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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

07 February 2012

APPLICATION NUMBER : CA//11/01987/FUL

PROPOSAL : Demolition of existing building and erection of two units (Class A1/A2/A3 Use) 574 sq m and 120 bedroom hotel with restaurant and associated parking and servicing.

LOCATION OF SITE : 1-7 New Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3AD

APPLICATION TYPE : FULL APPLICATION

DATE REGISTERED : 21 November 2011

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE TARGET DATE : 20 February 2012

CONTACT OFFICER : Steve Davies

CONSERVATION AREA : NO

LISTED BUILDING : NOT LISTED

WARD : BARTON

APPLICANT : Silvercoin Investments Ltd

AGENT : Hobbs Parker Property Consultants LLP

SUMMARY:

The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site at the junction of New Dover Road and Lower Chantry Lane which is currently occupied by a three-storey retail (Blockbusters) and office development, with a five-storey building comprising an 120 bedroom hotel above two ground floor Class A1/A2 or A3 (retail/office/restaurant) units. The scheme also provides operational parking within the site. The scale of the proposed development and its impact on the surrounding area are considered acceptable as are the parking and servicing arrangements proposed. The impact on the setting of the adjoining conservation area and nearby world heritage site is also considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:**Grant, Section 101 Delegation.**

That the Head of Planning and Regeneration be and is hereby authorised, pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, to grant planning permission for the development subject to:-

A) The completion of a unilateral undertaking to secure the development contributions relating to enhancement to the pedestrian realm linking to the City centre;

B) The confirmation of the sewer capacity to establish the acceptability of the proposed drainage scheme for the development;

and

C) The imposition of conditions relating to: drainage; noise mitigation; air quality mitigation; contaminated land assessment and remediation; archaeological evaluation of the site; hours of work and deliveries; kitchen extraction systems and exterior mechanical plant and screening; hours of work; external lighting scheme; construction to accord with BREEAM "very good" standard; the provision of short-term parking for the benefit of hotel guests being dropped-off and picked up; the provision and retention of parking; the implementation and maintenance of the submitted landscaping scheme; the submission and approval of materials; detailed elevational drawings and architectural and joinery details.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the corner of New Dover Road and Lower Chantry Lane; it is visually prominent at the entrance point for visitors arriving from the A257 from Sandwich and A2050 from Dover. The site is immediately adjacent to the Canterbury City Conservation Area in St George's Place and the World Heritage site around St Augustine's Abbey is some 400 metres to the north. To the south-west the site also adjoins the New Dover Road and St Augustine's Road Conservation Area.

The building is currently occupied by a three-storey building erected in the 1960's to provide a car showroom with offices on the upper two floors. The ground floor is now in retail use, split into two units, one is occupied by Blockbuster, a video rental outlet (650sq m) and the second is unoccupied but most recently occupied by Oddbins Off Licence (186 sq m). The upper floors have most recently been occupied by Canterbury College and used for educational purposes (836 sq m). There is operational parking and servicing to the rear of the building accessed from Lower Chantry Lane, the nature of the road junction immediately on the site frontages precludes on-street parking or servicing. The parking area currently provides 36 parking spaces, 14 associated with the retail use and the remaining 22 for the benefit of the office units. The access is also used to serve the Chantry Social Club.

Use of the surrounding area is mixed, and comprises five-storey residential development on the corner of Upper Chantry Lane and New Dover Road, the five-storey Becket House office building occupied by British Telecom, educational use by Canterbury College of Rochester House in St George's Place and the Waitrose food store. To the rear the site adjoins building within the campus of Canterbury College and to the north is the single-storey Chantry Social Club with the under redevelopment Red Cross building beyond. On the opposite side of New Dover Road to Becket House is Abbots Yard a three-storey building occupied by Canterbury College and a law firm.

On street parking in the surrounding residential areas, such as Edward Road, is subject to timed restrictions and permit control, although metered on-street parking is available in Longport and Dover Street, it is the Longport car park that is most likely to be used by guests of the hotel for overnight parking.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks consent for a redevelopment of the site replacing the existing building with a five-storey building providing: on the ground floor two units (110 sq m and 460 sq m) for either Class A1 retail, Class A2 Financial & Professional Service or Class A3 restaurant use, with the upper storeys occupied by a hotel operator (likely to be Premier Inn) and including a reception, restaurant and bar facilities together with 120 bedrooms. Parking and servicing would be retained to the rear of the premises, totalling 24 car parking spaces together with servicing space, customer pick up/drop off and cycle parking. Further cycle parking would be available to the New Dover Road frontage. A detailed landscaping scheme including enhancements to the New Dover Road frontage is also provided.

