

**PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WINCHESTER)**  
**SUB-COMMITTEE**

**29 September 2003**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Busher (Chairman) (P)

Baxter (P)

Beveridge (P)

Davies (P)

Evans (P)

Hatch (P)

Johnston (P)

Read (P)

Sutton (P)

Others in Attendance

Councillor Bennetts

Officers in Attendance

Mr D Dimon (Principal Planning Officer)

Mr J Hearn (Planning Team Leader)

Mr H Bone (Assistant City Secretary (Legal))

1. **MINUTES**  
 (Report PDC348 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 9 September 2003 be noted.

2. **REFURBISHMENT OF EXISTING BUILDING, INCLUDING RE-CLADDING OF ELEVATION, NEW RECEPTION, AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OFFICE BUILDING AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, ROMSEY ROAD, WINCHESTER**  
 (Report PDC341 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting five representatives of the applicant, Councillor Bennetts as a Ward Member, and three members of the public.

Mr Dimon explained that following comments made at the previous meeting, Members had spent the day further considering the application. They had visited the AutoDesk and Novartis Offices in Farnborough and, although both of these buildings were new-builds, the architect and representatives of the glass manufacturers were able to explain to Members the similarities between some of these buildings' glass elevations and the proposals for the Police Headquarters (HQ).

Following the visit to Farnborough, Members viewed the main building of the existing Police HQ from St Giles Hill, the junction of Taplings Road and Berewecke Avenue and Cheriton Road. Members then met representatives of the Police Authority at the Headquarters who explained the location and further details of their application.

Mr Hearn reminded the Sub-Committee that the application sought to re-clad the nine storey Police HQ tower in reflective glass, and in the grounds of the HQ build a new three storey office building on the site of two semi-detached houses (currently used as offices) and to improve car parking provision.

In response to a Member's question, Mr Bawden, who represented the Police, stated that the impact of internal lighting in the tower would affect its night-time appearance, as it did at present, and added that most night working would be conducted from the lower, west wing of the HQ.

Other Members were concerned regarding the visual effect the opening windows would have on the smooth glass appearance of the building as the Police did not propose to install air conditioning. Whilst discussing the appearance of the glass cladding, some Members considered that the effect of reflections would vary depending on sunlight conditions and where the building was viewed from. Members were also concerned about the visual effect likely to be created by the aluminium composite panelling that would clad the window-less ends of the tower.

With reference to the proposed car parking on site, Members noted from their site visit the large number of cars that were parked informally on grass verges, roundabouts and at narrow entrances. Mr Bawden explained that the proposals sought to increase the area of hard standing to properly accommodate the current number of cars that parked on site. A new car park would be created on the site of the temporary office buildings following decant to the proposed three-storey office building.

From visiting the site, Members noted that an informal car park between the proposed location of the new offices and West End Terraces was well screened by trees and bushes and were concerned that any rationalisation of this parking area could be more visually intrusive to local residents.

Mr Dimon stated that the car parking proposals were contrary to both the current and emerging Local Plans that sought to reduce the number of car parking spaces at employment sites in sustainable locations.

Members noted that the Police's submitted travel to work plan had been considered by officers at the County Council and the possibility of a legal agreement to enforce its proposals was being investigated.

The Sub-Committee discussed the proposals for a new three storey office building on the site of the existing two semi-detached pairs of 1950s residential properties. The application proposed that this building would be constructed 30-40 metres from the residential properties in West End Terrace and the boundary of the Conservation Area.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Dimon confirmed that the construction of large new office buildings in this location was contrary to the policies of the Local Plan. The applicant's representatives nevertheless stated that they considered the proposals to be mainly replacing existing temporary office space and that the top floor of the tower block was already in ancillary office use so its conversion to offices should not be considered to be 'new office space'.

Members also noted that only approximately 40% of the site was developed and further questioned whether other alternatives had been investigated. Mr Hearn

commented that officers had held discussions with the applicant to consider relocating the Police HQ elsewhere or redeveloping the current site.

Members also noted that most of the comments received and outlined in the report recommended a complete re-build to allow for the removal of the tower block. However a representative of the Police explained that any redevelopment option would be at least twice as expensive and that the South Eastern Regional Design Panel had advised that there would be no funding available from the Government's "Better Public Buildings" Initiative.

Councillor Bennetts spoke as a Ward Member and recommended that the views of local residents should be carefully considered and that consideration should be given to erecting the new office building adjacent to the east end of the main tower block as per the Police's original intention. Members noted that if constructed next to the main building, the new offices could take advantage of the change of gradients that fell away from the main tower and that its impact on West End Terrace would be diminished.

At the invitation of the Chairman, a member of the public commented on the proposal's effect on the properties in West End Close and the trees on site. Mr Bawden confirmed that, if the application was granted, it was intended that all but one of the trees on the site would remain.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members appreciated the financial constraints that limited the Police's options for development but with regard to the proposal to re-clad the tower block, the majority agreed that the detrimental visual effect of this upon Winchester and the nearby Conservation Area would be unacceptable.

With regard to the proposals for the new offices and formalised car parking, Members agreed that this was contrary to planning policies and should therefore not be permitted.

#### RECOMMENDED:

That the Planning Development Control Committee be recommended to refuse the application for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development is contrary to policies UB3, E.16, E19, of the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (review) and to proposals W.1, W.3, W.10, HG.6, HG.7, EN.5 and EN.7 of the Winchester District Local Plan and proposals W.1, E.3, E.4, HE.4, HE.5, DP.1, DP2, DP.3, DP.5, of the Emerging Development Plan – Winchester District Local Plan Review and Revised Deposit in that it would:-

(a) Having regard to the extremely prominent elevated siting and high rise form of the existing building, result in the unacceptable increased visual prominence of the structure to the detriment of the setting of Winchester and its conservation area.

(b) Result in a new building the size, siting, form, design and finish of which would not be of an appropriate quality to contribute positively to the urban design and setting of the city or to the character of the conservation area. Consequently it would not accord with the objectives of the Winchester 'Conservation Area Project' Supplementary Planning Guidance or the Governments 'Better Public Buildings' initiative. Moreover, in view of its juxtaposition to neighbouring residential properties it would detract from the

visual amenities of the area generally and of the occupiers such properties in particular.

(c) The new office space to be provided is contrary to the office restraint policies of the development plan and would be likely to be harmful in terms of increased housing and transport pressures.

2. The provision for additional formal parking areas as proposed would detract from the visual amenity of the site and in the absence of any information to the contrary, be likely to prejudice the strategically important tree belt that is within the conservation area on its eastern side. Furthermore, such provision cannot be reconciled with national planning policy guidance in PPG13 in that it would undermine the objectives of the applicant's green travel plan to make the best possible use of opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car. The over provision of on-site car parking would encourage reliance on the private car when alternative means of transport are or can be made available given the site's sustainable location. The over reliance on the private car would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys to the detriment of the environment and the locality. The proposal therefore conflicts with the sustainability objectives of the development plan as set out in policies T1, T2, T4, of the Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (review) and to proposals T.9, of the Winchester District Local Plan and proposals T.1 and T.4, of the Emerging Development Plan – Winchester District Local Plan Review and Revised Deposit.

The meeting commenced at 2.45pm and concluded at 3.45pm.

Chairman