

# **Planning Committee**

**Thursday, 16th January, 2020  
6.00pm**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Councillor Garth Barnes (Chair), Councillor Paul Baker (Vice-Chair), Councillor Stephen Cooke, Councillor Diggory Seacome, Councillor Victoria Atherstone, Councillor Bernard Fisher, Councillor Dilys Barrell, Councillor Mike Collins, Councillor Paul McCloskey, Councillor Tony Oliver, Councillor Simon Wheeler, Councillor John Payne and Councillor Rowena Hay
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	David Oakhill (Head of Planning) Victoria Harris (Senior Planning Officer) Nick Jonathan (OneLegal)

**1. Apologies**

Councillor Hegenbarth.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

**19/02335/FUL Recreation Ground, Clyde Crescent:** Cllr Hay – will speak but not vote.

**3. Declarations of independent site visits**

**27 Promenade:** Cllr Fisher, Cllr Seacome, Cllr Oliver.

Cllr Cooke asked why declarations of independent site visits are necessary, and was informed that this has become a standard agenda item. It is useful for members to know who has visited the sites, and in the interests of transparency for members of the public.

**4. Public Questions**

None.

**5. Minutes of last meeting**

Councillor Barnes suggested that unless any Member wanted to discuss any matters included in the exempt minutes, there was no need to go into closed session in order to agree them. The minutes and exempt minutes of the meeting were agreed, as a true and accurate record.

**6. Planning/ Listed Building/ Conservation Area Consent/Advertisement Applications, Applications for Lawful Development Certificate and Tree related applications**

**6. 19/01844/FUL & LBC 27 Promenade**

**Officer introduction**

DO described the application for the conversion of a number of floors of GII listed property at 27 Promenade, currently trading as Radley's, with retail on all four levels, fronting the pedestrian area of the Promenade, and with rear access from Post Office Lane.

The proposal is to convert floors 1, 2 and 3 to a single residence, with a modest staircase from Post Office Lane for a pedestrian entrance and otherwise no external changes. There is no longer a need for the upper floors to be used as retail, and this relatively modest example of an adaption is part of an emerging pattern in the changing retail world. Officers are having active discussions with different land-owners across town, considering how to introduce more and different uses to town centre to increase diversity and footfall. This application proposes changes which are sympathetic to the listed building; the conservation officer is happy and the Civic Society consider it to be exemplar, and would like to see more similar schemes. The recommendation is to grant consent.

### **Member debate**

**RH:** requested that this application come to committee, not because she has any objection to it but because she welcomes it and hopes to see more similar applications of this type in the future. It is a good use of the town centre, the residential use making it more diverse and busy. Is really pleased to hear such enthusiasm from the Civic Society on this.

**BF:** supports RH's comments on this. Remembers the last residential property on the Prom going some 20 years ago, opposite Imperial Gardens, but since then, town centre buildings have started to return to residential use, such as the flat over the coffee shop (former Dobells), and now Imperial Square, once 90% offices, returning to flats, and sometimes complete houses. Fully supports this application; it is an excellent idea.

**[GB:** failed to inform Committee at the beginning of the meeting that it is being recorded but not broadcast, for training purposes; the recording will be held for six months. Members understand that their presence at the meeting constitutes their consent to being filmed. Also, the electronic voting system tested out at the last meeting will continue, but for the time being with a show of hands alongside.]

**JP:** fully supports the application; it is absolutely the right thing to do, and apart from the metal staircase at the back, there will be no outward change to the building. One minor concern is that when the applicant originally proposed two dwellings, the heritage comments were a little scathing, and a little discouraging for the applicant. There needs to be a realisation that whilst these houses were built in the 1860s, lifestyle was very different then; there should be more freedom to allow developers to develop dwellings which support modern living. When Royal Crescent in Bath was built, it was just the outside walls - owners were able to put in the inside walls to suit their particular lifestyle, and it should be same here. Conservation officers are concerned about the removal of historic material, but only the people inside will see it, as the buildings are not open to public. Feels that there needs to be a little more relaxation on this.

### **DO, in response:**

- conservation is traditionally about conserving buildings, and as town centres change, with a lot of listed buildings and conservation areas in Cheltenham, we need to learn to adapt to that change;
- the bigger picture is that these many of the buildings are GII-listed by Historic England; there is a role for CBC to talk with Historic England about this issue, as change needs to happen and inevitably some historic fabric will be lost, altered or changed as we allow buildings to evolve as they have done in the past. Is keen to keep pushing for this; CBC's conservation officers are keen too. This is the first application of this type for a while, and is part of a learning exercise.

**SW:** the debate is moving a little away from the start, but on that point, would remind Members that back in the '60s and '70s, the whole country was very free with bringing in the modern, and there is not a member who doesn't scathe attempts at modernisation in a lot of town centres, especially Gloucester. Conservation is very important, and there needs to be balance between keeping the outside as it was built, and not introducing 1960s and 70s boring, square architecture; it is important not to lose that, and to preserve what makes Cheltenham Cheltenham.

**PM:** member training is taking place after the meeting, and would just say that this is a really interesting and good application to bring to Committee. The more usual reason Members ask for a Committee decision is because the officer is not entirely on the same wavelength as the neighbours or Members, but there are other reasons too, and this is the only way to have a debate on trends emerging in the town. This is a perfectly sensible and good use of the planning agenda – how else going to debate these trends?

