

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 5 October 2016

Present:

Councillor Sutton (Chair)
Councillors Bialyk, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Gottschalk, Harvey, Mrs Henson, Morse, Newby and Spackman

Apologies:

Councillors Lyons and Prowse

Also Present:

City Development Manager, Principal Project Manager (Development), Highway Development Management Officer and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (HB)

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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PLANNING APPLICATION NO. - 16/0890/02 - EXETER BUS AND COACH STATION RE-DEVELOPMENT AREA, PARIS STREET, EXETER

The Principal Project Manager (Development) (HS) presented the application for reserved matters of the layout, scale, appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping relating to the new Bus Station (Parcel B) and Street C: Pedestrian Access (Parcel Y).

The application was for the reserved matters of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale, outline planning permission having been granted by the Council on 20 January 2016. Further applications for reserved matters in respect of P (Paris Street) and C (Commercial uses) would be considered separately and these were anticipated to be received shortly.

Application for approval of reserved matters in respect of Parcel L (ref. 16/0891/02) was the subject of another report (Min. No. 80 below refers).

Members were circulated with an update sheet - attached to minutes – setting out an amendment to condition 1.

Mr Crawley spoke against the application. He raised the following points:-

- speaking on behalf of the Exeter and District Bus Users Group;
- no comments to make on appearance and landscaping and believe that the Design Team have come up with a building that looks in keeping with the general surroundings and provides a welcoming enclosed concourse for waiting passengers;
- turning to the layout and scale of the site, it is not believed that there has been enough thought given to the difficulties arising from the approach for vehicles off a steep incline and the placing of terminal facilities on site.

- The absence of a second floor for bus company staff has created a much reduced area available for public amenities. The bus apron has several layover bays on the Cheeke Street side into which buses can reverse. Ask that no bollards are placed where buses can hit them but, instead, a raised kerb is inset far enough for the longest rear overhang of a bus to pass over before its rear wheels hit the kerb;
- access to the site raises a number of issues. There are reservations about the steep approach that buses have to take when entering the site from Cheeke Street, then the added difficulty of buses using Bays 1 and 2 in particular, having to make an awkward manoeuvre to line up with the departure gate. Daylight tests with cones on level ground attempt to provide an assurance that this will work okay but the situation will be very different on a dark winter's day when raining. This is after drivers have ascended a slope which it is hoped will have all-weather grip to prevent loss of traction before they are confronted by buses on bays 2 or 3 trying to reverse directly into their path! The proposed layout offers only the length of the steep incline for buses to queue, with others tailing back onto Cheeke Street. This will cause congestion back onto Paris Street roundabout, and delay other city bus services ascending Cheeke Street;
- pedestrian access and egress from Cheeke Street to and from Street C on the plan is by way of 23 steps and a zig-zag slope for wheel chairs. Where this meets the pavement of Cheeke Street there ought to be placed safety railings to prevent people stepping or rolling into the road;
- seating on the passenger concourse is a welcome addition but having seats protruding across the path of the concourse will act as an impediment and restrict the flow of pedestrians using this desire line as their only way from Sidwell Street to the new leisure complex. The width of the concourse is barely that of the present one and transverse seating will obstruct free movement of people whether or not they are using a bus;
- the published timeline indicates that contractors will still be working on other areas of the site, right across towards upper Paris Street, after the new bus station is completed. How will people access the new station before contractors have finished what they are doing?;
- plans indicate the position of two bus stops between the vehicular entrance and exit to the station. It will be difficult for a bus driver to have sufficient visibility and space to exit the bus station and make a right turn down to the roundabout. This could result in buses actually queuing to get out of the station;
- in regard to sustainability, the Group has reservations about the reduced size and unless there is scope for early expansion of the site to accommodate more bays and facilities, it is felt the project will be dubbed an expensive white elephant from the start; and
- as further reserved matters are up for review it is hoped that these will include good connecting facilities to long distance coaches, bus information, the positioning and design of displays both in the bus station and at the two-year temporary stops in Sidwell Street, plus a review of tour coach facilities.

