

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE 10th January 2007

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

06/3243/REV

66 Bridge Road, Stockton-on-Tees.

Reserved matters application for the erection of 2 no. blocks of student residential accommodation and related external works including riverside footpath and cycleway

Expiry date: 18th January 2007

Summary:

Outline planning consent was granted in June 2006 for student housing development and associated means of access on the former SCS Furniture Store site, Bridge Road in Stockton (06/0709/OUT). This application deals with the remaining reserved matters from that approval namely Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale.

The site occupies an important riverside location and forms part of a larger site known as Boathouse Lane. Given the important riverside gateway location, the Council has prepared a planning and design brief to guide future development on the site and surrounding area, which was formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 23rd June 2006. Importantly the brief seeks to deliver a high quality and commercially successful mixed use development including residential development for the area through an established masterplan and agreed design principles.

The key objectives of the document are:

- To ensure the appropriate, comprehensive redevelopment of a key River Tees corridor site within the wider context of the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative;
- To create a Gateway into the town centre, including a regionally - significant landmark building;
- To create a diverse, attractive and exciting place to live work and visit;
- To ensure high quality urban design, which maximises the potential use of the water frontage location;
- To protect and enhance the natural and historic environment;
- To improve linkages with surrounding land uses.

The proposal is considered to be broadly in line with the above mentioned key objectives and general planning policies set out in the Development Plan and is recommended for approval with conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning application 06/3243/REV be approved subject to the following conditions:

01. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Drawing Number(s) :-

0523/029A,0523/041,0523/042,0523/053,054,055,056,057,058,059,060,061,062,063,064,065,066,067,068,069,070,07A,071 and 072.

Reason: To define the consent.

02. Notwithstanding any description of the materials in the application no development shall be commenced until precise details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external walls and roofs of the building(s) have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development.

03. The landscaping details shown in the approved plans shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the date of planting die, are removed, become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation.

Reason : To ensure satisfactory landscaping to improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

04. A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is the sooner, for its permitted use. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory landscaping to improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

05. Notwithstanding the submitted information, further details of the paving, lighting, railings, footpath construction and materials, and retaining wall shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development.

06. Development shall not be commenced until the Local Planning Authority has approved in writing the details of arrangements for the future maintenance of the Riverside Walkway.

Reason: To enable the proper control of the development.

07. Before the building is brought into use, precise details of a scheme of illumination of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include details of lighting units, level and spread of illumination including any controls and shielding.

Reason : In the interests of the visual amenity of the area

08. The development shall not result in a narrowing of the river channel.

Reason: To reduce the risk from flooding

09. Any areas of the walkway set at a level of less than 5m AOD shall be equipped with signage warning users of the possible risk of flooding and advising of the closest escape route.

Reason: To reduce the risk from flooding

The Proposal has been considered against the policies below and it is considered that the scheme accords with these policies and there are no other material considerations, which indicate a decision, should be otherwise
Stockton on Tees Local Plan policies GP1, HO3, HO11, EN28

THE PROPOSAL

1. The use of the land for student accommodation has already been established through the granting of outline consent. This application deals with the reserved matters namely Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale.
2. The site is located to the east side of Boathouse Lane and to the south of Bridge Road (Appendix 1 - site location plan). The land is currently vacant following demolition of the previous building (SCS Furniture Store). It is a prominent site and highly visible, with frontage to the River Tees and adjoining one of the main routes into Stockton Town Centre and is considered a Gateway location.
3. The application site is adjacent to a builder's merchant (Dove) to the west. The land to the immediate south is vacant, having been cleared some time ago of all buildings. The eastern boundary is made up by the River Tees. On the opposite side of Bridge Road, to the north, is Chandlers Wharf, a retail and leisure park containing outlets occupied by Burger King and Mecca Bingo. Approximately 65 metres northwest of the application site is the original Grade II* listed booking office of the Stockton - Darlington railway that adjoins a Hostel (number 50-56 Bridge Road), which is also listed (Grade II).
4. The application site forms part of a larger site known as Boathouse Lane, an area characterised by industrial and basic commercial buildings. The Council has prepared a Planning and Design Brief for Boathouse Lane to aid the area's comprehensive redevelopment.
5. The design comprises a modern building designed to give the appearance of a series of individual buildings, which are connected by lightweight linkages set back from the main frontage. A cascading roof falls from the highest point of the scheme on the corner of the site towards the JT Dove site to the west and the listed buildings beyond.
6. The variation in roof heights and changes in angles are designed to introduce visual interest and a light feature is incorporated on the corner facing out onto the bridge.
7. The proposed development includes over 300 bedrooms and provides an area of internal private amenity space in a courtyard as well as external amenity space along the river with many of the communal areas looking out onto the river and over the proposed footpath, which will link the existing network with the Boathouse Lane area.

