

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 1 June 2015

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)
Councillors Spackman, Denham, Edwards, Sutton and Williams

Apologies:

Councillors Buswell, Choules, Lyons, Mottram, Newby, Prowse and Raybould

Also Present:

Assistant Director City Development, Senior Area Planning Officer and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (HB)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 2 and 30 March were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 14/0963/03 - LAND TO WEST OF PILTON LANE, EXETER

The Assistant City Development Manager (Planning) presented the application for a three storey building containing 41 retirement apartments including communal facilities and associated car parking and landscaping.

The outstanding issue was the amount of a contribution towards affordable housing provision but an agreement had not been reached with the applicant. The Council's external valuer had concluded that a financial contribution of £1,250,000 to the provision of off-site affordable housing would be appropriate. The offer from the applicant was £656,000 together with a CIL contribution of £444,000.

The recommendation was therefore for refusal.

Mr Williams spoke in support of the application. He raised the following points:-

- following refusal of the previous application, which had been upheld by the Inspector at Appeal, and further negotiations, McCarthy and Stone had offered as an off-site contribution of £656,000 towards affordable housing. When added to CIL (£444,000) the total contribution would be £1.1 million by way of infrastructure/affordable housing related contributions;
- the offer made by McCarthy and Stone was against the opinion of its own valuers but was made to help bring forward this desirable scheme;

- the key difference between the parties was that of the sales value of the individual flats; and
- after two years of negotiations the applicant had put forward a final offer and would abandon the proposal if their suggested terms were not acceptable.

He responded as follows to Members queries:-

- the position at appeal on the sales value had been £200,000 for a one bed flat and £290,000 for a two bed flat and values had since increased;
- initial land value assessment by the applicant had been at benchmark valuation and if the applicant was required to pay any additional contribution financial appraisal would come out negative; and
- at Appeal there had been discrepancies over build costs but now the disagreement was in respect of an uplift in the value of the properties.

Andrew Burrows of Burrows Hutchinson Ltd. had been engaged by the City Council as an external valuer to assist with assessing the viability of the development. Mr Burrows explained that, in reaching the above figure sought by the Council, although a case for a higher figure could have been made he had been mindful of the guidance on “flexibility” in the Planning Policy Guidance and also Government advice for planning authorities to adopt a consistent approach in plan-making and decision-taking. As such, a concession would be appropriate to reach an early settlement. A significant aspect of a final decision would be for the Council to provide a consistent and robust message in respect of market values for developments. Accepting a figure not considered to be a good value would set a precedent which other developers would look to benefit from.

RESOLVED that planning permission for a three storey building containing 41 retirement apartments including communal facilities and associated car parking and landscaping be refused as, in absence of a planning obligation in terms that are satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority, and which makes provision for a contribution towards affordable housing, the proposal is contrary to Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2012 policy CP7, Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 Saved Policy H6 and Exeter City Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2014.

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LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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APPEALS REPORT

The schedule of appeal decisions and appeals lodged was submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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SITE INSPECTIONS - ROTA FOR VISITS

The report of the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support was submitted.

RESOLVED that the circulated rota of site inspections be approved subject to any changes during the course of the year.

SITE INSPECTION PARTY

RESOLVED that the next Site Inspection Party will be held on Tuesday 16 June at 9.30 a.m. The Councillors attending will be Bialyk, Denham and Mottram.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.11 pm)

Chair