PLANNING HISTORY

The existing building on the site was erected in the 1960's as a car showroom and workshop with offices over. In 1986 planning permission was granted for the use of the ground floor to change from a car showroom and workshop to unrestricted retail purposes, reference CA/86/1136/CAN. In 2002 permission was given for the use of the upper floors of the premises for educational purposes but on the condition that once the education use was no longer required the use would revert back to offices. Applications were received in 2001, 2002 and 2003 to operate a hot food take-away outlet from the ground floor of these premises but this proposal was consistently resisted due to concerns regarding the highway implications of how a take-away food outlet would operate in this location.

THE APPLICANT'S CASE

The application is accompanied by a range of supporting documents including a planning statement, a design and access statement, a transport statement, a noise and an air quality report, together with a travel plan, archaeological and drainage appraisals and a waste management strategy.

The proposed redevelopment is of a contemporary design with particular emphasis to provide a feature of the building on this prominent corner and to ensure that the scale of the building is appropriate to its surroundings. The ground floor replaces existing ground floor retail uses and the scheme provides a hotel on the upper floors of sufficient size to meet the operator's requirements in terms of facilities, room size and the number of rooms.

PLANNING POLICIES

The site of this building is allocated by the Canterbury District Local Plan for a mixed use development in accordance with Policy TC4. The following policies in the Canterbury District Local Plan are considered applicable to the consideration of this development:

- BE1** - High quality designs, sustainable developments and specific design, amenity and landscape criteria to which the Council will have regard: cross-refers to SPGs.
- BE2** - Creation of successful public realm in major developments.
- BE3** - Design statements/development briefs to be submitted with applications.
- BE4** - Canterbury World Heritage Site a key material consideration.
- BE5** - Preservation of listed & locally listed buildings and their settings.
- BE7** - Conservation Areas and their settings to be preserved or enhanced: specific criteria for consideration.
- BE14** - Protecting the setting of scheduled ancient monuments.
- BE15** - Archaeological evaluation of sites of archaeological interest.
- C1** - 2004 Canterbury District Transport Action Plan principles to be considered.
- C4** - Transport Assessment and Travel Plan for developments with significant transport implications.
- C9** - KCC Vehicle & Cycle Parking Standards with local variations.
- C10** - Restriction to on-site operational parking for retail, office or commercial developments in specified areas; contributions to transportation facilities.
- ED10** - Retention of small office accommodation. See para 3.78: less than 100 sqm in Herne Bay and Whitstable and 500 sqm in Canterbury.
- TC2** - Support for leisure uses outside the town centre boundaries subject to certain criteria.
- TC3** - Commercial frontages in and next to town centres shall incorporate a mix of uses.
- TC4** - Promotes mixed use development on identified sites to make more efficient use of land - Blockbuster, New Dover Road, retail ground floor with residential above.
- TC7** - New tourism development and accommodation criteria.
- TC10** - Acceptability of night-time/evening activity proposals subject to criteria to safeguard amenity.
- TC11** - The scale and impact of development on the City centre, alternative means of

transport, contributions to park and ride and the need for a travel plan.

TC14 - Relating to the St George's to Canterbury East Regeneration Zone, support the provision of hotels, enhance entrances to the City, improve pedestrian links and ease congestion.

also relevant are the following policies contained in the South East Plan:

BE1 - Urban renaissance: strategy to enhance quality of life, inc. infrastructure planning. Promote design solutions relevant to specific context; build on local character/distinctiveness. Sensitive re-use of redundant/under-used buildings. Appropriateness of higher density & mixed use developments. Use of design led SPDs etc.

BE6 - Management of the historic environment: protect/conservate/enhance heritage assets and their contribution to local/regional distinctiveness; appropriate regeneration of redundant or under used buildings to be encouraged.

CC1 - Sustainable development. To ensure all development is sustainable.

CC4 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable design and construction standards; refers to use of local SPD and flexibility in design.

CC7 - Strategic Policy: infrastructure: agencies' investment programmes, role of LDD, role of development contributions.

SP3 - Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance. The prime focus of development is in the urban areas.

T4 - Parking. Provision of development in accordance with appropriate parking standards.

TSR5 - Tourist Accommodation. The need for hotels, sustainability in location, meeting consumer demands.

TSR7 - Priority Areas for Tourism. The development and management of tourism, the reduction of seasonality, improve access and the upgrade of facilities, this includes making use of the attraction of Canterbury to encourage longer stays through linked trips to surrounding areas.

