

Minutes of a site meeting held on **Monday, 22 August 2016 at 10.00am**  
at the Former Council Offices, Mariners Street, Lowestoft

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Members Present:

Councillors P Ashdown (Chairman), S Allen, J Groom and C Rivett

Officers Present:

M Fitzsimmons (Asset Management Service), P Perkin (Principal Planning Officer), P Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management) and N Wotton (Democratic Services Manager).

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The Chairman welcomed Members to the site meeting and reminded those present that the purpose of the meeting was a 'fact finding' exercise only and to provide Members with an opportunity to view the site and its surroundings.

No decision would be made before the application was considered at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on 24 August 2016.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the application was for a proposed restaurant and drive-thru take-away on Council owned land to the rear of the Town Hall. The site formed part of a larger area that was allocated for redevelopment under Policy LOW 3. Some new affordable housing had already been built in the area and this application now provided an opportunity to realise some of the commercial elements of Policy LOW 3.

It was noted that there would be three separate applications regarding this site for consideration by the Planning Committee. The first application was for the proposed 50 seater restaurant and drive-thru takeaway, the second application was for the illuminated signage and the third application was for the prior notification to demolish some of the buildings on the site.

Members were reminded that the Town Hall was a Listed Building which was within a Conservation Area. However, the part of the Town Hall site under consideration within the applications was not listed nor within the Conservation Area. Members would need to consider how the proposed developments would impact upon the Town Hall Building.

Members viewed the buildings which were being proposed for demolition. It was reported that the cream and brick building which was adjacent to the A12, had formerly been known as Coopers which had been a Ships Chandlers, and dated back to the 1870s. As there was some historical importance attached to the building, it was considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The 1970's building which fronted onto Mariner's Street was also proposed to be demolished and it was noted that this particular building was an eye sore and in a poor state of repair. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management reported that it was not in the Council's best interests to leave the site in its current state and that on balance, the applications were recommended for approval.

Those present viewed the access and egress to the site, which would remain unchanged, and would retain the existing dropped kerbs. There would be a one way system around the site to facilitate the drive-thru. It was noted that there would be 19 parking spaces and cars would be able to exit onto Mariners Street, where drivers could proceed towards the High Street and would then be able to head either North or South. Confirmation was provided that if customers wishing to access the site from the A12 heading North, they would need to loop around the BP Petrol Station and then drive South along the A12 to access the site.

The proposed site of the restaurant and drive-thru would be clearly marked and would not encroach onto the Town Hall. It was noted that there would be some landscaping and soakaways to help soften the appearance of the site. It was confirmed that some of the materials used for the new building would be in keeping with the external materials used in the Town Hall building.

Members then viewed the location for the illuminated signage, which would be between the

A12 and the proposed development, for maximum impact. The illuminated signs would include the Burger King logo and the menu boards, other signs would not need to be illuminated in this manner. It was noted that the illuminated signs would need to be carefully designed to ensure that they did not distract or confuse road users. There was some discussion that the illuminated signs may cause some disturbance for local residents if the lights were kept on all through the night.

#### Questions from Committee Members

Members raised questions on the following issues:

- Had there been any comments or objections from neighbours? It was reported that there had been 2 representations received, one of which had met the deadline for inclusion within the report. The other representation would be mentioned verbally by the Principal Planning Officer during the meeting.
- Would there be fencing installed to prevent people misusing the land, once the 1970's building had been demolished and cleared? It was reported that the Town Hall site would be fenced off to prevent access to the site or fly tipping and would also be suitably landscaped.
- Would it be possible to have additional conditions on the use of the illuminated signs, so that they were turned off half an hour before the business closed at night? Yes it would be possible to add an additional condition, if required.
- Would it be possible to add an additional condition in order to preserve part of the stone work from the Coopers Building, in order to preserve the heritage of the local area? It would be possible to request such a condition.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The site visit concluded at 10.30 am.