

## **ADDENDUM REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE 18**

**November 2010**

**Item: 6.6**

**Site: The Hoe Centre, Notte Street**

**Ref: 10/01604/FUL**

**Applicant: University of Plymouth**

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### **1. Additional information**

South West Design Review Panel

The case officer report does not include references to the South West Design Review Panel report. Even though the Panel considered the proposed development at an earlier stage in the evolution of the design (ie at the first planning application, which was subsequently withdrawn), the Committee is encouraged to read the comments of the Panel – attached as an appendix to this addendum report – since it provides a context for the consideration of the current scheme.

Prior to the application being submitted, your officers sought to negotiate the retention of the original building with the owners, or to combine its retention with some redevelopment or extension. The applicant was unable to agree to these options. On balance, now, your officers totally support the principles of the scheme under consideration.

The quantum of 552 bedrooms was reduced, by negotiation to 517.

The design and massing of the buildings have been partially altered by negotiation, (although the scheme has not been altered having total regard to the Panel's observations). Contrary to the comments of the Panel, your officers consider that the heights of the buildings are "logical", and do have "meaning". Block 1 has a higher element/focal point at the junction of Armada Way and Notte St, (9 storeys with a set back 10<sup>th</sup> floor) and the frontages then run along Notte St at 7 storeys, but stepping down with the fall of the land (but the top storey is set back from the main frontage in Notte St. to reduce the massing of the building – a change having had regard to the representations received from the residents of Berkeley Square - opposite).

The Armada Way frontage of Block 1 is 9 storeys – an appropriate scale to Armada Way, and we consider the ground treatment in this frontage to be satisfactory treatment.

We consider the width of the new link to Sussex Street to be satisfactory.

We have negotiated an increase in the amount of active ground floor frontage around to and extending further up the Armada Way frontage.

Your officers do not agree that the earlier scheme amounted to "just routine architecture", but never the less, the quality of the elevational treatment has

been enhanced by rationalising the window treatments and the recent addition of coloured stainless steel cladding at key features of the building (see p 41 of case officer's report.)

## **2. Conditions recommended by the Public Protection Service**

2.1 The first planning condition, in the case officer's report, on page 51, is recommended by the Public Protection Service. It was mistakenly inserted in the wrong place in the list of conditions. **It should be new condition 25, and should have a heading of "Customer Toilets".**

2.2 Recommended Planning Condition 18, "Opening Hours", in the case officer's report has been the subject of further discussion since the report was drafted. It is recommended that the wording be changed to control the use of any A3 (restaurant and café uses) more strictly than A1 (shop uses). :-

**New condition 18 Opening Hours** is recommended to read as follows:-

18. Unless otherwise agreed previously in writing with the Local Planning Authority, the ground floor A1 shop uses hereby permitted shall not be open to customers outside the following times: 0700 - 2300 hours on any day of the week. Ground floor A3 (restaurant and café uses) shall not be open to customers outside the following times: 0700 - 2300 Monday to Saturday inclusive, and 1000 - 2200 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To protect the residential and general amenity of the area from any harmfully polluting effects, including noise and disturbance likely to be caused by persons arriving at and leaving the premises, and avoid conflict with Policies CS22 and CS34 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

2.3 The following additional conditions are recommended:-

### **New condition 26**

#### **Noise and Odour from Mechanical Extract Ventilation**

Prior to the installation of any mechanical extract ventilation system to any or all of the commercial units the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must be provided with plans and information in respect of the equipment, which must be approved in writing by the LPA, prior to the installation of any such equipment.

The information provided should include details of methods to reduce or eliminate cooking smells and should include confirmation of any odour control methods proposed for use in conjunction with any proposed system, i.e., filtration systems, odour neutralising systems, etc.

The information should also include details of methods to reduce any noise caused by the operation of any proposed ventilation system. The noise emanating from

equipment (LAeqT) should not exceed the background noise level (LA90) by more than 5dB, including the character/tonalities of the noise, at anytime as measured at the facade of the nearest residential property.

Reason: To protect the residential and general amenity of the area from noise and odour emanating from the operation of any mechanical extract ventilation system and avoid conflict with Policy CS22 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (20062021) 2007. –

## **New Condition 27**

### **Noise from Deliveries and Refuse Collection**

Unless otherwise agreed previously in writing, deliveries and refuse collections are restricted to the following times:

Monday to Saturday No deliveries or refuse collection between 6pm and 8am

On Sundays and Bank Holidays No refuse collections; no deliveries on Sundays, and on Bank Holidays deliveries only between 10:00am and 4:00pm.

Reason: To protect the residential and general amenity of the area from noise emanating from delivery and waste collection activities and avoid conflict with Policy CS22 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (20062021) 2007.

