

Late Representations

Planning Committee 15 March 2018

Item
No. 7

Application No. - FUL/2017/2704

Description of Development - Demolition of existing buildings including clearance of site and erection of a new purpose built facility for the Coventry Boys and Girls Club (Use Class D2) and two buildings up to a maximum height of 16 storeys and 18 storeys providing student accommodation (up to 778 beds) (Use class Sui Generis), with associated cycle parking, bin stores, amenity space, landscaping and other associated works.

Site Address - Land and buildings to the north side of Whitefriars Lane

Recommendation

The Section 106 legal agreement will not be completed in advance of the Committee and the recommendation is therefore updated to read:

Planning Committee are recommended to delegate authority to the Head of Planning and Regulation to grant planning permission subject to conditions and subject to the completion of a satisfactory Section 106 Agreement to secure the contributions and obligations listed within the report.

Additional representations

The Coventry Boys and Girls Club have written in support of the scheme, stating the following:

The Club relies entirely on voluntary donations, membership and bookings to fund its work with local children and young people. A transformative project like this comes once in a Club's lifetime and our trustees are very excited about creating a space that can evolve to meet the changing needs of local children and young people.

At a time when youth services across the city are disappearing, we want the Club to be a beacon for universal provision, welcoming any child or young person who wants to have fun and make new friends; try different sports and creative activities; get practical help and support; and explore opportunities for education and employment.

This is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to provide the Club with a brand new, purpose built facility which is larger than the existing building. It will ensure the maximum benefit to the residents of Coventry, both now and in the future, can be allowed to happen.

A letter of support has been submitted providing the following comments:

Empowr-U are a community organisation that is set up to work with disadvantaged children and young people, with a particular focus on the city of Coventry. Our team have been working with Coventry Boys and Girls Club for around 5 years and have witnessed some of the amazing work that is delivered through the centre. Through speaking to the board of trustees at Coventry Boys and Girls Club, we understand that they are seeking planning permission to move to a brand new building, in the near future.

We are extremely excited about the potential opportunity for children and young people in Coventry, and as an organisation working with over 1000 children and young people in Coventry per week, we are able to say it is something that children and young people are holding high hopes for too. It will enable children to take part in sports, arts, music, boxing, hair and beauty as well as being able to relax in chill out zones, which are now scarce across the city.

The development will become the heart of the city for children and young people, and attract and invite organisations that can deliver exceptional work with children and young people.

There has been a further two objections raising the following concerns: proximity to listed buildings, overshadowing, and the scheme may block views of spires and disturbance during construction.

An objector who has previously written in has provided further comments stating that the daylight and sunlight assessment fails to take into account of their solar panels. [Officers note that an addendum to the Lumina Daylight and Sunlight Assessment states that BRE assessments for daylight and sunlight are usually applied to habitable rooms only. The addendum notes that: 'while there is no legal right to sunlight in respect of solar panels/PV cells the result of the assessment show that the property will continue to received very high levels of sunlight, well above those expected in a low density suburban environment and therefore sufficient for the solar panels to continue to function efficiently'. The original assessment also noted that there are a number of roof lights at the objector's property on Gosford Street, which also achieve extremely high measured light values vertically downwards].

An objector who has previously written in has prepared a further statement:

The student blocks proposed in this scheme are far too tall for the site. Their scale, design and siting contravene the objectives of the City Centre Action Plan:

Table 3:
(8) 'To protect and enhance...the historic environment.'
(10) 'To ... encourage local distinctiveness and stewardship of local environments'

Table 4:
(1)'Preserve or enhance the character and setting of the historic built landscape...'
(2) 'Recognize, preserve and re-establish key views of the iconic 3 spires.'
(5) 'Provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing'.
The Local Plan's Policy HE2 stresses 'the historic character, sense of place, environmental quality and local distinctiveness of Coventry'.
The proposed scheme does none of these things.

