

Minutes

HILLINGDON PLANNING COMMITTEE

16 July 2024



Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Henry Higgins (Chair), Adam Bennett (Vice-Chair), Roy Chamdal, Darren Davies, Elizabeth Garelick, Raju Sansarpuri and Jagjit Singh</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Roz Johnson (Head of Development Management & Building Control), Katie Crosbie (Area Planning Service Manager – North), Chris Brady (Planning Team Leader), Alan Tilly (Transport & Aviation Team Manager), Pedro Rizo (Deputy Team Leader) Jimmy Walsh (Legal Advisor), Natalie Fairclough (Legal Advisor) and Anisha Teji (Democratic Services)</p>
12.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keith Burrows with Councillor Darren Davies substituting and Councillor Gursharan Mand with Councillor Raju Sansarpuri substituting.</p>
13.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
14.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 11 June 2024 be approved.</p>
15.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
16.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THE ITEMS MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.</p>
17.	<p>CIVIC CENTRE, UXBRIDGE - 14805/APP/2024/956 (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Change of use of Middlesex Suite and Registrar's Office (Part Level 1 and Level 2) within the Civic Centre Complex from Class E (g) (i) / Sui Generis to Class F1 to accommodate a new public library and museum, involving minor internal and external alterations and associated works.</p>

Officers introduced the application, highlighted the information in the addendum, provided a verbal update on an additional condition and signatories to the petition, and took Members through the plans. A recommendation for approval was made.

A nominated speaker on behalf of the petitioners addressed the Committee and noted that there had been two petitions submitted in objection to the application. The speaker submitted that there was insufficient data to justify the proposed library and community hub as critical aspects had not been considered. The nominated speaker submitted that the revised plan had an area similar to the library in 1974 to 1987, which now did not meet the increased population. Furthermore, he submitted that there were significant constraints and reductions which conflicted with the Council's objectives for facility relocation and delivering services equal to or better than the existing site. The speaker outlined that the application did not provide a list of the resource requirements and how they compared to the existing site. Concerns were raised by the speaker about reduced book shelving space to support a children's library and reduced space to support the new archive search room. It was submitted that the application lacked compliance with the existing building regulations and the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. It was submitted that the proposal does not address the accessibility issues raised by groups of people, including those with disabilities, visual impairments and Parkinsons with the listing of the building used to justify not making regulation compliant modifications. It was submitted by the speaker that a balance should be made for providing accessibility compliance and heritage values, which the speaker submitted had not been done. It was submitted that the proposed development did not meet the Council's aims for facility relocation, and improving the health, wellbeing and safety for those less mobile.

The nominated speaker emphasised that the library was a community hub seen by many as a village hall and was the only public resource in Uxbridge. It was submitted that the report lacked consideration of the proposed development and its impact on community events and community classes held in the existing library. It was also submitted that the plans should have been presented to a fire officer for assessment detailing how the building would be used with the expected number of service users, evacuation routes and assembly points. The speaker reiterated that he believed there were fundamental details in the plans and report that had not been quantified, omitted or even considered. The Committee was urged by the nominated speaker to either defer the decision to rectify the lack of data and the omissions in the report or refuse the application. Lastly, the nominated speaker reiterated to Members the importance of the library as a key facility and a community hub for many residents.

The architect for the application addressed the Committee and the issue of space allocation. It was explained that the proposal also included the area currently occupied by the Register Office, which added extra space and additional storage. There was an intention to utilise the existing shelving and furniture in the proposed library. The children's library space and archives search room space had been reviewed with library and museum staff and was considered sufficient. In terms of accessibility, it was submitted that the Council's access officer had been consulted, and there were multiple access routes into the library, including a lift that would be refurbished as part of this proposal. In terms of fire safety, it was noted that there was a fire review of the Civic Centre overall, and a consultation process was ongoing as part of those works.

Councillor Tony Burles addressed the Committee and supported the points raised by the petitioner. It was submitted that the application for relocating the library would downgrade the service and compromise safety and accessibility for residents,

especially those who were disabled such as wheelchair users. Concerns were raised about the lack of consultation and the new library lift not meeting width standards for all wheelchair users. The rationale for closing the High Street Library due to safety issues during evacuation was also questioned. It was submitted that the plan lacked the capacity to cope with the current use of the library, as the counts of the people using the PCs, study spaces and reading chairs exceeded the proposed capacity of 60 people with a 30-minute turnover. It was also noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau had moved from the Civic Centre. It was submitted that the application let down residents and needed to be deferred or refused.

