

Appendix 5: Planning Sub-Committee Minutes 24 May 2021

Minutes:

The Committee considered the pre-application briefing for the refurbishment of existing Civic Centre and redevelopment of the existing rear car park for the erection of a three storey building (plus roof enclosure); 2 x two storey links; creation of central courtyard; and associated landscaping.

The applicant team and officers responded to questions from the Committee:

- It was commented that accessibility and transparency were central to the original design of the building and members welcomed the fact that the proposals would maintain these features.
- It was enquired whether the building would be open to passers-by. The applicant team noted that areas of external landscaping and the reception area would be publicly accessible; there would also be an area that could be hired and used for events. Some members noted the importance of ensuring that some areas of the building were secure but felt that the Civic Centre should be more inclusive and should have more opportunities for the public to engage. The applicant team noted that the reception and some outdoor areas would be open to the public and could have flexible uses.
- Some members believed that the car park would be reasonably prominent and it was enquired whether this could be moved from the front of the building to somewhere less visible. The applicant team noted that the plan may be misleading as it was intended to have a pedestrianised area at the front of the building. It was explained that cars would access the area from Trinity Road and it was highlighted that disabled parking was required to be located within a maximum distance from the main entrance. It was stated that the area outside the main entrance would be pedestrianised and would be significantly upgraded.
- In response to a query, the applicant team confirmed that the net internal area of the building was 6,000 sqm and the external area was 11,000 sqm.
- Some members noted that, in the past, the west side of the building had experienced overheating issues during the afternoon

and evening. The applicant team explained that the glazing would be significantly upgraded and that the building would have mechanical ventilation.

- In response to a query, the applicant team confirmed that there were a number of memorial elements across the site, including some planting; members urged the applicant to retain or relocate these elements. It was noted that there would be engagement with the member forum and it was suggested that the reception area would be a suitable opportunity to capture some memorial elements.
- In relation to parking, it was explained that there would be eight parking spaces: three of these were disabled parking spaces and the other five would be enlarged spaces for flexible uses. It was acknowledged that some staff required vehicle access for their roles; the services with fleet vehicles would not be based at the Civic Centre and it was noted that the essential car permit policy was due to be reviewed for other staff. Some members noted that parking was important for visitors and for older people who may not be able to use the underground. The applicant team commented that the site was well-served by public transport and noted that event organisers could consider access and transportation measures, such as minibus provision. It was acknowledged that there would always be tension between parking and environmental elements. Some members commented that they did not believe that the parking provision was sufficient and that it should be reconsidered. The applicant team noted this point and stated that they would continue to work to balance these interests.
- The applicant team confirmed that the meeting rooms would have modern audio visual and presentation equipment. It was noted that, due to the heritage status of the building, the equipment would likely be sensitively designed and installed.
- In relation to refreshment facilities, it was explained that staff areas would have kitchenettes on every floor. There would also be large kitchen provision on the ground floor, including a servery counter which could be used by a caterer.
- Some members highlighted that, previously, users of the building had been required to use window blinds frequently due to sun and heat issues; it was requested that this issue be considered. It was commented that mechanical ventilation had been used but had not been effective.

- Some members noted that the Quality Review Panel (QRP) had commented that the east to west pedestrian and cycle route might not be well-used and it was enquired whether any changes would be made. The applicant team stated that some changes had been made and that provision had been made to improve the pedestrian route at the southern end of the building. The connection of the path to the woodland garden would also be improved and there would be a clear path through to Bounds Green Road.