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Minutes of a Meeting of the Worthing Planning Committee held in the Remote Meeting via Zoom on 21 April 2021

Councillor Paul High (Chair)
Councillor Noel Atkins (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Paul Baker
Councillor Jim Deen
Councillor Helen Silman

Councillor Paul Westover
Councillor Steve Wills
** Councillor Martin McCabe

****Absent**

WBC-PC/103/20-21 Substitute Members

Councillor Bob Smytherman substituted for Councillor Martin McCabe.

WBC-PC/104/20-21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Paul High declared an interest in item 6.1 as an elected Member of West Sussex County Council as he was part of the decision to transfer No 5 High Street from WSCC to Worthing Borough Council. He stated at the time of the transfer of the property there were no plans in place for the site. The Councillor added that he had abstained from voting at Full Council on 20 April 2021 regarding the budget for the proposal.

Councillor Bob Smytherman declared an interest in item 6.1 as an elected Member of WSCC and had been involved in various negotiations with the Estates team at WSCC with regard to No 5 High Street. He added that he had attended the Full Council meeting on 20 April 2021 but, as he was a substitute Member at the evening's Planning Committee meeting, had elected to abstain on the vote regarding the budget for the proposal, and came to the meeting with an open mind.

During the meeting Councillor Bob Smytherman also declared he was a Trustee of West Sussex MIND.

Councillor Paul Westover declared an interest in item 6.1 as a Central Ward Member. He advised he had not taken part in any consultation with the Borough and approved the funding for the proposed development at the Full Council meeting on 20 April 2021. He confirmed that he came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Noel Atkins declared an interest in item 6.1 as an elected Member of WSCC and although he had voted in favour of the budget for the proposal at Full Council on 20 April 2021, came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Paul Baker declared an interest in item 6.1 as he had attended the Full Council meeting on 20 April 2021 and voted in favour of the budget for the proposal but came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Steve Wills declared an interest in item 6.1 and advised he had elected to abstain from voting on the budget for the proposal at the Full Council meeting on 20 April 2021 being a Member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Helen Silman declared an interest in item 6.1 as she had spoken on the item regarding the budget for the proposal considered at the Full Council meeting held on 20 April 2021, had abstained from voting, but said her mind was still open.

Councillor Jim Deen declared an interest in item 6.1 as he had been present at Full Council on 20 April 2021 and abstained from the vote on the budget for the proposal as he was to consider the development at the Planning Committee meeting.

WBC-PC/105/20-21 Public Question Time

There were no questions raised under Public Question Time.

WBC-PC/106/20-21 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 24 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

A recorded vote was taken by the Democratic Services Officer which was as follows:
For: Councillors High, Atkins, Baker, Deen, Silman, & Wills

WBC-PC/107/20-21 Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

WBC-PC/108/20-21 Planning Application

The application was considered, see attached appendix.

WBC-PC/109/20-21 Planning Appeals

None received since the last meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.46 pm, having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman

Application Number: AWDM/0141/21	
Site:	Development Site at 52 Ann Street and 1 To 7 High Street, Worthing
Proposal:	Full planning permission for the demolition of 2-7 High Street and 52 Ann Street and creation of a mixed use development comprising 6.no residential flats with roof terrace (C3 Use Class) and a new Digital and Creative Hub consisting of office and meeting room space (Use Class E), reception areas, art studios, exhibition space (Use Class E), café facilities (Use Class E) and associated cycle parking and waste storage facilities at the site of Colonnade House.

The Head of Planning and Development shared his screen with Members and began his presentation by producing an aerial photograph of the site.

The Officer advised that Colonnade House was to be retained, and that the planning application sought to demolish nos 2-7 High Street and 52 Ann Street to create a mixed use development. He added that the existing use of Colonnade House, a cultural and creative hub, had been very successful since its opening and that although the application had been prepared on behalf of Worthing Borough Council, the Planning Committee should determine the application solely on its planning merits.

The Officer ran through the key elements of the scheme, which included the proposed design and suggested materials, and Members were shown a number of photographs, plans and photo montages to assist in their consideration of the proposal. He advised the Heritage Report was supported by Officers which had highlighted the architectural changes and deterioration of the buildings that had occurred over the years.

