

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
1 June 2022**

Present:

Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley (Chairman)

Councillor N.J. Gething (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

C. Bateson

J. Button

R.W. Sider BEM

M. Beecher

S.C. Mooney

J. Vinson

A. Brar

O. Rybinski

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor S. Buttar, Councillor H. Harvey and Councillor B.B. Spoor

In Attendance:

Councillor S.J Whitmore

32/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2022 were approved as a correct record.

33/22 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

21/01772/FUL – Former Debenhams, 37-45 High Street, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 4QU

Councillors Gething, Mooney and Rybinski declared that they had attended the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 10 May 2022 where the Committee was asked to consider the draft updated Staines Conservation Area Appraisal for public consultation, which included adding the former Debenhams building to the conservation area. They confirmed

that they were approaching the consideration of the application with an open mind on the planning issues put before the committee.

Councillors Bateson and Beecher declared that they attended the Planning Committee on 30 March 2022 where local listing of the former Debenhams building was considered, and that they also attended the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 10 May 2022 where the Committee was asked to consider the draft updated Staines Conservation Area Appraisal for public consultation, which included adding the former Debenhams building to the conservation area. They confirmed that they were approaching the consideration of the application with an open mind on the planning issues put before the committee.

Councillors Button, Sider, Smith-Ainsley, and Vinson declared that they attended the Planning Committee on 30 March 2022 where local listing of the Former Debenhams building was considered. They confirmed that they were approaching the consideration of the application with an open mind on the planning issues put before the committee.

34/22 Planning application 21/01772/FUL - Former Debenhams, 37-45 High Street, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 4QU

Description:

Demolition of the former Debenhams Store and redevelopment of site to provide 226 Build-to-Rent dwellings (Use Class C3) and commercial units (Use Class E) together with car and cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping, amenity space and other associated infrastructure and works.

Additional Information:

At the Council meeting of 19 May referred to in paragraph 1.5, it was agreed that the public consultation for both the Pre-Submission Publication version of the Local Plan and draft Staines Development Framework will run from 15 June 2022 to 5 September 2022.

In paragraph 1.10 of the report relating to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), the last sentence that states: *'The weight given to the IDP at this stage is also very limited.'* should be deleted. The IDP is part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and not policy to which weight should be attributed.

The applicant has written in in response to the report and notes:

Historic England did not respond to the assessment of the Egham Hythe Conservation Area.

The applicant also engaged with the MP, local ward members, held a meeting with the Staines Town Society and Riverside Residents Coalition.

Paragraph 7.35 is misleading in respect of building heights:

- Renshaw includes up to 11 storeys
- Charter Square up to 12 storeys

- London Road up to 13 storeys

In Paragraph 7.46 the applicant's proposed materials would be a different type of brick slip.

Paragraph 7.64 is misleading in respect of the density of the proposal at 807dph, the 2019 London Road scheme was 429dph.

Paragraphs 7.82 and 7.83 fail to acknowledge that the assessment was revised and Historic England made no further comment.

Paragraph 7.117 does not explain all the reason against the conversion of the building.

In paragraph 7.166 the report refers to 46 tandem spaces, this should read 23 tandem spaces (46 in total). The proposal also includes 15 car stacker spaces within the area of increased headroom, that the applicant indicates could be accessed independently of one another.

Paragraph 7.181 the applicant believes the communal garden area is 759m²

Paragraph 7.186 discounts the amenity space for the terraces at podium and penthouse level, which the applicant believes it should not.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Ann Damerell spoke against the proposed development raising the following key points:

- Concern about overdevelopment of the site, particularly due to the height of the proposed structures and the density of the dwellings.
- The dwellings were cramped and poorly designed.
- There would be a lack of amenity space.
- There was a lack of affordable housing.
- There would be a lack of sustainability measures.

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Richard West spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

- There was a precedent for similarly designed schemes that made efficient use of available land.
- The development would create a well sited, sustainable 'landmark building'.
- It was not possible to retain the existing building and provide high quality housing and car parking.
- The octagonal shape of the proposed development was inspired by the shape of the existing building.
- The provision of 226 homes and new retail units provided significant benefits to the town that outweighed any harm caused.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- The impact on surrounding buildings and character of the surrounding area, including the nearby conservation area
- The height, design and density of the proposed development.
- The loss of a building of local importance.
- The lack of affordable housing.
- The small size and difficult to utilise shape of some of the proposed dwellings.
- A lack of amenity space.

Clarification was also sought on fire safety requirements.

Decision:

The application was **REFUSED** in accordance with the officer's recommendation.

35/22 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.

36/22 Major Planning Applications

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.