Responding to a Member, he accepted that full consultation had been undertaken by the City Council with all views assessed after approval at outline stage in January. He felt, however, that some areas remained a concern.

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

- following outline Planning Permission the design of the bus station addresses the comments received during the consultation exercises and includes public toilets, an enclosed waiting area with seating, a covered boarding area, a public enquiry office, an accessible drop off point and cycle

parking. The number of departure bays and layover bays meet the requirements that have been previously agreed by Devon County Council and Stagecoach.

- **Access** - pedestrian access to the bus station is consistent with the Outline Planning Permission and is from Bampfylde Street to the north and Street C Pedestrian Access to the south. The enclosed concourse provides pedestrian circulation through the site;
- an accessible pick up and drop off point and cycle parking is located adjacent to Bampfylde Street with further cycle parking at the end of Street C Pedestrian Access on Cheeke Street. Vehicle access to the bus station apron is from Cheeke Street and vehicle manoeuvres have been assessed using digital vehicle tracking software together with a full size mock-up on site to design the bays, entrance and exit;
- **Appearance** - the appearance of the Bus Station takes account of the St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre and Princesshay Leisure in respect of façade treatment and materials. Curtain walling has been used to enclose the concourse to allow views of the buses and to provide a light and airy feel to the pedestrian circulation route. The form of the building provides a constant building height to the visible elevations with the building height and bus station area in accordance with the Outline Planning Permission parameters;
- **Landscape** - the terraced landscape of retaining walls and planting creates a crucial first impression as part of the gateway to the City. It incorporates a series of planted terraces to soften the appearance of the level change between pavement and buildings when being viewed from ground level and on the road approach. The planting design integrates a mix of plants and shrubs to provide year round interest, seasonal colour and to support biodiversity;
- **Layout** - the bus station comprises of the bus apron, the enclosed concourse and the main building that provides facilities for the public and bus station operator;
- the enclosed concourse contains 70 seats with 10 wheelchair spaces that are positioned adjacent to the bus boarding points and against the main concourse wall;
- the public enquiry office is positioned close to the Street C Pedestrian Access entrance. The operational staff accommodation is located in the central part of the building. The public toilets are located adjacent to Bampfylde Street entrance and provide female, male and accessible toilets with the quantity consistent with Code of practice for the provision of public toilets; and
- the bus station is seen as an important part of the City's public transport infrastructure and the status of this area as part of the City Centre requires a high standard of architectural quality. The design provides a new and enhanced Bus Station that is in keeping with the requirements of the City's vision, policies and the approved Outline Permission to provide a significant point of arrival to the City Centre.

He responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- further consultation would take place with relevant parties to address remaining issues including facilities generally within the bus station including those for cyclists and the disabled and continuing discussions with the City Council on open space matters and the Devon Wildlife Trust on landscaping;
- signage, information delivery and visual display issues would be picked up with the appointed operator;
- there was potential for additional cycle stands and further cycle provision in general in the final scheme;

- safety railings can be provided to enhance safety, as requested;
- bus use of the bays had been assessed through manual vehicle tests and digital vehicle tracking software with different approaches into the site considered and changes made to initial plans and would be progressed through the commissioning process with the chosen operator through white line provision etc.;
- distinctive seating within the concourse at the entrances to the bays to assist queuing would be provided following research visits to bus stations including Bath, Leicester and Bedford;
- access between the bus station and the Leisure Centre site would be carefully planned and monitored during the construction stage; and
- the contract with the operator would define service output including toilets and the City Council had granted the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board delegated powers regarding such operational matters.

The Highway Development Management Officer confirmed that the overall scheme including the layout of the bays was to the satisfaction of the County Council and that Stagecoach had been consulted on the design, including bay layout and access and egress to and from the site. Together with the Leisure Centre, it complemented the wider City Centre re-developments including Park and Ride bus provision in Paris Street with inherent flexibility to cater for peak periods.

