

Linlithgow Planning Forum

Minutes of Meeting held 1st February 2018

1. **Present:** Ron Smith (RS) Convenor (BB, LBT, L&LBCC), John Kelly, (JK) (L&LBCC, LBT), Marilynne MacLaren (MM)(Chair LCT), David Tait (DT) (LBA, WLC), David Timperley (DGT) (LBT), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Jonathan Fair (JF), Regional Managing Director of McCarthy and Stone and Campbell Purves (CP), Regional Planner, The Planning Bureau Ltd.
2. **Apologies:** Fraser Falconer (LCDT, LLBCC), Máire McCormack (MMcC)(L&LBCC & TL), Sue Friel (SF)(Chair TL & L&LBCC), Martin Crook (LLBCC, TMG), Mike Vickers (MV), (LBT, L&LBCC & LBA)
3. **Meeting with McCarthy and Stone:** the meeting began on the site where JF delineated the area under discussion and described the physical features of both the site and the neighbouring gable wall. After retiring to the Partnership Centre, the meeting reconvened and was able to ascertain a number of facts.
 - a. JF was appointed as regional managing director of McCarthy and Stone approximately 18 months ago. His association with the site has been over that period and his knowledge of prior events has been gained from company files.
 - b. The movement in the gable wall occurred around Easter 2015. Firstly the chimney moved during the initial stages of the demolition process which was halted whilst the chimney was stabilised. The demolition continued. The second movement in the gable wall occurred when excavation for new foundations was undertaken. In the opinion of JF the two buildings had come to rely on each other. McCarthy and Stone now own the property above the ground floor.
 - c. The consented building was designed as a load bearing masonry structure on a combination of pad foundations and contiguous driven piles.
 - d. A ground survey, which could not be undertaken until the existing structure was demolished, comprised five trial pits which revealed a mixture of sand and gravel. Bed rock was determined to be at a depth of between 17m and 20m.
 - e. In the opinion of JF the best solution was to stabilise the gable wall using steel channel section beams following the line of roof rafters and the line of the floors on each floor; tied back to the existing floor joists using steel tie rods. The gable wall (an internal wall of random rubble stonework) could be over-clad in zinc sheet or render. It was important that the finish was an applied lightweight finish as any masonry solution would require a foundation. The site would be landscaped to an acceptable specification and preferably adopted by West Lothian Council.
 - f. JF stated that the risks associated with any other solution were too great both in respect of the ex British Linen Bank and to the neighbouring property where a party wall situation exists. McCarthy and Stone are not prepared to take the risk and would if necessary leave an undeveloped site.

Two questions were asked namely:

- a. What technical solutions have been considered beyond those described above. For example, has a bored pile and cantilevered ground beam solution been explored? There was no answer to this question.
- b. If McCarthy and Stone were not prepared to take the risk of a built solution would they be prepared to transfer the title to the site to a community organisation without charge?

TK stated that if McCarthy and Stone are adamant that they are not prepared to develop the site in accordance with the consented design, then they should submit a modification to the planning application denoting a change of design and submit that to the Council for proper process.

RS stated that the time being 16.12 and in consideration of a full agenda of the Planning Forum that it was time to end the discussion. JF and CP were thanked for their attendance. TK and TC left at this point.

RS stated that the Planning Forum need to develop a plan of approach.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 4th January 2018:** Approved.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - a. **Assets in the common good:** Annet House – not discussed.
 - b. **Lamp Posts at County Buildings:** RS referred to several emails circulated describing a refurbishment option which will cost in the order of £1000 per lamp. Details will be sent to the councillors. **Action RS**
 - c. **Vennel/Town Centre Charrette:** JK, RS and DGT to measure up on site and prepare a schedule of accommodation. JK to coordinate. **Action JK**
 - d. **Reply from Kevin Stewart:** received; JK to circulate. **Action JK**
6. **Meeting with the MSP's:** meeting with the MSP is to discuss the Plan for the Future in the context of the new Planning Bill has been arranged for Monday, 19 February at 11am in the Partnership Centre. Those attending will be RS, DT, DGT, MM, MV and JK.
7. **Planning List items:**
 - a. 1065/FUL/17 four residential moorings opposite Deanburn near Preston road. This application is opposed. **Action JK/DGT**
 - b. 1040/PRE/17 two story extension to West Port and House. There is no information on this application in the West Lothian Council database. JK to investigate. **Action JK**
 - c. DGT had a number of other applications which were listed but which required no action from the community Council. The civic trust will discuss. **Action DGT**
8. **Plan for the Future:** RS stated that it was important for the Planning Forum to accelerate activity on the Vennel and that the major effort should be put in that direction. The update of the Plan for the Future should be completed by the spring.
9. **AOB:** There was a brief discussion of the implications of "BID mark 2" which would encompass a reorganised structure and a more ambitious town-based community with business approach. An event is taking place at Murrayfield.

10. **Next Meeting:** DGT stated that meeting at the Partnership Centre should be continued. The next meeting will be on 1st March 2018 at 3.30pm. 2018 meetings will be on the following dates:

1st March

5th April

5th July

4th October

3rd May

no August meeting

1st November

7th June

6th September

6th December

Meeting closed at 17.12.

John Kelly,
Secretary,
5th February 2018