

**MEMBER ENGAGEMENT
FORUM PRE-PLANNING
APPLICATION**

10.30 A.M.

16TH APRIL 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors June Ashworth, Carla Brayshaw, Dave Brookes, Helen Helme
Ward Councillor Nicholas Wilkinson

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Cassidy	Planning Manager
Jennifer Rehman	Major Applications Planning Officer
Emma Coffey	Senior Conservation Officer
Tessa Mott	Democratic Support Officer

Also in attendance:-

Hugh Roberts	Lancaster Civic Society
Martin Crews	City Block
Trevor Bargh	City Block
Andrew Bargh	City Block
Richard Barton	How Planning
Bernadette Bone	BB Heritage Studio
Sean Smith	SSHARC Architects

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nick Wilkinson declared that he is a student landlord and owns properties nearby the application site.

Councillor Dave Brookes declared that over a decade ago he attended a City Block meeting and had therefore met some of the external attendees previously.

5 APPLICANT PRESENTATION

The developers gave a presentation regarding the pre-application submission '17/01532/PRE3 Apothecary Bar and Lounge 87 - 89 Penny Street, Lancaster'.

Initially the presentation informed the forum about the history of City Block and outlined existing national City Block developments. The presentation also outlined the varying nationalities of the student intake and that City Block had been awarded for satisfaction levels amongst international students.

There was a detailed analysis of the development proposal which included reference to how the application had developed over time by engaging with Planning Officers and accommodating their pre-application advice. There was a detailed explanation outlining the progress made in 'option A' and 'option B' and also of the differences between the two options.

It was explained that a heritage consultant was appointed to assist with the development of the plans. The heritage consultant emphasised that work had been done to consider

the key views and massing of the development. It was also explained that the development had incorporated design cues from the massing of the nearby church to avoid any negative impact of the proposed new development.

Particular reference was made to option B in that it respected high level stone façades with larger windows and living spaces. Option B also contained within it a 3500ft² retail space with a corner entrance which was considered attractive to potential commercial tenants.

6 OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSAL WITH MEMBERS

Members of the meeting asked several questions of the developers present. The discussion included topics such as:

- Key views (from and towards) the development;
- Amount of floors/bedrooms in the proposed building;
- Timescales, anticipated start and completion dates;
- Potential future uses of the building;
- Refuge facilities and access;
- Impact of the remaining property (in different ownership) adjacent to the proposed development; and,
- Outlook of the flats.

The developers explained that statistical evidence had shown that in relation to growth, there was currently a requirement for more student accommodation in Lancaster. It was also outlined that the applicants were keen to utilise 'cluster flats' (with an optimum cluster size of 10-12) in this development, in order to facilitate the social aspect of living in the building and also because 'studio flats' now have occupancy issues.

The Planning Manager summarised the discussion and clarified that the principle of redevelopment of the site was accepted whilst appropriate discussions and consideration needed to take place in relation to: the loss of the public house/existing building; scale and massing of replacement structure; and the impact of the development upon the conservation area and the town/streetscape.

Members were in agreement and showed enthusiasm for the potential development, which had the potential to provide vibrancy along Penny Street and Marton Street. Members expressed that there was preference for design option B (outlined in the agenda document). It was agreed that the aesthetics of the building were attractive and an improvement on the building in its current form. It was noted however that the scale of the proposed development was at capacity and shouldn't be exceeded. It was also suggested that the development would work well in the area commercially and works sensitively with adjacent and nearby businesses/properties.

(The meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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