The Head of Planning and Development felt the main consideration for the Committee was the loss of heritage assets and said Officers agreed there was some harm to the loss of historical buildings but less than substantial in NPPF terms, and the Committee needed to take into account the public benefits of replacement of the buildings as set out within the report.

In concluding his presentation, the Officer referred to concerns raised by the existing businesses on the site however he said that, in planning terms, there was not a loss of employment floorspace, and existing businesses were protected by leases and that any surrender of lease or compensation necessary would be dealt with separately.

Members raised a number of questions for clarification on the presentation which the Officer answered in turn and in summary, included:-

- the concerns of existing businesses;
- viability assessment of the scheme; and
- pre-application consultation.

There were further representations from three supporters, who had all elected to join the meeting, and two objectors, one had their representation read out and the other objector elected to join the meeting.

Some Members raised questions with the registered objector and the architect which were answered in turn for clarification.

Prior to debate, the Head of Planning and Development stated the situation regarding the leases was a complex matter and strayed outside of planning considerations. He also took the opportunity to advise Members of some proposed additional conditions which included one requested from the Worthing Society regarding a public display of key historical details and photos being incorporated within the creative hub and/or the proposed cafe. Officers had been happy to agree to the proposed condition.

During debate, in summary, Members were generally in support of the cultural and creative hub and recognised its importance to the town but some felt the buildings to be demolished were an important part of the town's heritage and raised concerns about the loss of existing businesses.

Due to connectivity issues experienced by Cllr Jim Deen, the Chairman agreed to pause the debate and adjourn the meeting at 8.24pm for five minutes in an effort to resolve the problem. Unfortunately, Councillor Jim Deen was unable to connect back into the meeting therefore, although he took part in the earlier debate, he was unable to take part in the vote.

Following further discussion, it became apparent the majority of Members agreed with the principal of expanding the creative workshops in Colonnade House and felt the public benefits of the scheme outweighed any harm to heritage assets.

The majority of Members agreed to approve the application with proposed additional conditions which were key and historical details and photos to be incorporated with the creative hub and/or proposed cafe; construction to take place in accordance with National Space Standards; an archaeological watching brief to take place during construction; and details to be submitted as to the size and design of dormers on the north and east elevation and details of the string course on the replacement of 5 and 7 High Street to be approved prior to commencement of the development.

The vote was taken by roll call as follows:

For: Councillors Atkins, Baker, High, Smytherman, Westover, and Wills.

Against: 0

Abstention: Councillor Silman.

(Councillor Jim Deen did not take part in the vote as he was not present due to connectivity issues).

Decision

The Committee agreed to **APPROVE** the planning application, subject to the following and agreed additional conditions :-

1. Standard Full Permission (Time Period).
2. Approved Plans.
3. Submission of materials cladding, windows, roofing and bricks (including sample panels).
4. Submission of surface water drainage scheme (as recommended by Technical Services).
5. Maintenance and management of surface water scheme (as recommended by Technical Services).
6. Details of as built scheme (as recommended by Technical Services).
7. Construction Management Plan ((as recommended by WSCC Highways).
8. An archaeological watching brief during construction.
9. To be constructed in accordance with the National Space Standards.
10. Notwithstanding the submitted elevations the size and design of the dormers on the north and east elevation and details of the string course on the replacement of Nos 5 and 7 the High Street are not hereby approved and revised details shall be submitted to and approved prior to the commencement of development (excluding demolition of the existing buildings).
11. Prior to demolition of the buildings a photographic record of the buildings shall be undertaken and following the completion of the development a public display of key historical details and photos shall be incorporated within the creative hub and/ or the proposed cafe.
12. No demolition until a contract has been let to secure the redevelopment of the site.
13. Details of architectural features - fenestration, sills, string courses and fascia details.
14. Provision of cycle storage.
15. Notwithstanding the submitted details the aluminium roller shutter door is not hereby approved. Prior to the commencement of development alternative door details shall be submitted to and approved.

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