NRM9 - Air Quality. Ensuring development reduces air quality problems.

NRM10 - Noise. Ensuring high level of sound-proofing in development.

Consideration should be also given to the following documents produced by the Council:

Supplementary Planning Document: 'Heritage, Archaeology and Conservation' adopted October 2007.

Supplementary Planning Document: 'Development Contributions' adopted January 2007.

Supplementary Planning Document: 'Outdoor Lighting' adopted January 2006.

Supplementary Planning Document: 'Sustainable Construction' adopted 2007.

WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

Representations have been received from Canterbury Conservation Advisory Committee (CCAC), The Oaten Hill District Society, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) (Protect Kent) and Spokes.

CCAC -

Supports the principle of the redevelopment and considers the architecture to be an improvement on the existing building but is concerned by the massing and overbearing nature of the design. The proposal should be changed to have the top storey mansard sloping back rather than a vertical elevation. The elevations were considered confused, poorly related to their surroundings and unimaginative. Although the tower feature on the corner was considered quite nice some concern was also expressed regarding the materials. The proposed approach to parking was accepted but must be managed to ensure that drop-off and pick-up parking works effectively.

The Oaten Hill District Society -

Expressed some concern regarding the scale of the proposed development, however its main concern relates to the limited parking available on site and the impact this would have on local residents parking, particularly the Ivy Lane car park and the fact that this will be reduced in size if developed in accordance with the Council's proposals. The Society suggests that planning permission is not granted until this matter is resolved.

CPRE (Protect Kent) -

Supports the replacement of the existing building, however the design of the replacement building is regarded as inappropriate for the location and not to enhance the neighbouring conservation areas. There is considered to be no need for an additional hotel in the City, the Chaucer Hotel is now a budget hotel and this proposal is entirely speculative. The site should be used to provide additional housing. Concerns are also raised regarding drainage and lighting associated with the development. Concerns are also raised that the local car parks will not be able to accommodate the additional demand for parking. In summary the scale of the building should be reduced and be of a design more appropriate to its location.

Spokes -

Supports the amount of bicycle parking provided for the scheme and highlights the linkages available in the local area for cyclists.

One letter has been received from a resident of Copperfield Court requesting suitable control over the hours of work to ensure that residents are not disturbed during the construction of the development.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS

Kent Highway Services -

No objection, due to the location, public transport links and on-street parking controls this is a site where it is feasible to provide a lower level of parking provision. The applicant has subsequently carried out an assessment of the availability of parking in the surrounding off-street car parks and the findings of this demonstrate that there is sufficient spare capacity to accommodate the additional demand created by the hotel.

Environment Agency -

No objection, a ground contamination and remediation strategy is required for the site. No discharge of surface water to ground waters is allowed.

Southern Water -

Highlights the lack of capacity in the local network to provide foul sewage disposal for the development both in terms of surface and foul water. Additional off-site sewers or improvements to existing sewers will be required to provide sufficient capacity to service the development.

CCC - Sea Defences & Drainage Section -

The principle of the proposed foul and surface water drainage scheme for the site is accepted; however the approval of Southern Water will be required for connection to the sewers and subject to appropriate capacity existing within the system to accommodate the rates of discharge proposed.

CCC - Environmental Protection Section -

The mitigation measures for dealing with noise are acceptable and the imposition of these recommendations should be a condition of planning permission. The proposed air quality assessment for the site is also acceptable. Demolition and construction should be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the report. A contaminated land investigation and remediation strategy is also required for the site. Conditions relating to hours of work and deliveries are recommended together with details of proposed kitchen extraction plant

and systems.

CCC - Archaeological Officer -

An archaeological evaluation of the site is required, a condition setting out this requirement is recommended.

CCC - Economic Development, Culture & Enterprise Service -

Supports the proposals, the additional bed space provision would be a welcome addition to the supply of accommodation serving the City and benefit the tourism business and local economy. The hotel will add to the range of hotel facilities in the City. The need for additional hotel facilities in the City is recognised and the extra provision will help to boost the level of overnight trips and assist with establishing new market opportunities for other operators and attractions in the City such as the new Marlowe Theatre. The provision of the ground floor Class A1/A2/A3 uses will enhance the location and supplement the location of the hotel and pedestrian linkages. Overall the redevelopment of the site will replace a poor quality building and complement the aims of the regeneration zone for the area, an approach reflected in the Council's emerging Visitor Economy Policy (2011-2016).