8. Vehicular access is from Bridge Road and car parking is provided below a ground floor podium level which not only removes any pedestrian vehicular conflict but it also allows level access from Victoria Bridge, which is currently significantly higher than the site.

9. A local pallet of materials has been identified with influences taken from the stonework on Victoria Bridge, the brick work of the listed buildings to the west and the more modern pallets used on many of the new university buildings and other modern buildings on the south bank of the river. The choice of materials will play a key part in the success of the building and it is proposed to use three predominant types with brick at lower floors, cladding running through the middle section and curtain walling in the upper floors giving the appearance of a floating roof. The building also features deep recessed openings to add depth to the elevations and large glazed areas facing onto formal spaces such as the riverside walkway.

10. A lighting scheme will also be commissioned to ensure the success of the scheme as a landmark building situated in an important gateway into the town during the hours of darkness (a sample of the elevational treatment is shown in Appendix 2).

CONSULTATIONS

11. Neighbouring properties have been consulted which are primarily businesses and they have been individually notified of the application. The application has also been advertised on site and in the local press.

12. The following Consultees were notified and their comments they made are below: _

13. Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy

The Travel plan is well thought out and covers all the elements we would expect and reflects the fact that this location lends itself to easy access and sustainable forms of transport. However, confirmation of the type, location and number of cycle storage spaces is required as this is key to the success of this mode of transport. The applicant will need to enter into a Section 38 Agreement cycleway/ footpath and all the associated furniture and features should be to the design standards for the eight bridges cycleway.

14. Environmental Health Unit

No objection in principle subject to the following being addressed by condition:

Noise disturbance between living accommodation; noise disturbance from adjacent road traffic and Possible land contamination

15. The Environment Agency

The EA has no objection to the proposal but if planning permission is to be granted recommends conditions covering safeguarding the river channel and the provision of signage.

In addition to planning permission any proposed works in, over, under or within 5m of the River tees requires prior written consent from the Environment Agency. In general we require unimpeded access to the banks of main rivers to undertake our statutory, and we are likely to refuse any consent applications that result in a narrowing of the river channel.

16. CE Electric UK

Raise no objections

17. Northumbrian Water Limited

Mains record provided which must be located prior to any work commencing on site and must be adequately protected during construction work. The storage of construction materials and plant will not be permitted within 5m either side of this main. Northumbrian Water must carry out all connections to public sewers.

18. Durham And Tees Valley Airport

No objection.

19. English Heritage

This application arises from a series of pre-application meetings we have attended with the applicant, CABE and Stockton Council over recent months. We provided written pre-application advice on the proposed scheme and can confirm that we are broadly content that the submitted proposals will not harm the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings on Bridge Road.

In our view, however, the success and longevity of the proposed scheme rests to a large extent upon the quality of both the detailed design and the construction materials (including finishes and colours). This applies not only to the proposed upstanding structures but also to the proposed landscaping and public realm works. We therefore recommend that any forthcoming consent be carefully conditioned in order to ensure that the necessary quality is delivered on this important site.

20. One North East

The reserved matters application is considered to represent a significant improvement on the detailed application for student housing development and associated works, which was refused permission on the 28th of February 2006. One NorthEast welcomes the revisions made and supports the proposal but would offer the following comments:

The east elevation is much improved in terms of its overall bulk and articulation. The reworking the internal layout to ensure that the communal rooms overlook the river walkway is welcomed, although there is considered to be further scope for increasing activity at ground floor with a more generous solid to void ratio. Moreover, the floor to ceiling height should be sufficient to enable a change of use at ground floor level in the future.

