

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
30 March 2022**

Present:

Councillor T. Lagden (Chairman)
Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	M. Gibson	J. Vinson
S. Buttar	R.W. Sider BEM	
J.T.F. Doran	B.B. Spoor	

Apologies: Councillors A. Brar, N.J. Gething and H. Harvey

In Attendance: Councillors M. Beecher and J. Button

21/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

22/22 Disclosures of Interest

a) Disclosures of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct

There were none.

b) Declarations of interest under the Council's Planning Code

Councillors R Smith Ainsley, C Bateson, S Buttar, M Gibson, R W Sider BEM and J Vinson reported that they had received correspondence in relation to the application but had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views and had kept an open mind.

23/22 Local Listing of the former Debenhams Building, Thames Street, Staines-upon-Thames

Description: Local listing of the former Debenhams Building, Thames Street, Staines-upon-Thames.

Additional Information:

There was none.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Richard West of Cerda Planning spoke against the proposed local listing of the former Debenhams Building, raising the following key points:

- Local listing exercises carried out by the Council in 2004 and 2016 found the building not to be worthy of inclusion on the list.
- History of building is not significant or important from a heritage perspective.
- Buildings built after 1950 can be included in the listing if they have sufficient indisputable qualities; the Council's assessment does not provide evidence of this.
- The officer's report states that the building is not architecturally or historically of exceptional quality.
- No regard was given to the adverse impacts of the unattractive appearance of the south and east elevations.
- The emerging Local Plan considers the site suitable for redevelopment.
- The building does not lend itself to conversion to provide high quality residential development.
- Failure to redevelop the site would prohibit delivery of much needed homes.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Kathleen Healey spoke for the proposed local listing of the former Debenhams Building, raising the following key points:

- The Debenhams building was designed by George Coles, one of the most renowned architects of the 20th Century and was his final work.
- The building sits within a conservation area which gives Staines a sense of grandeur and prestige.
- Towns that are able to save their heritage buildings are now perceived as more desirable and prestigious.
- Historic England, The Twentieth Century Society and SAVE all object to the planning application.
- The Twentieth Century Society and SAVE urge for the retention and repurposing of the current building.
- The loss of this high quality building which is sympathetic to and enhances the conservation area would be sorely felt.
- Residents are looking to Councillors to protect the Staines Town's heritage and its future appeal and success.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Councillor M Beecher spoke as Ward Councillor for the proposed local listing of the former Debenhams building, raising the following key points:

- The building does not overwhelm the High Street and it well positioned
- It is an iconic building within Staines

- Historic England stated that it did not meet the criteria to place it on the national list but that did not exclude it from the local listing
- Residents in Staines consider the building to be a focal point within the town.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- Large number of small elements make this building suitable to be placed on the Local List, not any one major element
- Historic England's decision not to put the building on the National List should not preclude it from the Local List
- Landmark building within Staines
- The building is curved to match Thames Street
- Staines conversation area is nearby
- Other buildings designed by George Coles in the country have been listed
- Decorative façade and strong local character
- Iconic status within Staines due to the design
- Concerns about why this had not been considered for local listing previously
- Local listing would not prevent the building from being demolished

Decision:

For: 8

Against - 0

Abstain: 1

The Committee **resolved** to add the Debenhams building to the Local List of Buildings and Structures of Architectural or Historic Interest with immediate effect was agreed as per the recommendation.

24/22 Local Planning Enforcement Policy Updates

The Committee considered a report from Liz McNulty, Planning Enforcement Officer that outlined the new Local Planning Enforcement Policy that was adopted by the Neighbourhood Services Committee on 03 March 2022.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report.

25/22 Planning Appeals Report

The Chairman informed the Committee that if any Member had any detailed queries regarding the report on Appeals lodged and decisions received since the last meeting, they should contact the Planning Development Manager.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.

26/22 Major Applications Report

The Planning Development Manager submitted a report outlining major applications that may be brought before the Planning Committee for determination.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.