### **3. Further Representation received, since the case officer report was drafted**

Tanya Griffiths, Director of the Architecture Centre for Devon and Cornwall, has submitted some further comments. Her observations, and your officers' comments are summarised below:-

- Progressive demolition on the site, in the absence of an approved archaeological programme (and land quality submissions) any archaeology will have been compromised, and may cause complications regarding land quality.

Officer comment – your enforcement officers will investigate the archaeological implications of works progressing on site in the manner they have – but the likelihood of there having been remains of any significance at all is very low. Public Protection officers are satisfied that the current ground works raise no issue from a land quality perspective.

- A service loading bay has been included in the Notte Street elevation of Block 2, to the detriment of the street elevation and pedestrian flow

Officer comment – an electricity sub station had to be located at this position on the site. This necessitated service style doors in the elevation. They will not be used very often, and therefore pedestrian flow should not be significantly impeded.

- The South West Design Panel Report should have been referred to in the case officer report.

Officer comment – see paragraph 1 above.

- Disabled Access has not been adequately addressed.

Officer comment – your officers have raised a major specific aspect of this in negotiation, ie the need for a lift in block 3. The agent has submitted a revised

drawing providing a lift in this block. Other, more routine aspects will need to be addressed through the required Building Regulations submission.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 1. Grant Conditionally subject to S106 Obligation (as detailed in the case officer report), ie conditions as listed in case officer report, with revisions/additions to conditions as listed in this addendum report.**
- 2. Delegated authority to refuse permission if the S106 Obligation is not signed by 13 December**

**Appendix to Addendum Report for item 6.6 The Hoe Centre, Notte Street**  
**(10/01608/ful)**  
**Comments of South West Design Review Panel on previous scheme**  
**(Panel meeting of 17 August)**

The original planning application for this site (10/01163/ful) was withdrawn. The design of the scheme was revised, and application no. 10/01608/ful (ie the current application) submitted.

The following comments were made by the Design Panel on the original scheme:-

The Development Statement says that the site is in a prominent central location in close proximity to Armada Way and the Hoe Park, adjacent to the Hoe Conservation Area. It states:

An international architectural competition will be encouraged for proposals involving redevelopment of the site.

The Panel agrees with the Council that this site is significant enough for an architectural competition. It is regrettable that one was not held. The logic of the call for an architectural competition is that the site merits a considered scheme taking careful account of the context and making a contribution to the character and appearance of the City centre. By the same logic, a standard response that could be anywhere and contributes little is not acceptable.

The Development Statement gives three options for development of this site:

- Existing building could be retained and converted into a new use.
- Part or all of the existing building retained and combined with some redevelopment or extension.
- Total redevelopment of the site.

The current scheme does not address the first two options, and it is not clear what led the applicants to reject them. The Panel would like to ask what consideration was given to retaining the Hoe Centre. Is there evidence that it cannot be re-used? There should be a whole-life costing balance equation over say 50 years so the environmental impact of redevelopment and retention/extension can be assessed. This would examine, among other things, the embodied energy in the existing building compared with the energy impact of demolition and new build; and the comparative energy performances of the existing and new buildings in use. The era when substantial buildings could be lightly discarded has passed; in this era of climate change awareness, the case has to be made.

The Panel considers that the second option is worth examining. The Hoe Centre could be judiciously enlarged horizontally and vertically. The building is not listed so there is flexibility to adapt and extend it. And the University has already converted one building near to Armada Way for student accommodation. The fragment already demolished does not preclude this option (or option one).

Turning to the new buildings proposed in the current scheme, the Panel considers that the quantum of 552 bedrooms is asking a lot of a site of just 0.48 ha. The site is not large enough for two courtyard buildings.

The massing generally consists of many different heights with no apparent meaning giving a disjointed collection rather than a logical sequence.

The relationship of the scheme to Armada Way needs to be carefully considered. The scheme would have a heavy presence, outweighing the listed church opposite. The ground treatment proposed between the building and the trees is oddly inconsistent.

The new route complies with the Development Statement in principle but in practice the route is too wide relative to the streets it connects. It might be better to link the two main blocks in a long frontage to Notte Street, with an arch over a more modest route through to Sussex Place.

The Development Statement asks for active uses on the ground floor to Notte Street, Armada Way and any new link. The current scheme falls short of this requirement. A pool hall is not an active frontage.

The scheme is notably weak on environmental sustainability with no aspiration to achieve a high standard. It is unsound to place reliance on a district heating scheme for the City centre that may never be realised or may be many years away. The scheme ought to have flexibility in its design so that it could be adapted to other uses in future. That the scheme as designed is going to be environmentally inefficient has a bearing on the whole-life analysis we called for above.

Overall, the scheme offers just routine architecture and a pragmatic language where something of quality and distinctiveness is required.

If the existing building is to be redeveloped then it should be replaced by something better. The current scheme fails that test. It would not enhance this crucial site on Plymouth's pre-eminent axis.