



CHELTENHAM CIVIC SOCIETY

PLANNING FORUM

Note of meeting held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 16 July 2019 at Parmoor House

Those present: Rob Rimmell (Chair), Andrew Booton, Adrian Phillips, (Secretary), Mike Sheppard & Mike Richardson.

Apologies: Tess Beck, Mike Duckering, Douglas Ogle & Peter Sayers.

Cheltenham House, Clarence Street, Cheltenham

Removal of existing sculpture and replacement with replica

Planning ref: 19/01726/CLPUD

The Civic Society Planning Forum noted that:

- the Barbara Hepworth sculpture had been commissioned for, and was an integral part of, the building to which it is attached
- this was her last major public commission
- the intellectual property rights may well still rest with the Barbara Hepworth Foundation and copying may be prohibited

The Forum OBJECTS to the proposal to replace the existing sculpture with a replica for the following reasons:

- a replica would lack the authenticity of the original and could never be exactly the same
- it would devalue its contribution to the street scene
- it would constitute a dangerous precedent that could affect other public art.
- it was not apparent that the Barbara Hepworth Foundation had given consent to its removal and reproduction.

The Forum called on CBC to maintain its opposition to the proposal. If there was any substance in the legal opinion included in the application, it was important that this should be tested in a public enquiry as it clearly had wider implications. Certainly, the barrister involved appeared to believe that a unique artefact by one of the UK's greatest artists has the same status as a building's windows when it comes to replacement!

Land East of Farm Lane, Leckhampton, Cheltenham

The construction of a new sixth form secondary school building, with a new all-weather pitch, sports playing fields, a multi-use games area, onsite car parking and other associated works

Planning ref: 19/01690/DEEM3

This is a major project with voluminous documentation. The Civic Society Planning Forum felt the time being given to CBC to assess this proposal from GCC was far too short and hoped that CBC would demand more time.

The Forum also felt that a project of this scale should have been presented by GCC both to it and to the Architects' Panel as well as to the local community stakeholders as reported in the Design and Access Statement.

In respect of the scheme, the Civic Society Planning Forum:-

- agreed that it recognised the need for a new secondary school in this part of Cheltenham, but felt nonetheless, that the plan raised a number of concerns which CBC should take up in its response to GCC:
- the project would have a significant impact off-site, for example in terms of traffic generated. There should be related proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access to the school from residential areas nearby. Off-site investment in walking, public transport and cycling was essential
- the development of the site is very intensive. It looks as if a lot is being crammed into a relatively small area
- the plan underestimates the landscape impact of the new school and related on-site development (see the comments of the landscape expert, Ellie Wade).
- the plan fails to show how a net gain in biodiversity will be achieved.
- the decision to close the footpath through the school site is regrettable. It is extremely disappointing that an alternative route was not pursued because of the opposition of local landowners. GCC should try harder.
- it is not clear how land to the north of the school will be used.

We are aware of new proposals for building there, which seem to be partly in conflict with the report of the JCS inspector and CBC's plans for Local Green Space.

Whilst the Forum thought the design of the main entrance was acceptable and dramatic, the aesthetic created for the rest of the external elevations was repetitive and box-like. This is not the sort of adventurous design that might help encourage and stimulate the minds of young people to be in attendance.

9 Montpellier Parade, Cheltenham

Erection of detached dwelling following demolition of an existing garage

Planning ref: 19/01630/FUL

The Civic Society Planning Forum considered that this building had been designed to have minimal impact. They noted that the replacement of the existing garage block would be beneficial. They welcomed the detailed and helpful visual information provided with the application.

60 Promenade, Cheltenham

Change of use from Class A1 (Shop) to Class A3 (Food and Drink)

Planning ref: 19/01657/COU

The Civic Society Planning Forum objects to these proposals on the following grounds:

- The documents give no idea as to what the change of use will look like in this very important part of the town. For a site like this, a full Design and Access statement should be required.
- It appears that the establishment will need to be serviced from the front with issues about deliveries, waste removal etc. with possible impact on buses entering the Promenade.
- The intrusion of drinking and/or eating establishments etc. into the Promenade here could greatly alter its character.

The Forum considered that the application raised wider questions about the future of retailing in this key part of the town and that a decision on this application should not go ahead until a policy had been developed to safeguard the high-quality retail offer in the Promenade.

60 Promenade, Cheltenham

Change of use from Class A1 (Shop) to Class 4 (Drinking establishment)

Planning ref: 19/01685/COU

The Civic Society Planning Forum objects to these proposals on the following grounds:

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- It appears that the establishment will need to be serviced from the front with issues about deliveries, waste removal etc. with possible impact on buses entering the Promenade.
- The intrusion of drinking and/or eating establishments etc. into the Promenade here could greatly alter its character.

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78 Andover Road, Cheltenham

Demolition of rear garage and erection of double garage with rooms above to form annex. Erection of conservatory following demolition of existing modern rear addition plus a number of internal and external alterations / refurbishment. (Revised scheme ref: 19/00528/LBC - alterations to approved conservatory)

Ref. No: 19/01753/LBC

The Civic Society Planning Forum commended this scheme for its high quality of presentation, its sensitive treatment of the listed building and imaginative proposal for a new mews-type development.