Access for buses via Cheeke Street would be one way and right turn egress would not be problematic given the proposed reduction of north bound bus use of Cheeke Street as a whole. A condition would cover real time service information provision for passengers in line with the evolving Exeter City Futures project.

The Principal Project Manager Development responded to a number of issues raised above including conditions relating to surfacing materials to provide vehicle grip, safety railings and ramp design.

He explained that the change in levels across the site between Sidwell Street and Paris Street roundabout, together with the Bus Station layout had restricted the potential to achieve a cycle route through the site without conflict with pedestrians. The proposals to pedestrianise upper Paris Street and the link onward to Sidwell Street were considered to be an acceptable alternative east-west route for cycles. Given that the proposals did not make provision for a cycle route through the site, and the potential for conflict with pedestrians at the entrance to the Bus Station in particular, a peripheral cycle parking strategy for visitors, as set out in the outline consent, was considered acceptable and it was not considered that the ramped access to Cheeke Street should be designed to encourage mounted cycle use. Increasing the width of the ramp in this area would significantly reduce the space available for landscaping.

Members welcomed the detailed plans for the new bus station which would be a great asset to the City and surrounding areas, the Portfolio Holder for Sport and Health and Wellbeing stating that a full consultation exercise had been carried out by the City Council since outline permission had been granted in January including the existing operator, the County Council and a number of interested parties. He emphasised that opportunities remained for public participation through the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board, which was a public meeting. Reference was also made to the significant changes and improvements to the scheme introduced following the January meeting in response to issues raised during the consultation period. It was stated that further consideration of issues relating to cycle provision would be beneficial including the number of cycle stands and the overall safety of both cyclists and pedestrians within the site, including access arrangements for the former onto the site.

This could be achieved through bringing a report on a wider cycle strategy to the Planning Member Working Group. This was agreed.

The recommendation was for approval subject to the conditions as set out in the report and the update sheet.

RESOLVED that, subject to prior consultation with the Chair of this Committee, the Assistant Director City Development be authorised to **APPROVE** the reserved matters of the layout, scale, appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping relating to the new Bus Station (Parcel B) and Street C: Pedestrian Access (Parcel Y) be approved subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) Unless otherwise agreed the appearance, layout and scale of development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 29 September 2016 (*dwg. nos. (08)001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008 and 009*), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 2) Unless otherwise agreed in writing the landscaping and external accesses (including planting, retaining walls, steps and ramp) hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 22 September 2016 (*dwg. nos. 4288_BS_101, 103, 401, and dwg nos. 4288_EBS_402, 404, and 405*), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 3) Unless otherwise agreed in writing the development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in substantial accordance with the submitted Design and Access Statement revision A received by the Local Planning Authority on 23 September 2016, as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 4) Notwithstanding condition no. 1, no work shall commence on site under this permission until full details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the following shall thereafter be provided in accordance with such details:
 1. Detailed design of the projecting roof edges.
 2. Detailed design of the glazing systems used in external wall elevations.**Reason:** Insufficient information has been submitted with the application and in the interests of visual amenity.
- 5) No part of the Bus Station development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until a strategy for providing real time passenger travel information has been approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with this strategy.
Reason: To maximise the opportunities to promote and enhance use of sustainable modes, in accordance with Section 4 of the NPPF.

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 16/0891/02 - ST SIDWELL'S POINT LEISURE CENTRE - LEISURE DEVELOPMENT, PARIS STREET, EXETER

The Principal Project Manager (Development) (HS) presented the application for reserved matter details of the layout, scale, appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping relating to St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre (Parcel L).

The application was for the reserved matters of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale, outline planning permission having been granted by the Council on 20 January 2016. Further applications for reserved matters in respect of P (Paris Street) and C (Commercial uses) would be considered separately and these were anticipated to be received shortly.