The loss of the office/educational floor space within the existing building is not objectionable. The proposal will though create additional pedestrian footfall, particularly the linkages to the City centre. There are improvements to the pedestrian realm that would enhance user safety.

English Heritage -

No objection, the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of the Council's specialist conservation advice.

DRAINAGE CONSIDERATIONS

At the moment both foul and surface water drainage from the site is discharged into a combined sewer in Lower Chantry Lane. The proposed drainage for the site will remove the surface water run-off from the site from this combined sewer thereby leaving sufficient capacity for the increased foul water discharge from the development to drain into this sewer. Surface water will then be discharged to a surface water sewer also in Lower Chantry Lane.

There is no objection in principle to this approach from Southern Water, however a capacity check of the surface water sewer is required to ensure that it is sufficient capacity to take on the additional surface water run-off from the site at the rate of discharge/attenuation proposed. The capacity check is proposed to be carried out and its findings known in time for the Committee meeting. If the capacity in the sewer is insufficient then further restriction of the run-off rate from the site/greater provision on-site attenuation may be required. It is anticipated that a technical solution to this matter is possible, however it is prudent to ensure that permission is not granted until the main principles of this approach to the drainage of the site are agreed with Southern Water.

DISCUSSION

The main considerations regarding the determination of this application relate to: planning policy; the scale, form and appearance of the proposed building; its impact on the surrounding area, including the adjoining conservation areas, world heritage site and listed buildings; the impact on the amenity, day lighting, outlook and privacy of the occupiers of surrounding buildings; highway safety and parking requirements and the satisfactory drainage of the site.

The plan policy approach to this site needs to be considered with appropriate weight given to the various competing requirements. In accordance with the Local Plan Policy ED10 office

floor space above 500 sq metres should be retained. However the site is allocated for redevelopment with an appropriate mix of uses suggested as being retail with residential over as advocated by Policy TC4, whilst Policies TC7 and TC14 generally support the provision of new tourism development including hotels subject to factors such as traffic generation, accessibility, impact on amenity, standard of design and local economic benefits being acceptable. The need for and benefit of additional hotel accommodation in the City is identified by the Economic Development Officer.

Clearly the policy approach can be followed in a number of ways in this instance despite policies seeking to retain office floor space and suggesting retail and residential uses as appropriate for mixed use redevelopment, the consideration of the site for retail and an hotel is also supported by local plan policy and it is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the local plan. Likewise active uses on the ground floor such as for Class A2 and A3 purposes are considered equally appropriate in planning policy terms to continued Class A1 use and can be accommodated without harm to the night-time environment. The proposal actually leads to a reduction in the amount of retail floor space in this location and the continued provision of unrestricted retail floor space in this location is not objectionable. The retail floor space would operate without any change to the current circumstances of its use and operation. It should be noted that the retail use is not restricted and could for instance be used for more general retailing. Even if this did happen the Highway Officer is generally satisfied that this would not have unacceptable implications in highway safety terms. Similarly the change in the nature of the retailing carried on would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area either.

Accepting the principle of the redevelopment uses proposed, the scale and form of the building needs to be considered. The scheme proposes a 120 bedroom hotel. This number of bedrooms is required to meet the end user's operational requirements, taking into account the level of facilities, restaurant, bar etc provided for the benefit of the guests and general operational efficiencies that need to be supported. The building is arranged over five storeys with the appearance of the fourth floor being accommodated within a mansard roof. A design change has been secured to ensure that this upper storey has a more apparent set back. The height of the building is similar to the height of the residential building on the corner of Upper Chantry Lane on the opposite side of New Dover Road. The height of this building opposite increases along New Dover Road and Becket House next to it is substantially taller again, whereas the proposed building facing Becket House does not increase in height and is considered to sit comfortably with the scale of the adjoining buildings surrounding Abbots Yard.

The height of the proposed building facing Lower Chantry Lane is also carried through unchanged and whilst there is a substantial change in height of the street frontage with the adjoining single-storey Chantry Club building, it is likely that this building, currently vacant, will also shortly be subject to redevelopment proposals. Taking this into account the resultant scale of the building into the street scene of Lower Chantry Lane would be appropriately dealt with and be acceptable. The impact of the mass of the building is not considered to impinge on any wider views, including that of the Cathedral from any publicly accessible vantage point, or the setting of the surrounding conservation area or to detract from views into or out of the World Heritage site or its setting in general.

In terms of the design of the proposed building, it is accepted that the existing building does little to enhance the character and appearance of the area or the adjoining conservation areas. Having accepted that the mass of the proposed building is acceptable it is considered that the setting and appearance of the surrounding conservation area is enhanced by the new building. Although the architectural approach to the building has not found universal favour it is considered that it is generally satisfactory in this location and of an acceptable quality for this prominent position at a key point in the entrance to the City.