- Its scale overwhelms a rare surviving segment of pre-blitz Coventry, including five listed buildings, as the Conservation Officer argues.
- It does not sustain a sense of place or local distinctiveness. The blocks resemble ones by the same architects in Sheffield. <https://host-students.com/locations/sheffield/the-element/> These could be anywhere. They could be in Sheffield, or Chicago, or Melbourne.
- 1 Friargate has blocked the view of the 3 spires from the station. So-called 'landmark' towers are now compromising other significant viewpoints.
- This model is outdated. University applications are dropping; future demand for student housing is unproven. Because these blocks are built to lower space standards than dwellings, re-purposing them will be problematic.
- They will expose 1576 young lungs to emissions from the ring road.

The Committee should reject the application.

Eyes are on Coventry as a 'Heritage Action Zone', a future City of Culture, a Lottery-funded 'Great Place'. Regeneration could be achieved by developing more of Whitefriars Street as an intimately scaled student enclave, with dense, low blocks around a court. If the developers were encouraged to adopt a more sensitive approach, they could create an environment which is better and not worse than the present.

Historic England have raised concerns with the scheme and provided the following comments: The buildings proposed for demolition would appear to be of little or no heritage significance. The proposed student accommodation dominates the remnant of the historic buildings on Gosford Street, which contains two Grade II listed buildings. With the intervening ring road it is not possible to argue that the proposals have a major impact on the setting of the Grade I listed Whitefriars. The view from the ring road into the city centre is being increasingly constrained by a series of tall developments at various points on the circuit, although as a result of your authority's vigilance they generally respect the key views of the three spires, and Historic England are sure this will be into account in determining the scheme.

Historic England note that the photomontages within the supporting Heritage Impact Assessment make it difficult to agree with its conclusion that that the scheme has a neutral impact on the historic buildings on Gosford Street. It is considered that whilst there is obviously scope for development the impact upon Gosford Street is serious. Harm is identified as 'less than substantial' and Historic England advise that it is thus necessary to weigh in the balance the public benefit of the scheme against the heritage harm as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

The Council's Urban Designer has raised no objections to the scheme and has provided the following comments:

The proposed scheme has been the subject of extensive negotiations between the LPA and the applicant and has been revised extensively as a result of these negotiations to ensure that what is proposed to be built is a high quality landmark development that will positively address both Whitefriars Lane and the elevated ring road with dynamic and active frontages. The development will also allow for the future completion of a DDA compliant pedestrian link from Whitefriars Lane, under the ring road to the recently completed high quality pedestrian boulevard on the other side.

The development is designed to provide a sense of arrival to vehicles arriving into the city centre via London Road and to also address the large expanse of J4 of the ring road. At the same time it steps down to a lower scale to address Gosford Street and here it shares a similar relationship to other schemes approved within the city centre – Friars Road is an example.

The facades have been designed with a robust masonry expressed grid with extensive glazing set back in deep reveals, the glazing in conjunction with chamfered metal cladding ensures that the building retains a lightweight appearance in spite of the use of masonry. The use of masonry picks up on the buildings within the area – namely the recently completed Science and Health Building, the University Library and the William Morris building, it will also ensure that the building does not age or weather in a visually detrimental manner. The masonry will also ensure that there is a robust but visually interesting and tactile quality to the building at a pedestrian level.

There are a number of 'gable ends' to the blocks and here we have worked with the architects to create additional glazing wherever possible and to create a rhythm and pattern in both brick and metal cladding to create additional interest.

Additional supporting information

The applicant has responded directly to Historic England's comments confirming that the application site does not fall within an identified key view of the three spires. In terms of the impact to the setting of the two Grade II listed buildings on Gosford Street the applicant notes that Historic England conclude that the development would cause less than substantial harm. The effect of the harm is carefully considered in the supporting revised Heritage statement, which conclude that whilst there would be a change to the setting of these assets there would be no harm due to their existing context of built form, which includes traditional and more recent large scale structures and because the development will not alter the legibility of the buildings as a survival of a former historic streetscape or result in a change to the appreciation of their architectural qualities.

