

APPROVED

DPC meeting 1/13

3/01/13

THE DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of 2013 of the Development and Planning Commission held at the Charles Hunt Room, John Mackintosh Hall, on 3rd January 2013 at 09.30 am.

Present: Mr P Origo (Chairman)
(Town Planner)

The Hon Dr J Garcia (DCM)
(Deputy Chief Minister)

The Hon Dr J Cortes (MEH)
(Minister for Environment & Health)

Mr G Matto (GM)
(Senior Architect)

Mr C Viagas (CV)
(Heritage & Cultural Agency)

Mrs J Howitt (JH)
(Environmental Safety Group)

Mrs C Montado (CM)
(Gibraltar Heritage Trust)

Mr J Collado (JC)
(Land Property Services Ltd)

In Attendance: Miss K Lima
(Minute Secretary (Ag))

Apologies: Dr K Bensusan (KB)
(Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society)

Mr M Gil (MG)
(Chief Technical Officer)

Mr J Mason (JM)
(Rep Commander British Forces, Gibraltar)

Mr P Naughton-Rumbo (DTP)
(Deputy Town Planner)

Mr E Francis
(Minute Secretary)

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1/13 – BA11849 – Container Berth, North Mole – proposed Tank Farm

The Chairman reminded the Commission that a decision on this matter had been deferred at the previous DPC meeting to allow further consideration and discussion on representations received following the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A summary of the Environmental Statement and comments/representations received in response to the application was circulated amongst members prior to the meeting and referred to by the Chairman.

The Chairman informed the Commission that no public representations have been received and that the only representations received have been from consulted bodies.

The Chairman also expressed apologies from MG, KB and JM who were not present at the meeting. He said that all three members had expressed their approval of the Environmental Statement and Planning application and the conditions in the paper circulated with the Agenda.

The Chairman referred to the subjects studied by the EIA and confirmed that all have been discussed and commented upon by the consultees and the relevant information and reactions had been thereafter presented by the applicant. He said that he recommended that the list of representations be included as conditions in the permit.

The Chairman also confirmed that the Port Authority have commented and had presented their support to this new practice of storing lubricant oil than the current one. He said that the new method of management should lead to a better process.

The Chairman recommended that this application be considered positively and asked the members to express their views.

DCM recognised that there were initially a number of issues with this application which the applicant has addressed. However, he said that should this application be approved, there would be two different types of tanks and he would have preferred only having one.

MEH said that he had been comforted by the fact that consulted bodies with an environmental background have accepted the application with conditions to be included in the permit. He said that the Department of the Environment would like to take an active role in the drafting of the permit. He also said that it was a pity that the two entities have not worked together to create one tank farm instead of having two. MEH said that with the condition that all conditions are met and supervised, he would not object.

JH said that as an Environmental Group they agree that the applicant has tried to meet all concerns raised. She said that in past meetings she too had expressed regret that should this application be approved there will be two tank farms instead of one. She added that the Environmental Safety Group had been contacted by concerned residents. JH said that the Environmental Safety Group does not support the growth of oil industry but that the applicant has tried to meet concerns, and that she therefore, would not object but abstain.

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CV expressed his concern with regards to the proposed installation of a vehicle barrier and requested details of where it will be placed. The Chairman said that it will be within the land transportation area around the tank farm itself.

JC said that he supported this application but agreed that someone should look into the old tank farm form and whether it is really necessary.

CM agreed with the Environmental Statement and said that the Heritage Trust foresees no cultural impact as long as the tank farm remains within its boundary. She said that the Heritage Trust would request that an archeological survey be carried out if the sea bed is affected in the future.

GM said that he recently visited the area and realised that the area is slowly being surrounded by tanks. He commented on the physical aspect and the fact that these tanks will be seen by people visiting the area, for example cruise visitors. He suggested endorsing a condition that the tanks must be better screened and more discreet.

The Chairman asked the Commission whether in terms of planning merits they agreed that all 21 items listed in Item 10 circulated to members, should be included as conditions. He suggested that the Planning Permit could be drafted and shown to members for consultation. With regards to the visual aspect of the tank farm, he said that this is the same practice in other countries. The Chairman added that in his opinion in relation to the Development Plan the Port Authority should consider better future use of Port land including the harbour area.

The Chairman asked the Commission to take a vote on whether planning permission should be granted on the basis of this application. The Commission took a vote with the following result: -
6 votes in favour
0 votes against
4 abstentions

The Chairman then asked the Commission whether they wanted to impose the 21 conditions on the permit, as well as GM's recommendation with regards to visual aspects. He also suggested that the Commission could suggest that the Port Authority look into the functioning of the old tank farm and the use of Port land; this was agreed by the Commission.

MEH said that in his opinion placing conditions in terms of the visual aspect of the tanks as suggested by MG, would be unfair to the applicant, as this should have been highlighted when the application was first presented to the Commission.

JH added that although the applicant has tried to adapt their application to meet concerns raised, residents in the area might benefit from better screening.

GM said that in terms of minimising visual impact there are all kinds of issues that can be considered, for example colour screens and other architectural practices. The Chairman suggested that the applicant could be asked to revert with possible designs for the tanks. DCM concurred.

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The Commission approved this application with 21 conditions to be included in the permit and asked that the applicant submit suggestions for visual improvements.

