

Planning Committee

21 July 2010

Reference:
DLS/10/00582

Area Team:
South Team

Case Officer:
Mr K Spilsbury

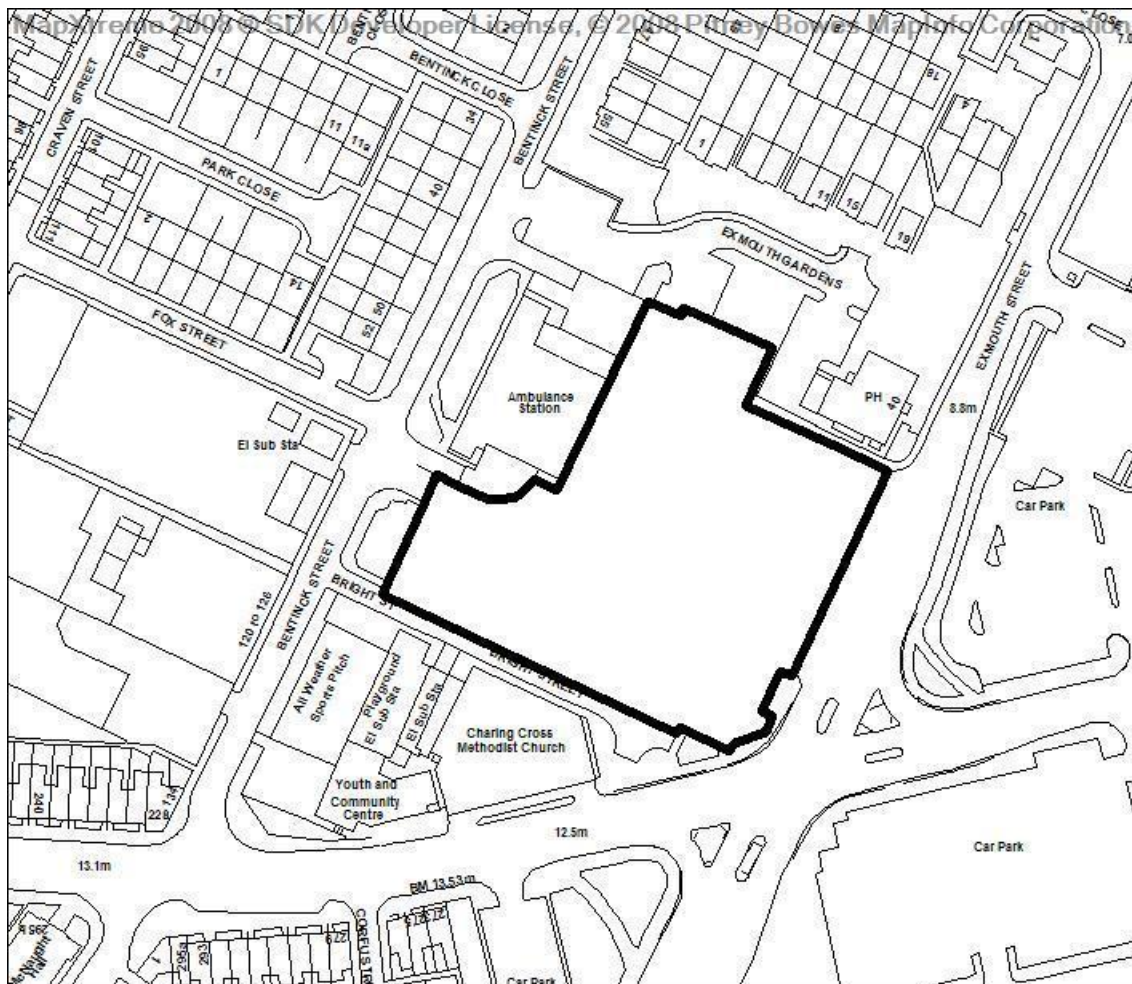
Ward:
**Birkenhead and
Tranmere**

Location: Merseyside Fire Brigade, EXMOUTH STREET, BIRKENHEAD, CH41 4AX

Proposal: Demolition of existing fire station and construction of new community fire station - Reserved matters application of (OUT/2007/5835) for layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping.

Applicant: Mansell Construction Services Ltd
Agent : Bluesky Architects

Site Plan:



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100019803. Published 2010.

Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Commercial Area

Planning History:

OUT/2007/5835 Demolition of existing fire station and construction of new community fire station -
Approved 17/10/07

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**REPRESENTATIONS**

A site notice was posted outside the site and 88 individual letters of notification were sent out. At the time of writing this report no letters of objection have been received.

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Regeneration (Pollution Control) - No Objection

Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management Division) – No Objection subject to conditions.

