



Press Release

22 July 2024

Wisbech car park demolition does not require formal planning permission to go ahead, under planning law

Owners of the Horsefair Shopping Centre in Wisbech are planning to demolish its multi-storey car park under 'Permitted Development Rights' – meaning it does not require planning permission to go ahead.

Local councillors have signalled their concerns about the plans but have been advised they have no power to intervene.

NewRiver Retail has notified Fenland District Council of its plans to demolish the car park under Permitted Development Rights, which exist in planning legislation for certain demolition works outside of a conservation area.

During a 'prior approval' phase now underway, the council can only consider the detail of the demolition plans rather than whether it should grant approval for the demolition at all.

The purpose of prior approval is to give Local Planning Authorities the opportunity to regulate the details of demolition, in order to minimise the impact of that activity on local amenity, but not to actually prevent or oppose the demolition.

Cllr Dee Laws, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning, said: "Demolition of this type of building is permitted in planning law, so the council only has limited powers available when considering this matter. We can only consider how the building will be demolished and the proposed restoration of the site afterwards to ensure the local amenity is not adversely affected.

"We are in discussions with the owners, NewRiver Retail, to ascertain their future plans for the site. Any future redevelopment will be subject to the usual planning application process."

Prior approval applications are delegated to a Local Planning Authority's Head of Planning to consider, rather than being determined by Planning Committee.

Any future redevelopment of the site would be considered under a separate planning application.

At this time, the plans for redevelopment are unknown. Until NewRiver Retail shares these plans or submits a planning application, no view on what may come next can be taken by the council or local councillors.

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Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk