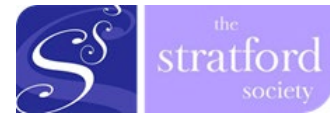


Planning Report



2022 saw the Stratford District Council (SDC) taking decisions on a number of planning applications made in 2021. Having submitted an objection, the Stratford Society welcomed the Council's refusal of permission, in February 2022, for a development at the rear of Meer Street.

During the year, the Society's principal concerns related to two major proposals within Stratford's Conservation Area. The first, the redevelopment of Debenhams, is particularly sensitive, being along the Historic Spine. While acknowledging that there is no demand to retain this as a department store, the Society urged that ways be sought of converting the existing building - which merits a reference in Pevsner's 'The Buildings of Warwickshire' - rather than demolishing it. The construction sector needs to reuse building materials to make its contribution to achieving national emission reduction targets. Despite this, in April, the Council approved the planning application, and demolition is expected to start in late-2023, to be followed by construction of a hotel on the site in High Street.

The other major planning proposal relates to the construction of an apartment building at the Arden Street/Greenhill Street corner. To date, this has gone out for consultation on four occasions, with various changes to the design, but none of these setting the proposed building back from the existing pavements. The Society has repeatedly pointed out that no account is taken of the Greenhill and Arden Streets Environment Improvement Plan, which is part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The aim of the Plan is to provide high-quality pedestrian and cycle links at this junction, which is an important gateway to the town. It seems probable that the Council will decide on this application in early 2023.

It is some time since consultation closed on the South-West Relief Road and, more recently, on the outline planning application for construction of 238 houses on land east of Shipston Road, south of the Rosebird Centre. In neither case has a date been set for these to come before the Council's Planning Committee for a decision.

Margaret Cund