

Appendix B – minutes of committee meeting January 2021

APPLICATION NO. 01/2020/0315/PF - FORMER NORTH WALES HOSPITAL, DENBIGH

- [Meeting of Planning Committee, Wednesday, 8 September 2021 1.30 pm \(Item 8.\)](#)
- [View the declarations of interest for item 8.](#)

To consider an application for the conversion, restoration, part demolition and adaptation of main range listed buildings to residential use (34 dwellings); demolition of Nurses Home, Mortuary, Isolation ward, Aled ward and former gasworks buildings; and development of land within the hospital grounds for mixed use as enabling development, including up to 300 no. residential units and up to 1114 square metres of business units (comprising a mix of A1, A2, A3, B1, C1, C2, C3, D1 and D2 uses); siting of the Denbigh Cricket Club; and construction of access, drainage and associated works (copy attached).

Minutes:

An application was submitted for Conversion, restoration, part demolition and adaptation of main range listed buildings to residential use (34 dwellings); demolition of Nurses Home, Mortuary, Isolation ward, Aled ward and former gasworks buildings; and development of land within the hospital grounds for mixed use as enabling development, including up to 300 no. residential units and up to 1114 square metres of business units; siting of the Denbigh Cricket Club; and construction of access, drainage and associated works at the Former North Wales Hospital, Denbigh.

The Chair referred members to the officer notes detailed in the supplementary papers along with comments made by Councillor Rhys Thomas who had apologised he could not attend the committee meeting.

The Development Control Manager stated he felt it important to provide members with a brief introduction to the report. Members had also received an informal briefing on this application on Wednesday 1st September 2021. The application presented to members was a 'hybrid' application. This meant part of the application contained detailed plans and a second element provided outlines, with further details to be submitted alongside further applications. The proposal included the conversion and restoration of the main grade 2 star listed building into 34 dwelling units. Alongside this restoration and in part to enable and fund the restoration the proposal included the development of up to

300 dwellings, 1,114 square meters of commercial space and other ancillary works, with these works to include the possible relocation of the Denbigh cricket club and other infrastructure works.

The planning application had been made by Jones Bros, Ruthin holdings limited and had been subject to a full pre application consultation process in early 2020. This process was statutory and involved wide scale community consultation. Local authority planning officers had worked with a wide range of specialist consultees and the applicant's numerous consultants. It was noted that there had been no objections from any specialist consultees.

The Development Control Manager touched upon previous planning applications for development at the site which committee had previously determined. Two relevant applications had been granted by previous planning committees for restoration of listed building and the development of areas of the site for housing and commercial uses. One of these had been granted in 2007 and more recently a scheme was presented to Planning committee in 2016 which members resolved to grant subject to a 106 legal agreement.

Those schemes and the proposed scheme involve the concept of enabling development. This concept is set out in the Local Development Plan policies, adopted site development brief and National guidance. Enabling development allowed for housing and other developments to take place in order to fund the restoration and reuse of heritage assets. In the application presented the scheme proposed sought enabling development of 300 dwellings to fund in part the restoration of the main range grade 2 star listed buildings at the former Denbigh Hospital.

The report set out the detailed assessments that had taken place in line with the LDP policy VOE4. This policy provided guidance on enabling developments. Officers concluded the proposals presented to the committee adheres with the policy and the adopted site development brief. The report set out relevant controls and obligations to ensure that the restoration of the listed buildings took place alongside any enabling development.

Officers emphasised that extensive negotiations and discussions with technical consultees and appointed solicitors had taken place to ensure the submitted information had been scrutinised and checked. Officers suggested it would be appropriate to submit a further report to committee detailing the precise section 106 legal agreement terms. The general terms had been set out within the report to reassure members that various material issues had been considered and would be built into subsequent approval.

The Development Control Manager emphasised the key economic, heritage and cultural benefits this scheme could bring to Denbigh and the wider county. It was felt the opportunity to save a key heritage asset alongside the wider economic activity outweighed any potential impacts of the enabling development.

General debate – Local Member Councillor Glenn Swingler raised concern on the lack of social housing and affordable housing at the site and the potential demolition of listed buildings. Concerns that the traffic and roads at the site would increase. He confirmed numerous issues had been experienced at the site over recent years and something had to be done. He was pleased Jones Bros were involved with the development. He stated in his opinion the application was very vague on the non-residential aspect of the application and would have liked to have seen what was proposed for that aspect of the site. He asked if officers knew at what stage of the development the main building would be completed and if it was possible for affordable housing to be built on the site.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Swingler, the Development Control Manager emphasised the development was an opportunity to try and save a cultural and heritage asset but it did require an enabling development. The LDP policy did allow for an enabling development to try and fund these developments. The focus had to be on saving the historic buildings and not necessarily affordable housing and education provision. The issue raised on the lack of detail of the non-residential aspects of the development was down to financial viability and if public sector funding could be used for elements of the site. It was stressed by officers further planning applications with further detail would be brought back to committee. It was hoped by officers that elements included in the 106 legal agreement would be the restoration of the main range listed buildings and this will be upper most priority. The wording of that agreement would have to be agreed. Ideally officers would request the restoration would take place at the start of the development. Improvement to the highways infrastructure that may be needed and improvements to Lenton Pool roundabout, footpath improvements would also be included in a legal agreement and implemented at the appropriate time. It was confirmed a lot of work had been completed on the legal agreement ahead of the committee meeting.