It is considered most important that the corner of the building is appropriately addressed. This corner site is prominent from both St George's Place, Upper and Lower Chantry Lane. It is considered that the architectural approach proposed does provide an appropriate feature in a modern architectural style and achieves the type of architectural statement required without being too showy or imposing in its surroundings. The external finishing for the building will be in render with a concrete frame, large glazed openings and with slate panels. The mansard roof will be constructed using a composite panel metalised finish, this would equate to a modern version of a traditional mansard detail. These facing materials are considered in keeping with the local area, St George's Place is typically a Georgian street and pre-war buildings on both sides were predominantly rendered. Although now there is much brickwork, the post war St George's Centre - Waitrose Store and older Baptist Church for example, the surviving terrace of listed buildings on the south side of the street are rendered and the new University building currently under construction next to these will have a stone finish.

The Highway Officer has raised no objection to the proposed development. The access and servicing arrangements proposed within the application follow those currently available to the existing building. Access is somewhat constrained by the nature of the surrounding highway network, the traffic lights and traffic island ensures that the access arrangements function reasonably well by limiting how access can be made. The road layout should also ensure that unauthorised parking and servicing cannot take place. The servicing of the existing retail units on the site has not previously raised significant concerns and it is considered that this situation should continue once the site is redeveloped.

It is considered that the hotel should set-aside some of the on-site parking for short-term use to allow people to pick up and drop of guests and their luggage. A condition to this effect is recommended. The overall level of parking on site to serve the hotel and retail uses is regarded as satisfactory for the central location. The site is within walking distance of the City centre and the bus station; it is well served by public transport and relatively close to the train station. City centre hotels often lack parking to serve all guests, and there are public car parks in the area at Dover Street and Holman's Meadow within reasonable walking distance and with Longport car park closet to the hotel site. The applicant has demonstrated by way of a parking survey that the local car parks can accommodate additional demand in the evenings and overnight including during the likeliest busiest times on Friday and Saturday night. Based on the current level of usage, the reduction in parking available at the Longport car park as a result of its partial redevelopment in the future would not unacceptably worsen the level of over-night availability of parking to an extent that would then be problematic.

The general scale, form and impact of the proposed building on the amenity of the occupiers of surrounding buildings is considered acceptable. To the rear Canterbury College buildings adjoin the site and to the side is the Chantry Club and the Red Cross building currently under construction. The adjoining elevations of Canterbury College buildings are blank and the new building can be built up to these without harm to their users' general amenity. Neither will the height of the proposed building be unacceptably overbearing to the surrounding development. The building is to be built sufficiently away from the Chantry Club and Red Cross building so as not to have an unacceptable impact. The relationship to the adjoining area at Abbots Yard is also regarded as satisfactory in terms of amenity, outlook, day lighting and privacy issues.

Before development takes place the site requires archaeological evaluation and for evaluation of and remediation of any contamination resulting from previous uses of the site. These matters can be addressed through conditions. It is considered that the site has no likelihood of the presence of any intrinsic wildlife interest.

The development is to be constructed to accord with BREEAM "very good" rating. A condition requiring adherence to this standard is recommended. Also conditions to deal with noise and air quality matters as set out by the Environmental Health Officer are also recommended. A condition for the further approval of any external lighting of the premises is recommended, whilst any adverts on the building would be subject to separate applications for advertisement consent. A condition requiring the implementation of the submitted landscaping scheme which includes enhancement of the area fronting New Dover Road is also required.

The development requires some contribution to be made towards transportation infrastructure provision. The Transportation Section's preference in this respect is for the contribution to go towards the provision of Park and Ride facilities; however the applicant has questioned the justification for this on the basis that visitors using the hotel are unlikely to use park and ride and therefore be an additional burden on the facility. Instead the applicant has suggested that their contribution should be put towards enhancement of the pedestrian linkages with the City centre, particularly the enhancement of the underpasses linking St George's Place with the City centre. It is considered that a contribution towards this proposal is justified in terms of the direct impact of the proposed development on the local area.

In conclusion it is considered that the proposal would represent a very real opportunity to enhance the City by increasing bed spaces and that this can be done in a way that has no unacceptable impact on the wider or more localised environment provided that appropriate conditions are imposed and the development contribution sought is secured. Subject to drainage issues being resolved, the contribution being secured and appropriate conditions being imposed a grant of permission is therefore recommended.