2/13 – BA12375 – Former Royal Naval Hospital, Europa Road – proposed conversion of Block E into dementia day care centre – GoG Project

MEH declared an interest as Minister for Health.

CV introduced the scheme explaining that the proposal is to convert Block E into a day care centre facility. He said that it is envisaged that works will be completed by December 2013.

The Commission welcomed Mr Jason Cano on behalf of HMGOG.

Mr Cano informed the Commission that the intention is to refurbish the building and construct an additional storey. He said that most trees in the lower level will be maintained and that a drop-off zone will be created. A lift will also be installed to provide access from the paved area to the first floor. The floor plans include facilities such as activity rooms, dining facilities and showers. Mr Cano explained that the extra floor will provide staff facilities and an out-patients area. He said that the center is being designed to accommodate 20 patients per floor but that there is potential to extend for up to 90 patients.

MEH explained that the intention is for elderly people who need to be cared for during the day to be dropped off by their families and picked up at the end of the working day. He added that the design has been ‘clinician’ led.

JH asked whether Block E is connected to the other buildings within the former Naval Hospital complex. Mr Cano confirmed that the day care center will be self-contained.

The Chairman asked about the pavement accesses to the site from the road which needs to be improved as there is no pavement on this side of the road. CV and Mr Cano confirmed that improvements to the bus stop facility and pedestrian access to this area are being considered and presented to the Traffic Commission.

3/12 – BA12377 – Parliament Building, 156 Main Street – proposed internal refurbishment – GoG Project

CV introduced the project saying that the Parliament Building is a listed building which is dated and perhaps not fit for purpose. He said that refurbishment works to paneling, ceilings and doors are necessary. He added that there is a need for acoustic barriers and better lighting. Storage facilities are also required and these he said would be provided within the walls of the public gallery. CV said that a more traditional setting or modern approach can be adopted in refurbishing the building, adding that he is supportive of a more modern approach. CV also said that the roof of the building is in dire need of attention and that a disabled access is also necessary; these works he said might have a visual impact on the building and would be brought to the Commission for comment at a later date.

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CV informed the Commission that the Heritage Trust has been consulted as this is a listed building and that they have recommended the use of darker furniture. CV said that in his opinion darker furniture would remove the importance of the Speaker's chair.

JH enquired whether there would be press facilities. CV confirmed that two desks will be provided on either side of the public gallery and that further members of the press would have to sit within the public gallery itself.

The Chairman asked whether CV knew what lies behind the existing cladding. CV confirmed that only the old walls.

CM confirmed that the Heritage Trust feels that refurbishment of this building is necessary but that the style of the furniture should be more traditional. She said that the Trust would like to be involved in this project and that they believe it is important to ensure the possibility of restoring the building to its original use in the future, if required. CM added that the Heritage Trust are concerned with the short timescale in which they have been consulted, and requested that in the future they are given more time to assess projects concerning listed buildings.

CV explained that the plans for this project have been created in three or four weeks and that this is the reason why the Heritage Trust was not consulted earlier. He agreed to include the Heritage Trust in the project's working group.

DCM and MEH declared an interest as Members of Parliament. DCM said that this project was welcomed. He added that the project has to be completed within a short timescale and that there will be no changes to the structure of the building.

Applications granted permission by sub-committee under delegated powers

4/13 – Ref 1198/032/12 – BFA Estate Agents, 47 Line Wall Road: For sale sign

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

5/13 – Ref 1198/30/12 – Aquagib, 10B Leanse Place, 50 Town Range: Business Sign

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

6/13 – BA12280 – Europa Rd, Kind George V Ramp: Proposed installation of telecommunications equipment in a new cabinet next to existing

JC requested confirmation that all Gibtelecom cabinets are being screened. The Chairman confirmed that they would all be screened as requested by the Commission. CV suggested that it might be a good idea to provide a list of all cabinets which must be screened to Gibtelecom.

The Chairman informed that he would be presenting to the Commission the cabinets as fitted on site and would request the Commission to decide whether screening was warranted or not, case by case.

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

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7/13 – BA12286 – Keightley Way Tunnel Exit, Europa Point: Proposed installation of telecommunications equipment in a new cabinet next to existing

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

8/13 – BA12313 – 35 Main Street: Proposed retail refurbishment

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

9/13 – BA12316 – 90 Ragged Staff Wharf, Queensway: Proposed alterations and refurbishment

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

10/13 – BA12317 – 3a/3b Eurolife Building, Corral Road: Proposed Office fit out

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

11/13 – BA12320 – Suites 10.1, 10.2 & 10.3, ICC: Proposed internal alterations

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

12/13 – BA12329 – Unit 5 Buttercup House, Waterport Terraces: proposed Conversion of empty commercial unit into retail unit with associated office space

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

13/13 – BA12334 – 57/63 NatWest House: Proposed kitchenette to office premises

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

14/13 – BA12337 – 6 Merlot House, Vineyards Proposed internal alterations

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

15/13 – BA12345 – Flat A, 10 Pitman’s Court: proposed internal alterations and replacement of all external windows

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

16/13 – BA12353 – Unit 2 & 3-5, 143 Main Street: Two shop units into one

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

17/13 – BA12365 – Ape’s Den, Upper Rock: Conversion of existing staff WC/office into public toilets

The Commission noted the approval granted by the sub-committee.

Any Other Business

18/13 – Next Meeting

The Commission agreed to next meet on Thursday 24th January at 09.30 am.