

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 10 APRIL 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: David Cornish (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Alistair Neal, Wayne Smith, Michael Firmager, Stuart Munro, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Tony Skuse and Bill Soane

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Alison Swaddle

Officers Present

Gordon Adam, Highways Development Control
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Rachel Lucas, Senior Lawyer
Liam Oliff, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Stefan Fludger
Claire Moore

79. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

80. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

81. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

82. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no Deferred or Withdrawn items.

83. APPLICATION NO 233168 FORMER TRAVIS PERKINS SITE, WOODLEY GREEN, WOODLEY, WOKINGHAM, RG5 4QP

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a building to form a residential care home (Use Class C2) with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing buildings on the site.

Applicant: R Ruscoe, Propco (Woodley Green) Ltd

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 17 to 61.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Developer contributions- The NHS had provided additional information related to their request for funding (secured by planning obligation), to provide upgrades to

local serves. This information did not demonstrate that the use of an obligation to secure the funding met the tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and therefore this was not justified.

- Housing Land Supply contribution.

Keith Baker, Woodley Town Council, spoke in favour of the application. He thanked the applicant for the changes made in response to previous refusals. He added that the developer had been constantly engaging with the community and had sat down with local residents and Members. He urged members of the Committee to approve the application.

David Lobb, applicant, spoke in support of the application. He explained that the business was family run and was the best small care home developer in the UK. He mentioned that they had constantly been working with officers and the local community with meetings and newsletters. He also said they were running an outreach programme with local schools and had an open-door policy with the local community. He commented on employment, telling Members that the care home would lead to 74 full time job equivalents and that they would recruit locally.

Alison Swaddle, ward member, spoke in support of the application. She was pleased the application had been recommended for approval. She mentioned that local residents were happy with the use of the site as there had been issues with illegal encampment. She added that there had been great community engagement from the developer and that there was 100% support from the ward.

All members of the committee had attended a site visit except Councillors Cornish, Munro and Soane.

Councillor Mickleburgh commented on the developer and their community engagement being a positive. He added that he was interested in the idea of ongoing engagement. He believed there were many merits to the application and that he would be minded to approve the application.

Councillor Skuse asked whether there had been poor communication between Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and the NHS as they hadn't provided evidence regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead, Development Management explained that there was ongoing communication between the NHS and WBC on multiple applications and that there had not been sufficient evidence on this specific application.

Councillor Smith questioned the calculation that added 38 homes to the Housing Land Supply when the care home had 68 beds. Stefan Fludger, case officer, explained that the calculation was the net increase in the number of bedrooms which was 68 divided by the average number of adults in households in England which was 1.8, this led to 38.

It was proposed by Councillor Cornish and seconded by Councillor Shepherd-Dubey that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That application 233168 be approved subject to:

- Completion of S106 legal agreement to secure the Employment Skills Plan – To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent

financial contribution in accordance with Policy TB12 of the MDD and based on the value of the Construction Industry Training Board Benchmark and the conditions and informatives set out on pages 40 to 49 of the report.

OR

- REFUSE full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed within three months of the date of this resolution (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

84. APPLICATION NO 240459 20 OLD BATH ROAD, CHARVIL, RG10 9QR

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed single-storey front extension, single-storey side extension, two-storey side extension and part single-storey part two-storey rear extension plus changes to fenestration and demolition of existing detached garage.

Applicant: Mr Tino Simon

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 63 to 83.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Five additional objections from neighbours
- An additional condition relating to Boundary Treatment

Claire Moore, case officer, advised that there was an additional condition regarding drainage.

Rob Jones, Charvil Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. He told Members that he was disappointed that previous refusal reasons had not been taken into account. He mentioned that the application was in contrary to policy CP3 regarding mass and added that the original house had been completely lost. He referenced a previously rejected application at 11 Old Bath Road that was refused due to form, scale and being harmful to the street scene and questioned the difference between the two applications. He commented on the loss of light that the development would cause for neighbouring properties. He explained that this was an example of people taking advantage of the planning system by using repeated planning applications, he added that residents were losing faith in the planning system.

George Enock, resident, spoke in objection to the application. He told Members that the development was blocking natural light getting into large parts of his house, even on sunny

days, he showed through an image of his garden that the two-storey rear extension would block light coming into his house even more. He added that the rear extension broke the 45-degree BRE rule. He explained that the mass and scale of the development was overbearing. He mentioned that the building line of the property would be considerably further back compared to neighbouring properties. He commented on a lack of space for scaffolding at the side of the property. He stated that the development would have five side windows and with the removal of the hedge they would be able to see into his house.

Tino Simon, applicant, spoke in support of the application. He explained that since the house was built, there had never been any enlargement, and this made it unfit for a modern family. He mentioned that previous refusal reasons had been taken into account and that the loss of light had been carefully assessed. He told Members that the proposal increased the separation between number 18 and number 20. He explained that this proposal was only one small element on top of what had already been approved. He said that everything had been done to be in line with the NPPF. He mentioned that the Councillor who listed the application had not visited the site and that there were no material reasons for refusal.

All members of the committee had attended a site visit except Councillors Soane, Cornish and Munro.

Councillor Cornish explained that this was a composite of previous applications and that most of the issues had been covered off by already approved applications. He added that the only issue that the committee was considering was the infill on the front and side of the property.

Councillor Soane questioned whether the only alteration was the front and if there were any changes to the roof. Claire Moore explained that there was a 5cm increase in the height of the roof, which was down from 30cm on the previous proposal.

Councillor Firmager sought clarity on the previously approved applications and whether they would still be applicable if this proposal was approved. Claire Moore responded by saying that this application would not supersede the previous applications and that they would still stand.

Councillor Smith referenced the case officer presentation and particularly the approved roofline and questioned what was already approved. Claire Moore explained that the proposal infilled the two-storey front section and pushed the corner out to the principal building line.

Councillor Smith mentioned comments regarding policy CP3 in terms of the scale of the property compared to neighbouring properties. Claire Moore told Members that the road had no dominating design style and that the proposal would blend in with the local environment. Brian Conlon explained that CP3 did not stifle difference and that Members needed to decide if the difference was harmful.

Councillor Smith sought comment on the BRE guidance regarding loss of light. Claire Moore clarified that there would be a minor impact but not significant. Brian Conlon added that the BRE guidance was not mandatory and was not something to solely base a decision on.

Councillor Mickleburgh said the previous refusal reasons had been addressed and that the key point was whether the side/front extension would be sufficient grounds for refusing the application. He told Members they should make their decision based on planning policy.

Councillor Cornish expressed sympathy for Mr Enock and that there may have been a different discussion if previous applications had been brought to committee, he added that what Members needed to consider was what the extra harm was of this proposal with what had already been approved.

It was proposed by Councillor Cornish and seconded by Councillor Skuse that this application be approved.

RESOLVED: That application 240459 be approved subject to conditions and informatives set out in appendix 1 of the agenda, and the additional condition regarding boundary treatment.