

WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF 4th APRIL 2016

ADDENDUM

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

This report summarises information received since the Agenda was compiled including, as appropriate, suggested amendments to recommendations in the light of that information. It also lists those people wishing to address the Committee.

Where the Council has received a request to address the Committee, the applications concerned will be considered first in the order indicated in the table below. The remaining applications will then be considered in the order shown on the original agenda unless indicated by the Chair.

ITEM 4 – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPLICATIONS

Page Nos	Community	Planning Ref	Speaker Against	Speaker For
62 – 73	WRR	P/2016/0141	√	

Pages 62 – 73 WRR P/2016/0141

Total Fitness UK, Stansty Road, Wrexham
SPEAKER: AGAINST – Mr Ian Carson (Objector)

Consultations

Community Council: The additional parking will inevitably mean more cars and more traffic at the busy road junction of Stansty Road, Rhosddu Road, New Road and Prices Lane. Improvements to this junction are required to deal with the increased traffic.

In addition, visibility to the right for vehicles exiting the site is restricted when viewing cars coming into Stansty Road from the Town Centre along Rhosddu Road.

The Applicants should enter into a Planning Agreement to contribute towards additional highway improvements necessitated by their additional development.

Local Member: Councillor Steve Wilson has made the following comments:

I am fully in favour of application P/2015/0812 and would prefer some further mitigation, if possible, to reflect the concerns of the residents in St. James Court re Planning Application (P/2016/0141). In respect of P/2016/0141

1. *I would like to suggest whether there could be some further mitigation to allay the concerns of the residents of St. James' Court. Members should remember that the gym's peak hours of operation are between 5-30 and 7-30 in the evening.*
2. *Finally, in response to the statement 'If anyone wants the destruction of this ecological habitat on their conscience', I am not aware of any great crested newts, natter jack toads, long eared bats , badger sets etc., inhabiting the site.*

Representations

An objector has circulated an email to all Planning Committee Members expressing concerns over the inaccuracy of the planning application documents. More specifically, the objector states that the applicant had incorrectly stated that there were no trees or hedges on the site.

The failure of the applicant to correctly answer this question does not invalidate the application. The Local Planning Authority and those residents affected by the proposals are fully aware of the presence of trees and these have been considered as part of our assessment of the application. The trees were planted as part of the landscaping scheme for Total Fitness and their loss is considered in the main report. They are not mature specimens and are not protected by either a Tree Preservation Order or planning condition and could be removed regardless of this application. Nevertheless, in recognising their potential value in providing a screen from neighbouring dwellings, conditions are imposed requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement to protect trees to be retained and additional landscaping in the same area to compensate for those that are to be removed.

1 additional objection expressing the following concerns:

- i) Traffic noise;
- ii) Light pollution;
- iii) Late night personnel movement;
- iv) Possible ground/soil excavation;
- v) Noise pollution from machinery necessary to maintain the pools.

Observations

I have covered points i), ii), and iv) in my main report. With regards to point iii), my comments in respect of amenity address this matter.

The proposals will not make it any more likely that neighbouring properties will be exposed to noise from existing plant and machinery within the site.

I have dealt with the matters raised by the Community Council in my main report.

The landscaping and boundary treatment conditions listed in my main report will address the matters raised by the Local Member.

Correction

Condition 6 – Insert shall not be used

Recommendation

Unchanged.

ALL OTHER ITEMS WILL BE TAKEN IN ORDER SHOWN ON THE ORIGINAL AGENDA

PAGES 13 – 15 WRA P/2015/0239

Clarification

The proposal satisfies the BRE standards regarding daylight.

Recommendation

Remains unchanged.

PAGES 16 – 19 COE P/2015/0674

Observations

I have reconsidered imposing Condition 8 which restricts the hours of use of the building. The intention here is to minimise the impact of any potential noise and disturbance upon the adjoining property. However, in hindsight it appears unduly restrictive given that the building will only be used for hobby purposes and the applicant would be unable to make any use of the building after 5pm. Restricting works to hand tools only will not only provide a more effective way of controlling potential noise throughout the day but will allow the applicant the flexibility to use the building in the evenings for hobby purposes. I am therefore replacing Condition 8 with a condition which restricts works to hand tools and this, in conjunction with other conditions, will ensure nearby amenity is protected.

Condition 8 will now read – Only hand tools shall be used within the building.

Reason 8 will now read – To ensure the building does not cause nuisance and disturbance to nearby residents.

I am also proposing additional conditions to protect the hedge to the southern boundary of the site.

Condition 9 – Notwithstanding the approved plans and documentation the proposed siting of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The building shall be erected strictly in accordance with the approved siting.

Reason 9 – To protect the existing hedge to the rear of the proposed building, to prevent ground disturbance and to reduce potential root damage in the interests of nearby residential amenity and the general visual amenities of the area.

Condition 10 – The existing hedge on the southern boundary and to the rear of the proposed building shall be permanently retained and not cut down, grubbed out or otherwise removed or lopped or topped so that the height falls below a height which has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to any works commencing on the development hereby approved. If any part of the hedge is removed without permission, dies or becomes diseased they shall be replaced by hedgerow / trees of such size and species and within a timescale all to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason 10 – In the interests of nearby residential amenity and the general visual amenities of the area

Consultations

Community Council: Rhosddu Community Council is the authority that now funds children's play facilities so the commuted sum should go to the Rhosddu Community Council to fund the new children's play facilities. I confirm that the Rhosddu Community Council will be prepared to enter into the S106 Agreement to receive the commuted sum, and to utilise such sum to provide additional play facilities.

There is a play facility by the Prices Lane Community Centre that could also accommodate extra play facilities for the planning site, I do not think that the Garden Road site should be the only site mentioned in the report. It should be open to future negotiation where the additional play facilities should be sited.

Community Council comments included in the addendum to the 7 March report:

*Whilst the Community Council agrees that residential development of this site would be an appropriate use of this under used area of land, unfortunately, the access and adjacent roads and road layout would make it impractical without major Highway improvements. The Council, therefore **OBJECT** to the Planning Application on Highway Grounds as follows:-*

- 1. The proposed access is too close to the New Road /Rhosddu Road and Stansty Road junction.*
 - There is insufficient visibility from the development site access of traffic coming from the Town Centre along Rhosddu Road into Stansty Road. The speed limit is 30 MPH and traffic frequently travels at this speed into Stansty Road.*
 - At peak times, Stansty Road by the site access is grid-locked; traffic on Stansty Road cannot exit onto Rhosddu Road / New Road because that road is busy with traffic, so the traffic on Stansty Road can back up to the railway underpass. Because the underpass is not wide enough for normal two way traffic, the backed up traffic holds back the traffic coming from Rhosddu Road / New Road, so the road in front of the site access is blocked in both directions.*
- 2. Local Members are extremely concerned that Stansty Road has reached saturation point. As noted above, the junction of Stansty Road with Rhosddu Road / New Road is frequently grid-locked, and the underpass of the railway bridge is not two way, and causes a backup of traffic.*

There are 2 local Primary Schools close by (Ysgol Plas Coch, and Rhosddu C P School) The Glyndwr University, and the Wrexham Football Ground which hosts Wrexham F C, the Crusaders Rugby Club, and International Football and Rugby matches both have main accesses to their Car Parks and facilities from Crispin Lane off Stansty Road. Stansty Road also provides direct access from the East side of Wrexham to the Plas Coch Retail Park which has Sainsbury's, Currys / PC World, Sports Direct, Boots, Aldi, Homebase, Argos, and other smaller establishments.

No highway improvements have been carried out to Stansty Road despite the increased traffic flows generated by the Plas Coch Retail Park.

- 3. The underpass under Stansty railway bridge has already been identified by the Highway Department as being sub-standard, and that view was endorsed by the*

Welsh Assembly who gave a grant to the Highways Department. However, no improvements were made to the underpass which still remains sub-standard. The erection of houses on this site would only exacerbate the situation.

4. A recent Housing Development on the former Remploy site nearby has also added to the traffic problems, with no improvements to the highway.