In terms of weighing in the balance the public benefits of the scheme against the heritage harm as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, the applicant has identified the following key public benefits to support the scheme:

- The proposed development will result in the provision of a brand new purpose built facility for the Coventry Boys and Girls Club being provided free of charge.
- Economic benefits from boosting the demand for local services, amenities and shops from students. The listed Whitefriars public house is vacant and the provision of a facility for 778 students on a site within the locality has the strong potential to create the custom required for public house to re-open.
- The development will provide a contribution of £76,000 towards the improvement of healthcare facilities in the city.
- As part of the development, a section of land at the southern end of the site is to be dedicated to the Council to provide a pedestrian link from the University's facilities on the western side of the ring road toward the University's Library, student centre and academic buildings on the eastern side of the ring road.
- It is widely accepted that, through creating purpose built student accommodation, dwellings which are currently used as HMOs can be released back into the property market. As student properties are currently exempt from council tax, releasing such properties back into the general market will subsequently increase council tax payments within the city.
- The scheme presents local employment opportunities.

The applicant states that if the size of the student accommodation element of the development were to reduce, the provision of the new Boys and Girls Club facility as designed would be at risk, which would result in the inability to deliver a new Club in the format that the club require.

Whilst not a material planning consideration the applicant has sought to elaborate on the need for further student accommodation, which has been questioned by objectors to the scheme. The applicant advises that only a quarter of full time students in Coventry currently have access to purpose built managed student accommodation or university halls of residence (11,560 of 43,850 full time students as at October 2017). At the point of writing the supporting Planning Statement, it was estimated that there were approximately 5,950 student bed spaces with planning permission and which, if built, would result in the number of students who do not have access to such accommodation reducing to about 60%, which is still a significant under-provision. The applicant is aware of additional bed spaces that have been granted planning permission since the Planning Statement was written in October 2017, but we note that the number of full time students has similarly increased (from 43,850 in the 2015/ 16 academic year to 47,115 in the 2016/ 17 for which data has recently been issued by HESA) and will have increased more than the number of student bed spaces that have been granted planning permission within the intervening period. The result of this is that there is still in excess of 60% of full time students in

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| | <p>Coventry who do not have access to purpose built managed student accommodation or university halls. This does not take into account part time students who may create an additional need. There is clearly a quantitative need for this student accommodation and the application site is, without doubt, one of the best sites within Coventry for the uses proposed.</p> <p>Conditions update Condition No.2 has been updated to remove a typo referring to drawing numbers 117C and 118C as 1117C and 1118C and now reads:</p> <p><i>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved documents: Drg No.1527_PL_000A, 102E, 103C, 104C, 105C, 106C, 107C, 108C, 109C, 110C, 111C, 112C, 113C, 114C, 115C, 116C, 117C, 118C, 119C, 120E, 200C, 201B, 202B, 203B, 210B, 211B, 212C, 213B, 215B, 005A, L-100 P01, L-101 P01, L-501 P01. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</i></p> <p>Due to the phasing of the development a further condition has been suggested to secure the order of development:</p> <p><i>The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until a phasing plan identifying the phased order of development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved phasing plan. Reason: To secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DE1, EM1-7, H10, HE2, GE3, AC1 & 4 and JE7 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016.</i></p> <p>Informative in relation to the above condition: <i>Relevant planning conditions may be submitted for discharge in relation to each phase of development to enable the partial discharge of a condition relevant to each development phase identified.</i></p> |
| Item No. 8 | <p>Application No. - FUL/2017/3169</p> <p>Description of Development - Proposed erection of Garden Pavillion</p> <p>Site Address - Allesley Park Walled Garden Allesley Hall Drive</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Additional consultation received from Cllr Male in support of the application:</p> <p>‘The Allesley Walled Garden Group are a hardworking, dedicated and innovative community group that has developed and significantly improved the Allesley Walled Garden for the benefit of the whole community. They have engaged with other local groups and local schools offering an educational experience for Coventry youngsters that sadly, all too often, is not available elsewhere. They also operate regular market garden and fund raising events within the grounds, allowing them to further invest in the Walled Garden.</p> <p>Permission to develop a building, that is in keeping with the traditions of the Walled Garden, will allow the group to expand their educational interests to a wider group of young people and to develop the garden further for the benefit of the whole community. I would urge that the Committee grant permission for this building for both present and future generations to enjoy.’</p> |