

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

15th JUNE, 2010

At a Special Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 15th June, 2010:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor L.M. Phillips) and Councillors C.S. Biggs, R.M. Biggs, V. Black, A.J. Canning, T.C.N. Harries, L.E. Heath, Trevor Jones and F.E. Kent-Ledger (Chairman).

In attendance:
Councillor T. James
6 representatives from the Developer

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Councillors C.M. Hebditch, S.C. Hosford, R.B. Potter and M.E. Rennie.

8. **PLANNING APPLICATION 1/D/10/0763 – REDEVELOPMENT AT CHARLES STREET**

In accordance with Planning and Environment Committee Minute 7(d)(2) the Committee considered what comments to offer on the above planning application.

The Chairman welcomed those attending but emphasised that this Committee would only comment on the merits of the planning application.

She then introduced the representatives of the developer who gave a brief presentation on the proposal and explained that the offices, library and adult education centre were subject to a detailed application whilst the remainder of the development was outline and would be classified as reserved matters.

The developer's architect explained the ethos behind the proposal and stressed their recognition of the importance to integrate the new development with the existing streets and to follow the building scale, patterns and materials in the Town including the use of a Broadmayne style of brick, local stone and render.

In response to a question from a Member a representative of the developer said that discussions had taken place with planning officers from the West Dorset District Council and that the developer considered that the application satisfied a sufficient number of the requirements of the Charles Street Planning Brief.

In response to another question the representatives for the developer said that they believed that the proposal complied with PPG4 which identified offices as an appropriate use in town centre developments regardless of the omission of office uses from Policy EA14 of the West Dorset District Local Plan. A member expressed his concern that the developers had failed to pay sufficient attention in their presentation to the proposed office/library building which was the only detailed element of this planning application.

Another Member expressed concern that the retail element of the scheme might not proceed if the development of the office/library building did not go ahead but the Simons representative informed the Committee that the delivery of the retail scheme could proceed provided the financial market was sufficiently buoyant.

A Member expressed his concern that the proposed office building was too large adjacent to South Walks and another Member expressed concern regarding the low number of residential units within the scheme.

In response to a question the developer confirmed that the archaeological evaluation of the site could take between 6 and 12 months but they were hoping to start the office construction by April, 2011 and anticipated that construction would take approximately 18 months.

The members of the public were then give the opportunity to ask questions of the developers. One main area of concern was the insufficient number of car parking spaces within the proposal and the positioning of the car park and hotel entrances. Other concerns were the lack of trees and shrubs within the development and accessibility to and within the proposed development which appeared to need further work.

Concern was also expressed regarding the archaeological merits of the office building and its impact on the Conservation Area and the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The Chairman brought the question and answer part of the meeting to a conclusion and thanked the representatives from Simons for attending. They then withdrew.

During consideration of the Committee's formal response to the planning application Members expressed broad support for the retail elements of the scheme but there were major concerns concerning the proposed office/library building.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the comment on this planning application as now agreed and set out at Appendix I be notified to the West Dorset District Council.
- (2) That the Town Clerk be instructed to write to the Government Office for the South West at the appropriate time requesting that the Secretary of State call in this application for public enquiry on the grounds of its non-compliance with Policies SA21, EA14, DA3, DA5 and DA 7 of the approved West Dorset District Local Plan and the significant detrimental impact which the proposal, if approved, would have on the streetscape of Dorchester, the Dorchester Town Centre Conservation Area in general and South Walks.

Chairman

PLANNING APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Planning Applications considered on 15th June, 2010

1 10555

Demolition of existing buildings and structures and comprehensive redevelopment comprising retail units (Use Class A1), restaurants and cafes (Use Class A3), financial and professional services (Use Class A2), a hotel (Use Class C1), residential apartments (Use Class C3), offices (Use Class B1), library (Use Class D1) and adult learning centre (Use Class D1) with associated undercroft car parking, new streets including new pedestrian links, public square, public art, public toilets, access (including highway improvements), servicing, landscaping and boundary treatments (outline application) at Charles Street. 1/D/10/0763

Recommend refusal in the strongest possible terms. The proposal is not in accordance with Policies SA21, EA14, DA3, DA5 and DA7 of the adopted West Dorset Local Plan. It also fails to deliver the 50 dwellings (including 18 affordable units) anticipated at Table 6.2 of the Local Plan.

In addition the proposal fails to comply with the Charles Street Planning Brief in that it pays little regard to accessibility by means other than the private car; makes limited and uncertain provision for arts, cultural or leisure uses; disregards the requirement for “prestigious” development of the boundaries of the site with South Walks and Acland Road (by inference for housing purposes); does not provide the called-for focus on Dorchester’s archaeological heritage; and proposes a wholly inadequate town square.

The proposed office/library building adjacent to South Walks is detrimental in the highest degree to the scheduled monument in particular and the conservation area in general by reason of its bulk: at no other point are any of the Town Walks abutted by a building of such mass.