

New Works Committee

Report to CCT Council 16th April 2014

The main applications we have commented on since the last meeting are:

1. The proposed conversion of Backford Hall, coach house, stables and barn and lodge into 18 dwellings together with an additional 45 dwellings. (Ref. 14/00595/FUL). This proposal involved the demolition of modern buildings in the grounds and new dwellings in the grounds of the hall all of which is covered by green belt policy where there is a need for very special circumstances for most new development.

Although we accepted that some new dwellings were acceptable on land previously occupied by demolished buildings, we objected to the Backford Hall development because of the building of some new dwellings on previously undeveloped land in the green belt, occupied by mature trees, loss of other trees, unimaginative layout and the need for additional traffic safety measures on the main road.

2. Proposed new boathouse and community rowing and fitness facility with boat storage for the University of Chester at Sandy Lane. (Ref 14/00513/FUL)

Although we stated that we are not opposed in principle to a new boathouse in this location, we objected on the grounds of the affect on the character of the conservation area and that the design does not respect the scale of the boathouses and summerhouses in adjacent gardens. The proposal is also considered to be an over development of the site.

3. We are also in the process of considering and commenting on an outline application for 120 new dwellings at Saighton camp. (Ref. 14/01219/OUT) This proposal involves building houses on land previously designated in the master plan for a school and employment development. Possible grounds of objection are of loss of land for education and community uses without acceptable replacement of equal value and accessibility for schoolchildren.

During our consideration and monitoring of planning applications in the City Centre we are becoming increasingly concerned about the loss of retail units to other uses, further diluting the shopping offer and status of Chester as a shopping designation.

A separate report has been made to council on the problems of an unplanned approach to the provision of accommodation for students.

Andrew Pannell