

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE - 8<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2013**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSIONING**  
(Author: Chris Raine, Senior Planner)

**THETFORD: REDEVELOPMENT OF SITE WITH MIXED USE SCHEME  
CONSISTING OF CINEMA, HOTEL AND 5 UNITS CONSISTING OF  
RETAIL/RESTAURANT/CAFÉ USES AT THE FORMER ANCHOR HOTEL,  
BRIDGE STREET, THETFORD**

**Applicant: Breckland District Council**

**Reference: 3PL/2012/0790/F**

### **DEFERRED ITEM REPORT**

At the Planning Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 Members agreed to defer the application in order to allow the applicant to give further consideration to the design of the scheme.

In response to this request, an amended scheme has been submitted which makes the following revisions:

#### **Riverside (northern) elevation**

- Revisions to the internal layout and corner retail unit facing Butten Island has allowed for the eastern end of the northern elevation to be presented as a gable end set back from the main (northern) elevation.
- Within the aforementioned gable end the arrangement of openings has been amended so as to feature a single vertical arrangement of windows and the materials changed from dark grey metal panel cladding and brick to horizontal timber boarding.
- The previously suggested buff brick has been replaced with a grey brick.
- The amount of brickwork proposed has been increased so as to include the ground floor units.

#### **Other revisions**

- The previously suggested buff bricks to the east, west and parts of the southern elevation have been replaced with a grey brick
- A combination of grey brick and horizontal black weatherboarding to the eastern elevation as opposed to the previously suggested brick and dark grey metal panel cladding

These revisions have been designed to have the effect of reducing the impact of the building on its immediate surroundings and introducing a design and palette more appropriate and consistent to those prevalent within this part of Thetford.

#### **Consultation responses**

A re-consultation exercise has been undertaken, with all previously contacted parties notified. In response, the following comments have been received:

- The Environmental Health Officer and Contaminated Land Officer have reiterated their previous comments.

- Thetford Town Council has confirmed that they have no objection in principle subject to comments that the tin shiny roof they would like changed to a matt finish; they do not like the projected parapet roof in Bridge Street. It is requested that the planning committee agree the schedule of materials for the project and this should not be an officer decision. The path to be maintained by the Dads Army statue and there should not be a wall in front of the statue. There are concerns with the reduction of parking spaces and the impact this will have on the town centre; it is requested that the town centre master plan reviews the issue of car parking spaces for the town centre. The facade sight line in Bridge Street needs more detailed architectural attention to reduce its impact on the street scene.

- Objection from Green King Plc Freeholder of The Bell Hotel, King Street. Whilst the principle of re-development is accepted, it is considered that the revised design fails to respect the character of Thetford, which together with its scale, adversely impacts upon the Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings.

At the time of writing, and despite the expiration of the re-consultation period, some consultation responses have not been received, including those of English Heritage. These, along with any others received, will be reported verbally to the Planning Committee.

### **Assessment**

With regard to those matters raised by Thetford Town Council, the points raised regarding the securing of appropriate external materials is considered to be an item which can be addressed through a suitably worded planning condition, with the relevant officer's expertise capable of ensuring an appropriate palette of materials is agreed. The issue concerning the integration of the Dads Army statue and footpath into the re-development can be adequately addressed via the suitably worded planning condition relating to the agreement of all associated hard landscaping. With regard to the concern relating to parking levels, it has been confirmed in the past by the Highway Authority that the parking levels proposed are acceptable given the nature of the scheme and its town centre location and, as such, no further revisions or information are considered necessary. Finally, the concerns relating to Bridge Street are acknowledged, however, it is not considered that a further re-design to this elevation is required.

In assessing the revised scheme, it is considered that the revisions have assisted in breaking up the bulk of the building and adding greater vertical emphasis to the scheme, especially when viewing the northern elevation, and the revised palette is more consistent and harmonious with those in the immediate vicinity. When considering the revised scheme as a whole it is evident that it makes an improved contribution to the town centre than the previously considered scheme.

### **Conclusion**

It is considered that the revised scheme has improved the scheme's integration into its surroundings and makes an improved contribution to the town centre than the scheme previously considered and on this basis the application is recommended for approval.