

**At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (NORTH SUNDERLAND)
SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 29TH MARCH,
2012 at 4.45 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor Copeland in the Chair

Councillors Curran, Francis, D. Richardson and Walton.

Declarations of Interest

11/03441/FUL – Change of use from warehouse to student accommodation to provide 44no. bedsits and associated works.

Councillor Curran declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Charlton, Fletcher and T. Foster.

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report, supplementary report and circulatory report (copies circulated) relating to the North Sunderland area, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council upon applications made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

11/03441/FUL – Change of use from warehouse to student accommodation to provide 44no. bedsits and associated works.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that this application was for a change of use to student accommodation which was a sui generis use; should the consent be granted and then the applicant wish to rent to non-students then a further change of use would be required.

The building was currently set over 2 floors however there would be a change in the ceiling heights which would allow there to be a third floor created.

While this proposal was a departure from Policy EC4 of the UDP which set out the acceptable land uses in this area it was felt that the departure from the policy would be acceptable given that the site had been on the market for three years without interest and the building was in a dilapidated condition and would be renovated by the applicant as part of this development.

There had been a number of objections to the application and the Headteacher of Dame Dorothy Primary School Mr Ian Williamson was in attendance to speak against the application as was Councillor Bonallie.

Mr Williamson advised that the application site was in very close proximity to the school and he had serious concerns around safety for the pupils at the school. The road was quite narrow and at the start and end of the school day there were a large number of vehicles parked on the roadside which created a hazardous situation; he was concerned that the situation would be made worse by the development, especially considering the small number of parking spaces that would be provided within the development site.

Councillor Bonallie then addressed the Committee as a Ward Councillor. He stated that he was concerned that there was a saturation of bedsits and student dwellings in the area which used to be a family area. He also felt that the development would do nothing to benefit the community.

The Applicants Solicitor Mr Ken Stanger then addressed the Committee in support of the application. The applicant had already developed student accommodation on nearby Dundas Street and this development had not caused any problems for the area. The university was expanding on the north side of the river and it was important for students to have accommodation close to the campus.

Councillor Walton stated that the amount of parking provided seemed very small for the number of bedsits there would be due to the assumption that students did not have cars. She also stated that the university in its objection had stated that there was a surplus of accommodation; this was a concern as there was already a lot of bedsits in this area which caused problems and this development could exacerbate these problems.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that a change of use would be required if the bedsits were to be used for anything other than student accommodation. With regard to the car parking, the highways department had examined the proposals and were satisfied that there would be sufficient parking. The representative of the Highways department then added that there had been work done with the university to identify how much parking was required for student accommodation and it was considered that at this proposed development there would be sufficient parking. It was important to consider that the current land use for this site was industrial and that this would generate a larger amount of traffic including HGV movements in the area.

Councillor Francis asked Mr Stanger how he would guarantee that only students would be given tenancies in the building. Mr Stanger advised that applications would only be accepted from students and that student identification would be required.

Councillor D. Richardson queried the oversupply that the university had claimed was a problem and was informed by the representative of the Deputy Chief Executive that the University had objected on the basis of supply and demand and competition and that their business would suffer if supply was greater than demand.

Councillor Walton stated that around 400 residents had objected to this application and that it was likely that the development would lead to parking issues and could affect child safety.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive then advised Members of the procedures for going against the officer's recommendation. Should Members be minded to do this they would need to develop valid reasons for their decision and would need to be willing to fight any appeal that may be lodged against the decision. He also advised that policy EC4 of the UDP could be used as a reason for refusing this application.

The Officer's recommendation to approve the application subject to conditions was then put to the vote and with all Members present abstaining it was:-

1. RESOLVED that determination of the application be deferred to a future meeting of the committee.

12/00117/FUL – Construction of temporary car showrooms, associated and ancillary buildings, facilities and operations

2. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 13 conditions set out therein.

12/00118/SUB – Development of site to provide two car showrooms with associated facilities and car parking, including stopping up of public highway

3. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 29 conditions set out therein.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. COPELAND,
Chairman.

