

**Name of meeting: STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> August**

**Title of report: Pre-application for conversion of an existing mixed use building to 140 bedroom student accommodation with 3 storey rooftop extension and side extension (Co-operative Building, New Street, Huddersfield)**

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</a>?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Date signed off by Service Director - Economy, Regeneration &amp; Culture &amp; name</b>	<b>2 August 2017 Paul Kemp</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Assistant Director for Financial Management, IT, Risk and Performance?</b>	<b>No financial implications</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Assistant Director - Legal Governance and Monitoring?</b>	<b>No legal implications</b>
<b>Cabinet member portfolio</b>	<b>Economy, Skills, Transportation and Planning (Councillor McBride)</b>

**Electoral wards affected: Newsome**

**Ward councillors consulted: Yes**

**Public or private: Public**

## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This pre-application is brought to Strategic Committee given the scale of the development and the historical and cultural significance of the building/site.
- 1.2 The Council's Officer-Ward Members Communication Protocol provides for the use of Position Statements at Planning Committees. They set out the details of the pre-application, the consultation responses and representations received to date and the main issues identified at pre-application stage with the development proposed.

- 1.3 Members of Committee will be able to comment on the main issues to help inform Officers and applicants. This is not a formal determination, it does not predetermine the outcome of any subsequent planning application, nor does it create any issues of challenge to a subsequent decision on the application by the Committee.

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

- 2.1 The site comprises the former Co-operative building located within Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area. The site is bounded to the west by New Street and Alfred Street to the east and sits on the edge of the ring road located abutting the site to the south.
- 2.2 The building is four stories in height with third floor windows set back from the main façade with a continuous balcony and canopy. The proposal was built as an extension in 1936 to the original Co-operative building which was built in 1893. The building has been vacant for some time despite efforts to find a suitable use and occupier. The site remains under the ownership of the Council.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal involves the conversion of the existing building and the erection of a three storey extension and full height side extension in order to accommodate 140 bedroom student accommodation.

## **4. Consultees and their opinions**

Police Architectural Liaison Officer – Subsequent application will need to consider crime prevention

Education – no contribution required.

Conservation and Design – *The building is within the Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area and has the benefit of a current Certificate of Immunity from Listing which I believe runs out in November of this year; I also understand that the Council are to apply again. It is likely that should a request be made another Certificate will be issued unless new information comes to light over the social and historic interest the building has; in my opinion this is doubtful.*

*Built as an extension for the Co-Operative movement in 1936 to the existing Co-Op that was built in 1893. The modernist approach to the architecture of the extension is in stark contrast to that of the late Victorian Baronial approach to the original. The building is four stories in height with the third floor windows set back from the main façade with a continuous balcony and canopy. The contrast to the horizontality of the building is provided by the canted corner block which is extremely prominent and has a strong vertical emphasis. There are glazed stairwells at either end of the building which helps to soften the relationship between this extension and the original store. The building was latterly a nightclub but has been vacant for a number of years which has led to poor maintenance and vandalism; the building is owned by the Council as part of the Queensgate Revival scheme. The building is constructed with a concrete frame which is allegedly suffering from deterioration thus making the building unviable.*

*The scheme to which the pre-app relates looks towards converting the building to student accommodation and increasing the height of the building by an additional three floors including increasing the height of the corner block with glazing. To the junction of the building with the former co-op on New Street is a glazed 'box' that extends beyond the façade of the building. All this additional work is an intrusion and causes harm to the character of the building and the conservation area. I do not believe this to be substantial harm as defined by the NPPF but it is certainly less than substantial. The pre-app is not supported by any evidence that this amount of extra floor-space is a requirement to make the building viable and this would need to be part of any application as well as a structural report to understand the amount of work necessary to make the building fit for purpose.. Equally I would wish to see evidence by the way of photomontages and sections that the extensions do not dominate the area particularly views of the clock tower and dome on the former co-op; a view up from Chapel Hill may be appropriate to prove that this domination is reduced.*

*I am not against the extension of the building, indeed this may be the best way of doing it, but I remain to be convinced that the additional increase in height by three stories is necessary without a cost analysis. I would suggest that a development of this size will need to be sent to Historic England.*

Biodiversity Officer – No objection subject to potential enhancement.

Highways – No objection. Advice provided covered below.

Environmental Health –

*Noise*

A noise report should accompany any planning application.

*Air Quality*

Air quality assessment required.

Landscape

No objection. Advice provided detailed below.

Drainage

No objection.

## **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

*Principle and Impact on Heritage Assets*

- 6.1 The former Co-operative is an iconic building positioned on the edge of Huddersfield town centre within the confines of the ring road. The building lies in Huddersfield Town Centre Conservation Area. Part of the building appears to have deteriorated to an extent. The building is currently owned by the Council.

6.2 Officers raise no objections to the principle of the use proposed as it is a compatible town centre use. However, it is acknowledged that the proposed extensions would significantly alter the appearance of the existing building, as well as impacting on the Conservation Area and potentially affecting the original Co-operative building adjacent.

6.3 The NPPF states in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

6.4 Based on the information submitted with this pre-application enquiry, it is considered that the works proposed are likely to represent less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. In this regard the NPPF states:

*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

6.5 It is important therefore, that any subsequent planning application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and viability information to demonstrate that the extent of the alterations and extensions are justifiable on the basis that the works would secure the optimum viable use of the building. Information should also be submitted showing the visual impact of the building from sensitive receptors, including Chapel Hill.

#### *Highways*

6.6 There are no objections to the principle of development which relies on existing town centre parking. The site is in an accessible location close to public transport and within walking distance of the University.

6.7 Any subsequent planning application should demonstrate details of storage and access for collection of wastes from the premises. The current arrangement to reach the service area to the rear of the buildings is via third party land and shared access and it is important to consider how the proposal would affect collection/turning for refuse collection vehicles. This should be done via the means of a Transport Statement, demonstrating how the conflict with Wilkos loading arrangements are to be avoided.

6.8 A travel plan would be required. Acceptable and safe cycle storage facilities details would also be required with any subsequent planning application.

6.9 Details of loading/unloading for students should be included in any application.

### *Other Issues*

- 6.10 In respect of landscaping/public realm, the applicant is asked to consider improving street furniture and providing bins along New Street and consider whether green roof would be appropriate.
- 6.11 Ecological enhancements are recommended in the form of swift nest features.
- 6.12 A noise report and air quality assessment would be required with any subsequent planning application.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The proposals have the potential to bring back into use an iconic town centre building and the general principle of development is supported. It is important that the scheme is carefully designed to respect the heritage assets and supported by information to justify the scale of the development.
- 7.2 Other matters for consideration in any subsequent planning application are set out in this report.

## **8. Contact officer**

Mathias Franklin –Development Management Group Leader (01484 221000) [mathias.franklin@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:mathias.franklin@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

## **10. Service Director responsible**

Paul Kemp