5. Whilst the Application Site has been laid out as a Car park for visitors to Total Fitness, it has always remained virtually empty as a surplus of parking spaces was provided. It cannot, therefore, be said that the loss of a number of car parking spaces as a result of the proposed development will ease the traffic flow. On the contrary, the facilities at Total Fitness are not to be decreased, so the number of visitors to Total Fitness will continue as before, and the traffic generated by the proposed development will be additional.

6. If the proposed developers were to provide a footbridge over the railway (in conjunction with the Developers of the Remploy site) the walkway in the underpass could be removed which would enable the carriageway to be widened to make the traffic in that direction more free flowing.

Members also made the following comments about omissions in the Application which would normally result in the refusal of Planning Permission:-

1. It was noted that no provision is made on the plans for play facilities / open space.

2. It was also noted that the Applicants Design and Access Statement failed to address the issue of additional traffic movements arising from the proposed development, both during construction, and as homes.

3. Members would also draw attention to the requirement for Affordable Housing in the Development, and that the Development is likely to produce a requirement for additional School places.

Local Member: Councillor Steve Wilson has made the following comments:

I am fully in in favour of application P/2015/0812 and would prefer some further mitigation, if possible, to reflect the concerns of the residents in St. James Court re Planning Application (P/2016/0141). In respect of P/2015/0812:

1. Of all the residents that I have spoken to, or have contacted me, I have only had 2 (TWO) residents who have any issue with these proposals-one is worried about possible lack of parking facilities and the possible effect on Walnut Street; and the other was concerned with how close the development would come to their property.
2. As far as I can tell Total Fitness has not raised any issues or objections.
3. Apart from Mr Carson I have not received (and I think this applies to Committee Members as well)any representations from other users of Total Fitness re any concerns re this Application. Considering the amount of time this Application has been in the system and the supposed 'Domesday scenario', I find this unusual given the supposed strength of feeling.

4. *I would now like to touch on the issue of access onto or off the site. Yes, it is not good but I am not aware of any accidents having occurred at this location. Also the Highways Engineer has suggested some adjustments to help the situation(Page 34-item 9).*

In response to the Committees concerns regarding traffic speeds entering the site the applicants have indicated that they are prepared to introduce traffic calming measures- Page 22 of the Report

The addition of 24 houses is not likely to impact on this and as the Report says any impact is likely to be less than the previously approved office application (P/2014/0077).

Most sensible drivers drive with regards to the location and conditions-unfortunately you cannot 'legislate' for less careful/considerate drivers. There is also reference to this development by the main objector that the Application, if approved, would 'bring traffic chaos to the town. The current site has spaces for 269 vehicles whereas the Applications total 243. Most traffic to the gym appears between 5-30 and 7-30 in the evening-this presumably will not change. I am not quite sure how traffic chaos has been avoided up until now.

5. *The present Total Fitness has only been in operation for 12 months. Most residents remember the period when Total Fitness ceased operations and the issues that arose whilst the building was not being used.*
6. *The Application if approved would provide a small good quality housing development close to the town centre and facilities most of which can be accessed on foot-it might also provide some additional members for the gym-who should not need to use their cars to get there.*

Observations

I will comment the above issues not specifically addressed in my main report below:

Public Open Space

Whilst maintained by Community Council the Rhosddu Road/Garden Road play area is owned by Wrexham County Borough Council. The Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager will therefore need to liaise with the Community Council when spending the commuted sum funding.

The recommendation to secure funding for the Rhosddu Road/Garden Road play area is informed by advice received from the Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager.

Impact upon Stansty Road Underpass

As noted in my main report, the development will result in a smaller increase in traffic than the previously approved office development. No conditions to require improvements or alterations to the underpass were imposed on the permission for that development. Highways have advised that any improvements to the underpass are necessary in order to allow the development to take place. As such it would not be possible to sustain a refusal

on the grounds that no improvements are proposed nor would it be possible to justify imposing a condition to require a scheme of improvements to be implemented.

Affordable Housing

Policy H7 (affordable housing) is only applicable to developments of 25 or more dwellings.

Recommendation

To substitute 'Head of Community Wellbeing and Development' for 'Head of Environment and Planning' in Recommendations A and C