

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2022

Present:

Councillor Owen (in the Chair)

Councillors

Baker	Kirkland	Robertson BEM
Farrell	O'Hara	Stansfield

In Attendance:

Carl Carrington, Head of Planning, Quality and Control

Jenni Cook, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Ian Curtis, Legal Officer

Susan Parker, Head of Development Management

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2022

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 25 January 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 PLANNING/ENFORCEMENT APPEALS LODGED AND DETERMINED

The Planning Committee considered a report on planning enforcement appeals lodged since the last meeting. Five appeals had been lodged and three appeals determined. Of the three determined, one had been dismissed and the other two had been allowed.

Ms S Parker, Head of Development Management, informed the Committee that the Planning Inspector had allowed the appeal in respect of Bairstow Street for the use of the premises as six self-contained holiday flats. Although the Inspector had acknowledged that the proposal was a sui generis use and that the Council was entitled to apply its adopted residential standards, he gave weight to the quality of the internal fit-out amongst other considerations and accordingly granted planning permission. Ms Parker advised that while taking the decision into account, the Council would continue to maintain a firm line to exercise planning judgement as it saw fit.

Resolved:

To note the update.

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4 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Planning Committee considered a report on enforcement activity in Blackpool from 1 February 2022 to 28 February 2022. During the period 32 new cases had been registered for investigation and as at 28 February 2022, there were 433 “live” complaints outstanding.

Resolved:

To note the update.

5 PLANNING APPLICATION 21/0968: STANLEY BUILDINGS, CHURCH STREET, BLACKPOOL

The Planning Committee considered application 21/0968 for the refurbishment of the existing building and external alterations to all elevations and windows, installation of replacement shop fronts, creation of courtyard at ground floor level, provision of new roof terrace at second floor level and use of premises as altered for office, cafe and retail uses following the demolition of various structures within the courtyard area at Stanley Buildings, Church Street, Blackpool.

Ms Susan Parker, Head of Development Management, outlined the report and provided a summary of the application and details of the proposal. The building was locally listed, fell within the Town Centre Conservation Area, and also fell within the setting of a number of statutorily and locally listed buildings. The building was currently used for retail and office space at ground floor level with retail, café and office space at first floor level along with some residential accommodation.

As part of the application, works to the building would comprise façade repairs/alterations, replacement of windows and the removal of canopies. Replacement of shop fronts would be done in a uniform manner to create a coherent frontage and a strong vertical emphasis, which would return the building back towards its original design.

Ms Parker noted that a significant amount of the original building fabric would be lost as a result of the scheme. This would include areas of faience tiling and some original windows. Although this loss would harm the heritage value of the asset, it would enable the repairs to take place, thus safeguarding the long-term future of the building. Any harm would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme which would include employment, retention of a heritage asset and visual improvements to the street scene.

In respect of consultation, no highways concerns had been raised, nor had the Council’s Conservation Officer raised any objections to the proposal and Blackpool Civic Trust had not offered any comment. However four of the existing retailers had objected to the scheme. Ms Parker noted that the benefits of inconsistent shopfronts were not accepted by the Planning Officer as the building was originally designed to be uniform and coherent. The central courtyard area would operate on a one-way basis to ensure that existing servicing is not compromised, which would also provide the benefit of improved access and refuse storage along with landscaping and seating.

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It was noted that the scheme would result in the loss of two dwellings but this did not weigh notably against the proposal as the Council was able to identify a five year housing land supply.

Ms Parker drew the Committee's attention to the Update Note and the amendments to two proposed conditions and stated that the proposal was expected to regenerate a prominent site within the town centre and would safeguard the future of a heritage asset. Members were recommended to grant planning permission subject to the conditions 1 to 9 listed in the officer report and the proposed amendments to conditions 4 and 5 as detailed Update Note.

Mr Alban Cassidy, agent for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and stated that the building was currently in poor condition, requiring remedial action to prevent any further deterioration. Although there would be some loss of the historical fabric of the building, the proposal would result in a more attractive and provide uniformity, closer to the building's original design. The principle of the development was considered to be appropriate and the building, once completed would encourage new businesses as part of a wider urban regeneration initiative. Improvements to the internal courtyard would result in better access for vehicles and no highways concerns had been raised. Although two flats would be lost as a result of the proposal, the Council was able to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply. Mr Cassidy stated that the proposal would significantly improve and enhance the 1930s art deco heritage asset and asked the Committee to grant planning permission.

The Committee discussed the application and noted that this was a significant site within Blackpool that had fallen into a poor state of repair.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Carl Carrington, Head of Planning, Quality and Control, clarified that changes made to the building over time had altered the uniformity of the building. The proposed application would not unduly compromise the historic pattern of the building and, on balance, the scheme was an improvement. The coat of arms on the faience tiling was not thought to have any historical significant but was merely in line with the pseudo-Egyptian style of the building.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the conditions 1-9 in the committee report and the amended conditions 4 and 5 in the update note.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

To note the date of the next meeting as 10 May 2022.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.20 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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