Expanses of glazed curtain walling and cladding, which tend to impact on the level of interest and texture should be minimised. The local material/colour palette would appear appropriate, and would assist in providing the development with a local identity. It is recommended that the detailing and quality of materials is controlled, and in the event that the Council is minded to approve the application, that a suitable condition is imposed accordingly.

Finally, should the application be viewed favourably, the Agency would request the Local planning Authority to encourage the developer to pursue the highest standards of quality in the development of this site, e.g., BRE-eco homes, BREEAM, Building for Life and Secured by Design.

21. Police Crime Reduction Architect

Have carried out a site survey of the proposed student accommodation, footpath and cycleway and make the following recommendations:

The lighting layout should be carefully designed to cover vulnerable areas and not create shadows. It is recommended that the lighting scheme be in keeping with the existing scheme along the riverbank ensuring sufficient lighting is placed under the bridge. I would recommend two CCTV cameras linked to the centre via radio,

22. Northern Gas Networks

No objection and mains record shown

23. Urban Renewal Officer

No objections. The applicant will need to be aware that the property when constructed will be subject to Mandatory Licensing of House in Multiple Occupation in accordance with the Housing Act 2004.

The applicant will have to ensure that the design and construction meets the requirements of this Council's minimum amenity standards and they will have to ensure that a valid licence is obtained for its use as student accommodation before it's occupation.

PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

24. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP).

25. The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:

Policy GP1

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Policy HO3

Within the limits of development, residential development may be permitted provided that:

- (i) The land is not specifically allocated for another use; and
- (ii) The land is not underneath electricity lines; and
- (iii) It does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes; and
- (iv) It is sympathetic to the character of the locality and takes account of and accommodates important features within the site; and
- (v) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users; and
- (vi) Satisfactory arrangements can be made for access and parking.

Policy HO11

New residential development should be designed and laid out to:

- (i) Provide a high quality of built environment which is in keeping with its surroundings;
- (ii) Incorporate open space for both formal and informal use;
- (iii) Ensure that residents of the new dwellings would have a satisfactory degree of privacy and amenity;
- (iv) Avoid any unacceptable effect on the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (v) Pay due regard to existing features and ground levels on the site;
- (vi) Provide adequate access, parking and servicing;
- (vii) Subject to the above factors, to incorporate features to assist in crime prevention.

Policy EN28

Development which is likely to detract from the setting of a Listed Building will not be permitted

The Tees Valley Structure Plan does not contain any policy applicable directly to the application site. In general terms however the Structure plan is based on a strategy to ensure that most new development takes place within or on the edge of the main urban areas together with regeneration of rundown, urban areas.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Communities lists design as one of the fundamental ways of delivering sustainable development and states that planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 and Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing identifies the priority given to different housing sites and states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid developments, which make inefficient use of land.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport seeks to integrate planning and transport by reducing the reliance on the motor car, encouraging the use of more sustainable transport choices, reduce the need to travel, and promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, cycling and walking.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment provides comprehensive advice on controls for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

26. The application site already has outline consent and therefore the principle of the development has been established, all matters except access were reserved as part of the original approval. This application is concerned with these matters and relates to the form and design of the development as a whole.

27. The main considerations in this application relate to the impact of the proposed development on the locality in terms of the relationship and impact on future development, the character of the area and whether it satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies and Government Guidance. Each of these issues will be examined in turn.

Planning Policy

28. Policy EN17 of the adopted Local Plan highlights part of the Boathouse Lane area as derelict and underused. The adopted policy also encourages the reclamation and re-use of the site and recognises the sites potential for improving the image of the Borough.

29. The application site is previously developed land and within a major urban area and is the subject of a SPD, which has been prepared by the Council to guide future development on the Boathouse Lane area, which includes the application site.

30. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application(s) received by the Council and sets out the Council's aspirations for the area. The document also seeks to clarify planning parameters within which developers can explore options. Consideration must therefore be given as to whether development of the application site in the manner proposed would sufficiently harm the proper planning and comprehensive redevelopment of the area.

31. The proposal is considered to be broadly in line with the SPD key objectives and general planning policies set out in the Development Plan.