Director's Comments:**REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This development is a major application and is therefore required to come before the Planning Committee.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing fire station and the construction of a new community fire station. This application constitutes the reserved matters (details) for layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping following the approval of outline planning permission (OUT/07/05835) on 17 October, 2007.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The principle of the development and the grant of planning permission has been established through the outline planning approval as detailed above. This application seeks the consent of the reserved matters (details) for layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping. The means of access to the site has already been approved subject to the 2007 outline consent.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site area is approximately 7140m² and is bounded by Exmouth Street to the East, Bright Street to the South, the Ambulance Station and Bentick Street to the West and Exmouth Gardens to the North. The Key Town centre of Birkenhead lies on the opposite side of Exmouth Street to the east of the site. The existing building is primarily brick construction and is for the most part single storey with some first floor elements.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy SH6 (Development Within Primarily Commercial Centres) allows for A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), B1 (Business Uses) and D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) uses, provided that they do not harm the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, they meet highway and access requirements and are not detrimental to neighbouring uses or lead to any loss of amenity.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The design and layout of the proposed development has resulted from a number of pre-application meetings between the Local Planning Authority and the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. The development is driven by the Fire & Rescue Services' need to engage with the community and to provide an enhanced modern development.

The current station is unsuitable for use as a community fire station. Accessibility is poor and the appliance bays are inefficient. There is not enough space for community related activities, including training. The enhanced fire station will allow for additional facilities to support the new fire station, including a training tower, fuel tank and generator and a new flag pole.

The new facilities will be used to house two fire fighting appliances and their crews and one reserve fire fighting appliance. The community fire station will also be used as a base for promoting fire safety.

The new station would be located to the north of the existing site with the frontage facing out onto Exmouth Street, resulting in an active frontage within the street scene. The proposed building is of modern design. It is considered that the proposed replacement fire station will create a focal point that will add interest within the street scene by using strong high quality building materials and an effective colour pallet. The introduction of glass to the front of the new building will enable the community to see the inside of the station and create a feeling of openness, warmth and confidence. The design of the building has angled the main community elements of the building towards the main intersection of roads - the junction of Claughton Road and Exmouth Street, which will create a feeling of strong civic presence. In all aspects of design, the building will be sympathetic and respectful to its neighbours.

The building is considered to be in keeping with its immediate surroundings. The scale and massing of building ties in with the character of the area and will complement the existing street scape which includes the Charing Cross Methodist Church, Seamus O'Donnell Public House and The Lauries Centre on the opposite side of the road.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

It is considered that residential properties will not be affected by the proposed development as the closest residential properties are a sufficient distance away from the development to ensure that no harm would result from the site. The use of the site as a fire station is already established with the present and existing fire station on the site. The nearest residential properties are approximately 30 metres north of the site (Exmouth Gardens) and approximately 70 metres west of the site on Bentinck Street.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

Access to the new Fire Station has previously been approved with the 2007 outline planning permission. However, to remind Members of the proposed access arrangements, the site is currently directly accessed and egressed from Exmouth Street for both emergency vehicles and other traffic (through a separate entrance). It is proposed to retain the existing access arrangements although the current apron area onto Exmouth Street for appliances will be reduced significantly for three bays. Significant traffic movements for operational staff based on the site will not typically take place during peak travel hours and will be consistent with current traffic movements. As such the site will not detrimentally impact on the operation of the highway network. The current level of appliance movements from the site will not change. The scheme will provide 23 parking spaces (including 2 accessible spaces) and 9 visitor spaces (including 3 accessible), a level considered acceptable for this size of development and is in line with other similar developments in the North West. Cycle parking is to be provided adjacent to the main building in a secure cycle store. The site is well served by public transport and is within short walking distance of the Key Town Centre of Birkenhead. The access arrangements are therefore considered to be acceptable and there are no objections to the proposals on highway safety grounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Aero-thermal heat pump technology will provide the fire station with a highly efficient heating system using thermal energy extracted from the surrounding air. It has been calculated that this will provide 43% renewable energy contribution from renewable sources which is far in excess of the 10% aspiration of the North West Fire and Rescue Service. This will contribute greatly to the requirement for 20% improvement on Building Regulations (2006)-part L. The Fire and rescue services consultants determined that the pay back for this solution will be 20 years, which is well within the expected lifespan of the building. Other energy efficiency design features include a building energy management system to optimise the buildings heating, daylight and time control mechanisms to control external lighting, time occupancy based controls for ventilation systems and maximisation of u-values for the walls, floor and roof.

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

The proposed details, by virtue of their layout and design will have no detrimental impact on the surrounding area, amenity, highway safety, access or parking and is therefore considered to comply with UDP policy SH6. It is for these reasons it is recommended the application be approved.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Reserved Matters Approval has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The local planning authority considers that the reserved matters detailed within this application would have no detrimental impact on the surrounding area, residential amenity, highway safety, access or parking and is therefore considered to comply with Policy SH6 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

Recommended Decision: Approve**Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than whichever is the later of the following dates:-
 - A) The expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - OR
 - B) The expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters, or in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing, roofing and window materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy SH6 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

3. Notwithstanding the approved plans, details of a full scheme of works to provide vehicular access from the highway into the development site, including all associated surfacing, kerbing, tactile paving, road markings and surface water drainage requirements shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. The approved scheme of works shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Further Notes for Committee:

Last Comments By: 07/07/2010 10:21:18

Expiry Date: 06/08/2010