Councillor Merfyn Parry stated he was in support of this site and **proposed** to grant the application in line with officer recommendations, **seconded** by Councillor Bob Murray.

Councillor Mark Young thanked the officers for the detailed report and noted the work that had already happened. Councillor Young asked for some clarity on how the phasing in work would be managed. Councillor Young also felt the development provided a golden opportunity with active travel in the area, and asked for a commitment that the active travel officers are involved in the development. He was pleased to see the site was being developed.

The Development Control Manager wanted to ensure that a deliverable and workable phasing strategy was included in the legal agreements. Key issues included the restoration of the heritage asset, the protection of the environment and biodiversity, ecology and improvements to infrastructure. All would need to be set out clearly within the legal agreements. Opportunities from public sector funding may be possible.

Councillor Emrys Wynne concurred with members views and was in support of the conservation element of the application. Councillor Wynne asked how key the missing responses from the consultation that had not been received were? He was surprised to note that no response from organisations such as Scottish Power, Welsh Ambulance and Betsi Cadwalader had been received and responses should have been requested.

He too felt that social and affordable housing should be included within the development. Councillor Wynne raised concerns on the impact the development would have on the Welsh Language.

Members were surprised to note that there had been no mention of ecology or environmental constraints had been made within the report. Members queried if a report on the current situation from the bio diversity officer was available.

The Chair confirmed the Development Control Manager was Paul Mead, planning officer for Denbighshire County Council.

Officers responded to members queries informing the committee that a number of requests for consultation responses were sought. Officers had no control on responses from organisations. It was highlighted that the responses that had been received had no objections. The principal for development of this site had previously been considered through a number of processes including policies within the LDP plan including the public enquiry process, a site development brief specific for the site which had been subject to a public consultation exercise and adopted by Denbighshire County Council as a supporting document for redevelopment. It was officers opinion that public engagement and involvement had been wide spread over the last 10 years.

Members heard one of the reasons that the proposal had taken some time to be presented to committee was due to ecology and biodiversity. Concerns raised by Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and county ecologist around the diversity of ecology at the site to meet habitat regulations, climate change and biodiversity regulations had been made. Officers directed members to the planning website for the detailed documents that had been submitted by specialist's consultants in relation to this concern. It was confirmed that the documents had been reviewed by NRW and the county ecologist and subject to conditions and controls they were content the scheme would be built around ecology and biodiversity.

Further information was provided on the drainage at the development site. The applicant would be required to ensure connection to public sewers was completed, the hospital had been connected previously. The other aspect of drainage was sustainable drainage and the requirement to ensure the site has a sustainable drainage system. Officers had reviewed the plans for drainage and raised no concerns.

Business cases would be made to Welsh Government for the growth fund and other funding streams that would be available for the development. Funding, viability and delivery of this development were inextricably linked, officers offered members reassurance that phasing and delivery and the provision of various aspects of the development would be presented to members for further scrutiny. A detailed report had been produced by Senior Engineer- Development Control and the Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager had composed a report on may be required off site in terms of highway improvement, these requirements would be built into the legal agreement.

The Development Control Officer provided further information on the hope to create a liaison committee to review the delivery of the scheme. It was hoped the committee would ensure the site was maintained with input from Cadw, Town Council, Conservation architect and other organisations.

Officers highlighted the Head of Terms note - Welsh Language Enhancement Strategy, which required further details of Welsh Language and Culture to ensure a strategy was established for this. Members concerns on statistical evidence, enhancement and improvement and the promotion of the Welsh Language and culture would be set out in the legal agreement.

Members wanted to thank the planning officers for the briefing session that had been organised.

The Leader, Councillor Hugh Evans felt the development was an opportunity for Denbigh and Denbighshire. It was the Leaders opinion that the development was a positive proposal for the area and authority.

Proposal – Councillor Merfyn Parry proposed to grant the application in accordance with officer recommendations, seconded by Councillor Bob Murray.

VOTE –

For – 15

Abstain – 0

Against – 0

RESOLVED that permission be **GRANTED** in accordance with officer

recommendations as detailed within the report and supplementary papers.