Relationship of the proposed development and impact on future development on the surrounding area

32. The importance of adopting a design-led approach to comprehensive redevelopment is fully recognised in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development which states that planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. The Guidance goes on to say that design which is inappropriate in its context or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

33. Design is also a key consideration of the Stockton –Middlesbrough Initiative (SMI) – “A Vision For Our Future” which seeks to create a distinctive high quality city-region with greater emphasis placed on connectivity of the key regeneration sites and not allowing them to become isolated developments. The document highlights the current lack of a coherent city-scale presence at the geographical core of the sub-region and that this situation will continue to hold back its development unless it is addressed in a strategic and collaborative way.

34. A detailed Design Statement with a thorough analysis of the context and surrounding environment accompanies the application. This includes strategic views into the site, historic mapping and linkages and permeability.

35. The design response has been subject of a number of discussions with Council officers and representatives from English Heritage and CABE.

36. The building which is contemporary in design, features a roof profile utilising a variety of angles and the building incorporates different finishes and external fenestration to add visual interest and break up the scale and massing of the proposed development. Detailed discussions with the applicant have taken place regarding construction techniques and materials including landscaping, to ensure appropriate detailed treatment and quality of the finished building.

37. This is a sizeable scheme with a high density but this is not considered excessive in view of the sustainable location within the urban core. The scale also reflects aspirations set out in the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative, which seeks to create a city-scale environment and maximise the riverside.

38. In terms of the wider Boathouse Lane area, the proposed building will be the largest of the buildings proposed along the river. The tower (adjacent to the road) starts at 9 stories then drops down to the mid section which measures between 7-8 stories to the end section which falls from 6 stories to 4.5 east to west.

39. To the south of the site outline planning approval for residential development has recently been granted. It is considered that surrounding uses will not be affected in terms of amenity as a result of the proposed development. Furthermore the stepped roofline of the linked blocks to the Bridge Road frontage is successful in creating an appropriate relationship between the development and the listed buildings.

40. The use of glazed areas facing onto formal open spaces and the riverside walkway will add to the vitality of the area and lead to natural surveillance thereby designing out crime. The communal area also features sufficient ceiling height to enable a change of use at ground floor level should this be required in the future.

41. The main amenity area for the occupants of the building will be the raised courtyard. This area will include reading areas, cycle parking facilities and outdoor seating.

Access and Highway Safety

42. Access to the site is off Bridge Road and was approved at the outline stage. Furthermore as part of the outline approval the applicant agreed to contribute towards the provision of pedestrian improvements at the signals at Boathouse Lane, provision of public transport infrastructure and section 278 works to the access.

43. Vehicular access is taken underneath a podium level and servicing is also taken from this point. The proposed design allows convenient cycle and pedestrian flows from north to south across two levels (road level and below) and minimises the dominance of the parking area thus allowing a larger useable courtyard for use by residents of the scheme.

44. The site offers the opportunity for the continuation of the Teesdale Way, which runs along the northern bank of the River Tees through the centre of Stockton. The approved outline planning permission requires the opening up of the access below the bridge as part of the scheme. The applicant has agreed to fund CCTV cameras as part of the works to further encourage better and safer pedestrian and recreational linkages along the riverside.

45. A protected pedestrian route will also provide direct access onto Bridge Road via the car free raised courtyard. This area will accommodate 80 secure cycle parking facilities.

46. The application is accompanied by a Green Travel Plan, which has been considered by the Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy who concludes that it is well thought out and covers all the elements expected and reflects the fact that this location lends itself to easy access and sustainable forms of transport.

CONCLUSION

47. It is considered that the development would have the necessary design quality for this prominent site and would have a satisfactory relationship to the surrounding area due to the extensive and detailed discussions which have taken place involving representatives of CABE and English Heritage. Consequently the development will not impact upon the setting of the listed buildings and is in line with relevant planning policy and guidance and is therefore recommended for approval with conditions.

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Financial Implications – As report

Environmental Implications – As report

Community Safety Implications – As report

Background Papers – Stockton on Tees Local Plan, PPS1, PPG3 – PPS3, PPG13, PPG15, App. Nos. 04/0474/FUL, 05/3429/FUL, 06/0709/OUT.

Human Rights Implications – The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward Stockton Town Centre
Ward Councillors Councillor D. W. Coleman, Councillor P. Kirton