He confirmed that the landscaping provision in the front of the Leisure Centre would include wildflower planting to enhance the biodiversity of the site and complement the Exeter Wild City initiative.

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

- the Leisure Centre has a gross internal floor area of 6,100m² which is within the outline approval requirement for leisure centre use. The mass steps up from Paris Street moving north as identified in the approved parameters plans and the pitched roofs don't exceed the levels at each step identified in the outline approval. It is two stories tall to Paris Street maximum datum height 53.6m and three stories to the new pedestrian street maximum datum height 62.3m; both within the approved parameters;
- the leisure centre is designed to passive house energy standards that are far higher than best practice and the BREEAM energy requirements identified in CP15; minimising energy loss whilst maximising solar gain are identified in DG2, both are central to the passive house approach. The leisure centre is designed to facilitate connection to a future district heating system when it becomes available as identified in CP13;
- the leisure centre is at a strategic city gateway and therefore accorded particular significance in the bus station supplementary planning guidance, plus in CP17, which sets out the quality of design expected. In response to the specific location, the design steps up from the Paris Street roundabout in a similar way to the wider streetscape reducing the immediate bulk against the footpath whereas the distant views from the top of Heavitree Road show the whole building, in line with the strategic nature of the gateway site;
- the design helps repair the existing urban fabric on this important approach into the city with particular emphasis on the gateway quality of the site and studies are included in the application showing the positive urban impact of the development from the surrounding streets. The use of a number of different materials and a strong articulated building form ensures that these views retain interest and that there is a hierarchy of scale through the use of materials of differing modules and texture. This palate picks up on the Princesshay west development closest to the cathedral;
- large areas of glazing provide highly active façades to Heavitree Road and Paris Street, plus to the new retail development and bus station. These glazed areas act as shop windows for the activities inside encouraging participation and integration with the wider community; in line with the objectives of CP17 to encourage social interaction and ensure a positive experience for users and the general public;
- the use of high quality materials, standard of design and environmental credentials highlight how the scheme will be the jewel in Exeter's crown; and

- the proposed leisure centre sets a high standard of design and quality as should be expected at this important approach into the city, to reflect the civic nature of the new facility and ensure that the new centre becomes the focus for fitness for Exeter district.

The recommendation was for approval subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

Commenting on the quality of the range of services within the Centre, the adoption of high environmental performance standards for the building including Passivhaus Standard and Building Biology IBN best practice guidance in healthy design, Members welcomed the detailed plans for the Leisure Centre, which, it was felt, offered an iconic building which would greatly enhance both the Leisure offer and built environment of the City Centre. Members also remarked that its location in the centre was an accessible, practical solution to replacing the now, unfit for purpose Pyramids pool and was of benefit to those living within the area without private transport as well as those elsewhere in and outside Exeter because of its proximity to transport hubs.

RESOLVED that, subject to prior consultation with the Chair of this Committee, the Assistant Director City Development be authorised to **APPROVE** the reserved matters details of the layout, scale, appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping relating to St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre (Parcel L) subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) Unless otherwise agreed the appearance, layout and scale of development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 22 September 2016 (*dwg. nos. (08)005, 006, 009 rev A, 010 rev A, 011 rev A, 012 rev A, 013 rev A, 014 rev A, 015, 020 rev A, 021 rev A, 022 rev A, 023 rev A, 030, 031 and 040*), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 2) Unless otherwise agreed in writing the landscaping and external accesses (including planting, retaining walls, steps and ramp) hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 22 September 2016 (*dwg. nos. 4288_SSP_100, 101, 102, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405 and 406*), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 3) Unless otherwise agreed in writing the development hereby approved shall not be carried out otherwise than in substantial accordance with the submitted Design and Access Statement revision A received by the Local Planning Authority on 22 September 2016, as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 4) Service vehicle and delivery vehicle access to the site shall only be carried on in accordance with a Delivery Vehicle Management Plan which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Additional Information Circulated after Agenda Dispatched - circulated as an appendix

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.10 pm)

Chair