#### **Vote on officer recommendation to permit**

13 in support LBC

13 in support FUL

#### **PERMIT - unanimous**

### **6. 19/02335/FUL Recreation Ground, Clyde Crescent Officer introduction**

VH told Members that the application is for construction of a concrete scooter and skate park, next to the existing multi-use games area, play area and grass football pitch. The bowl-shaped design will support skaters, scooters, roller bladers and BMX riders, with a new access path, bench, bin, cycle racks and tree planting, and is situated 45m away from the closest residential dwelling. It is not lit. There have been no letters of representation from neighbours. The application is at Committee because CBC is the applicant and the landowner, and the recommendation is to permit, subject to the conditions set out in the officer report.

#### **Public Speaking**

##### **Councillor Hay, in support**

Has been involved with project work on this with residents; will therefore speak but not take part in the debate or vote. This is the fruition of five years' work and £70k fundraising, and technically speaking, came out of fact that young people were using Cornerstones at St Michaels Church as a skate and scooter park, coming straight off the steps into the road; the regeneration partnership started looking at what else to do and how to raise money for this, as there was a clear need for a facility for local youngsters, particularly those under 12 years of age although older children will use it too. Young people have been very much involved in the consultation on the design, and have helped with knocking on all the doors in Clyde Crescent. There were some complaints and concerns from local residents about the potential for anti-social behaviour from young people gathering together, and it will undoubtedly be very popular in the beginning, being the first facility of its kind in Cheltenham. It is constructed of concrete because of noise issues - the skate part in Pittville Park is very noisy – and the sides are banked, so flooding won't be an issue. As ward councillor is really excited about it, as the first of its kind and the fruition of much work. The young people who were involved at the start call themselves the WhadSquad, and can

now go to Pittville Park on their own, so the Clyde Crescent facility will be primarily for children too young to go do that. There will be an increase in the number of bins to address issue of littering. Hopes committee will support application.

#### **Member debate**

**BF:** considers this to be excellent, a really good idea. A similar installation at Burrows Field in Leckhampton a few years ago is still a hive of activity - kids love it - and the one in Pittville is also very popular. It is good for the local community and for local children. Should do more of it.

**SC:** echoes BF's comments - the cycle track in Leckhampton is really successful and a great asset to the community. Given that, wonders why this rather than a similar cycle track is proposed here, what the pros and cons and relative costs may be. Would also like reassurance that the concrete bowl won't turn into a swimming pool in bad weather.

**JP:** is fully supportive of this application for a number of reasons. One reason is that Prestbury is looking to do something similar, and when selecting possible activities, the idea of a cycle track was abandoned on the grounds of noise and cost; is therefore really pleased to have this facility in the neighbourhood. Regarding anti-social behaviour, would think this facility would help to mitigate against it, giving an outlet for energy. It is a really good idea. Has one small query, regarding the people who will be using it: is all for inclusivity but a little bit worried about the claim that it will be used by people in wheelchairs – would think that whizzing round ramps would give huge potential for injury. But otherwise considers this to be a great scheme, and fully supports it.

**SW:** echoes RH's comments. Can remember the days of Welch Road playing fields in his ward, when the main activity was the buying and selling of drugs. A lot of work was subsequently done there, a MUGA installed, the whole design altered - there were some complaints about anti-social behaviour but it was already there. Today it is a wonderful park, used right across the community, from young children and families, fathers and sons with jumpers for goalposts, and the elderly just there to sit. This not going to cause anti-social behaviour; it will actually solve a lot of it, giving young people somewhere to go, something to do, and it won't cost anything. It is a fabulous idea.

**MC:** fully supports the proposal; considers it a great idea, not only because of his previous sporting background. When serving on a previous council, did a lot of work on state parks, with user groups and youth workers; this is already a recreational area, and if there is any anti-social behaviour, this won't make it worse, but will channel it away. There is always a degree of hierarchy in what goes on in places such as these, and young people tend to self-police – they won't want people there messing about. As RH said, being closer to where the users live, they won't have to go far to access the facility, and they will have more ownership of it. If people moan about noise and litter, they should remember this goes on already; hopes this will improve it. It is absolutely brilliant.

**SC:** to reassure members, would just add that the possibility of anti-social behaviour at the Leckhampton skateboard park was raised beforehand, but has been almost absent. Noise has not been a problem either. It is a great asset to the community and this will be too; any worries along those lines can be dismissed.

**VH, in response:**

- regarding why this particular type of facility was chosen, it is a community-led scheme, and this is what the community wanted;
- regarding drainage, the proposal will be built above ground, and building control officers will inspect it; it will be constantly monitored, not something for planning application stage;
- regarding use of the facility by wheelchair users, if they wish to use it then we support it.

**Vote on officer recommendation to permit**

12 in support

**PERMIT**

**6. 19/02446/LBC Municipal Offices, Promenade**

**Officer introduction**

**DO** introduced the application for the Municipal Offices to remove modern stud partition walls and doors from the south wing ground and first floors, and block up some redundant spaces and openings, as part of CBC's modernisation agenda. The recommendation is to approve.

**Member debate**

**BF:** has just one question: as there was an application similar to this last month, why can't they be rolled into one, does it cost more money? Wouldn't one application have covered the lot?

**DO, in response:**

- listed building application are free.

**Vote on recommendation to grant**

13 in support – unanimous

**GRANT**

**7. Appeal Updates**

Latest appeal information had been circulated to Members.

**8. Any other items the Chairman determines urgent and requires a decision**

There were none.

**9. Exempt Minutes**

See above.

Chairman