses set out in the update report be used to respond to the consultation, subject to officers strengthening the responses by inclusion of relevant local evidence and data to support the arguments where available.

121. PROPOSED TREE WORK TO ONE PROTECTED COUNCIL TREE IN ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD, ST MARY'S BUTTS, READING

The Committee considered a report on proposed work to one Council-maintained Horse chestnut tree in St Mary's Churchyard, which was subject to a Tree Protection Order (TPO). The tree was shown as T11 on plan TPO 10/06 attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the tree was one of many protected in the Churchyard and maintained by the Council under a long-standing agreement with the Diocese. It had previously been pollarded, the appropriate management for such trees being to re-pollard on a regular basis, normally every 3-5 years. An inspection by the Council's Tree Surveyor had identified some decay and cavities (also noted on previous surveys) and had concluded that re-pollarding was due and prudent. On 14 March 2024 an application had been received from the Tree Surveyor seeking consent for the re-pollarding of the Horse chestnut (application reference 240336).

The report stated, for information only, that a crown reduction was proposed to the non-TPO Holm Oak on the north-east corner of the Church, back to previous pruning points. This was in line with good tree management, particularly given the fungal fruiting bodies present and increasing decay.

A site notice had been attached to the Horse chestnut tree on 12 April 2024 and would be left for the required 21-day period. It was reported at the meeting that no public comments had been received so far but the consultation period finished on 3 May 2024.

The report concluded that the works proposed were necessary in order to appropriately manage the tree. Subject to no substantive objections or comments being received as a result of the public notice, it was recommended that the works be approved.

Resolved –

That the proposed tree works to the Horse chestnut tree be approved, subject to no substantive objections being received within the consultation period.

122. 231190/FUL & 231191/LBC - 20-30 KINGS ROAD

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231190/FUL - Change of use from E(g)(i) to F1(g) Law Courts for both The Carbon Building and Highbridge House. Fitout of the buildings for use as a Law Court, installation of a new internal lift and new plant to existing roof plant enclosure. New gate and external ramped entrance to the rear of The Carbon Building. Streetscape security features including bollards to footpaths and obscuring film to windows.

231191/LBC - Listed building consent for alterations to Highbridge House, re-opening of opening in rear wall at ground floor and new opening at first floor level to form connections to The Carbon Building.

The Committee considered a report on the above applications. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave details of further information submitted by the applicant on the Construction Method Statement, bollards, BREEAM, brick storage and re-use and privacy films, and set out resulting proposed amendments to or removal of conditions as appropriate.

Comments were received and considered.

It was noted at the meeting that there should be electric vehicle charging points in some of the car park spaces in line with current policy and it was suggested that the applicant should be asked to consider installing the infrastructure to allow for potential further electric vehicle charging points to be added to spaces in the future.

Resolved –

- (1) That planning permission and listed building consent be granted for applications 231190/FUL and 231191/LBC respectively, subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the amendments set out in the update report, and subject to the following further amendment;
 - (a) That Condition 7 (vehicle parking spaces) for 231190 be amended to clarify the policy requirement for electric vehicle charging points;
- (2) That the End User Phase Employment, Skills and Training Plan be approved in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets, and Ward Councillors;
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to make such minor changes to the conditions as may reasonably be required to issue the permissions;
- (4) That the applicant be asked to consider installing the infrastructure to allow for potential further electric vehicle charging points to be added in the future.

123. 240073/REG3 - VICTORIA PARK RECREATION GROUND, GEORGE STREET

Relocation of an existing children's play area within Victoria Park and the reinstatement of the existing children's play area to an informal open space.

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The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

It was reported at the meeting that there was a typographical error in Condition 5 which should refer to nine new trees not 38.

Resolved –

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission be authorised for application 240073/REG3, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended, with the correction of 38 new trees in Condition 5 to nine new trees.

(Councillor Rowland declared a prejudicial interest in this Item on the grounds of predetermination. She was Ward Councillor for the area and had expressed her views in favour of an improved playground. She made a statement to the Committee as Ward Councillor but then left the room and took no further part in the debate or decision.)

124. 201766/FUL - 40 SILVER STREET

Erection of 4 storey building to provide 23 private rental homes with associated communal facilities, surface parking, access and landscaping works (amended).

The Committee considered a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting that proposed adding an additional header within the Section 106 Heads of Terms and recommended delegation of minor changes to the conditions, the Heads of Terms and the details of the legal agreement to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services if necessary.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

It was suggested at the meeting that the applicant should be asked to consider installing the infrastructure to allow for potential further electric vehicle charging points to be added in the car parking spaces in the future.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application 201766/FUL, subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 24 May 2024 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the update report, with an additional clause regarding the private waste collection arrangements to allow the Local Authority to request at any time a log of the collections carried out;

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- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may reasonably be required to issue the permission;
- (3) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (4) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report;
- (5) That the applicant be asked to consider installing the infrastructure for potential further electric vehicle charging points to be added in the future.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)