In response to a Member question to Councillor Tony Burles regarding the stated numbers of service users and equipment use, it was confirmed that a count had been conducted by petitioners..

Prior to Member discussions, officers clarified several points for the Committee relating to accessibility, capacity, safety and impact on the town centre. It was noted that the development in question was a listed building and its constraints and opportunities had been assessed.

Officers explained that step-free access was provided at the first and second floors, the existing ramps within the building were considered an acceptable means of access for wheelchair users. Although the lift was marginally short of compliance with regulations, by 20 centimetres in depth, the Council's access officer has confirmed that a wheelchair could be accommodated with other step-free routes available for larger wheelchair users. Disabled parking had been allocated for blue badge holders at the first and second floors. In terms of capacity, it was confirmed that the floor space had increased by over 800 square meters in the revised proposal. It was difficult to establish the number of people visiting the site within a given period. A condition requiring a fire safety statement has been added. Concerns about anti-social behaviour had been considered and a condition that includes details and guidelines for deterring such behaviour and maintaining a safe environment (including CCTV and lighting) has been recommended. The key aspiration and strategic aim for the proposal was to bring a consolidated service that functions within the whole civic complex.

The Chair reminded the Committee to only consider planning matters.

In response to a Member question, officers clarified that although it was difficult to establish capacity and user numbers, the floor space in the development had been maximised and was bigger than any other library in the Borough, and assessed as acceptable. Member concerns and comments about capacity were noted.

Members requested that refuge points for wheelchair users be included in the fire safety statement.

Members were shown on the proposed drawings the different routes for step-free access to enter and exit the building and it was clarified that there were ramps that would provide entrance straight into the library. It was also highlighted that the lift was going to be refurbished and doors replaced where required with accessible doors.

Members discussed the covered walkway project and clarity was sought on the design. Officers explained that the window openings would be enclosed with new screening and glazing and that the access door to the Middlesex suite would also be replaced.

The Committee acknowledged that despite the concerns raised, this was a good

	<p>application as the Council was investing in libraries across the Borough, moving into central community hub locations.</p> <p>The officers' recommendation, was moved, seconded, and when put to a vote, there were four votes in favour and three against.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the application be approved as per officer recommendation</p>
19.	<p>CIVIC CENTRE, UXBRIDGE - 14805/APP/2024/1410 (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Alterations to the existing covered walkway between Corporate Entrance and the Middlesex Suite to form an enclosed entrance area and link from the Corporate Entrance to the Middlesex Suite, involving the installation of new windows and glazed screens together with the installation of new signage (Application for Listed Building Consent)</p> <p>Officers introduced the application and made a recommendation for approval.</p> <p>The Committee considered agenda items 7 and 8 together and raised no queries in relation to the application for listed building consent.</p> <p>The officers' recommendation, was moved, seconded, and when put to a vote, there were four votes in favour and three abstentions.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the application be approved as per officer recommendation.</p>
20.	<p>GARAGE SITE, HILTON CLOSE - 77811/APP/2024/442 (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Erection of two 3-bedroom detached dwellings with associated parking and amenity space following demolition of existing garages.</p> <p>Officers introduced the application, provided verbal updates on an amendment to a landscaping condition and proposed delegated authority to consider Scottish Southern Electric comments should they be received within the consultation period. Officers made a recommendation for approval for the s106 agreement.</p> <p>The committee discussed a potential condition for the landscaping maintenance of the adjacent substation and it was explained that the substation was outside of the site and not within the scope of the application. In terms of flood risk and material used for the development, it was noted that the site was not in a flood zone and that the landscape condition would require an improvement of the current hard standing. It was added that the increase in floor levels and the increase in soft landscaping would mitigate any potential flood risk. Members were advised that the Environment Agency was not a statutory consultee for this application, as the site was not within a flood zone 2 or 3</p> <p>The officer's recommendation, was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the application be approved as per officer's recommendation.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.10 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895 277655 ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.