

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 10 MARCH 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Shirley Boyt and Alison Swaddle

Officers Present

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Neil Allen, Legal Specialist

Roger Johnson, Senior Assistant Engineer - Highways and Transport

Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management

Case Officers Present

Mark Croucher

Simon Taylor

Natalie Jarman

60. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

61. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date subject to the following minor amendments:

Agenda page 10 – “Malcolm Richards **acknowledged that** the units would have flat roofs **which would minimise the height...**”

Agenda page 10 – “...and queried whether any of the proposed **parking** spaces would be for disabled use.”

62. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Andrew Mickleburgh declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 65, on the grounds that he was a Member of the Earley Town Council Planning Committee which had made a recommendation regarding this application. Andrew added that he had formed a view regarding this application, and as such he would not participate in either the discussion or the vote for this item.

63. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

64. APPLICATION NO.203456 - WAINGELS COLLEGE, WAINGELS ROAD, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed construction of a 3G synthetic pitch consisting of sports fencing, LED floodlights, storage container, spectator area and pedestrian access

Applicant: Mr John O’Keeffe

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 15 to 58.

The Committee were advised that the Members’ Update included:

- Condition 19 to be headed “Drainage Implementation and Maintenance”;
- Additional Condition 20;
- Confirmation that the applicant had no intention for the floodlights to be retractable;
- Contextual information regarding the 3db noise increase;
- Additional photographs of the site along Waingels Road and from within the school campus.

Keith Baker, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Keith stated that having just 24 hours notification prior to Committee had not given speakers adequate time to prepare for this meeting. As such, no residents had registered to speak. Keith was thankful for the Woodley Town Council staff for notifying him of this item coming to Committee, who themselves were notified around 24 hours prior to Committee. Keith felt that the lack of notification was unacceptable and undemocratic. Keith stated that he supported additional sports facilities within the Borough, however this application would result in the loss of total pitches. Keith added that there were existing flooding issues on Waingels Road, however he was grateful for the case officer’s reassurances that this application would not add to these issues. Keith stated that this application would place further traffic on to the Waingels Road, with the traffic from the Charvil direction having to travel the whole length of the road to reach this facility.

Alison Swaddle, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Alison stated that the lack of notice regarding this item coming to Committee was unacceptable. Alison shared her thanks to Woodley Town Council officers for their quick actions when informed that this item was coming to Committee. Alison stated that a Scout’s centre was approved at the previous meeting of the Planning Committee which would add additional traffic to the Waingels Road. Alison added that the proposed 5m high wire fence would have an impact on roosting birds and bats in the area. Adding to this, Alison stated that she could not find a bat survey or an on-site investigation report on the impact to birds as a result of the proposals. Alison concluded by stating that although she supported the provision of high class sporting facilities within the Borough, she could not support this application due to a number of outstanding issues.

Simon Weeks sought clarification that the final closing time for the facility was 9.15pm, queried whether the proposals would create an acceptable level of additional traffic on Waingels Road, and queried whether the issue of bats had been suitably considered. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that the whole facility including the floodlights had a final closing time of 9.15pm. Regarding the issue of bats. Simon Taylor stated that the ecology officer was comfortable that a bat survey had not been submitted, as the hours of use meant that bats would primarily only be affected in the months of May and September for a small crossover period of time each evening. Roger Johnson, Senior Assistant Engineer – Highways, stated that traffic on the Waingels Road would increase as a result of the proposals, however this would predominantly take place during the quieter periods of the day and therefore it was not considered an issue.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the proposals would create additional water run-off, queried whether Waingels Road was ever closed as a result of flooding, queried why a bat survey was not deemed necessary, and queried whether a specific figure should be attached to the biodiversity net gain requirement. Simon Taylor stated that the proposals would not create any additional surface water run-off compared to the current site. In addition, Thames Water were planning to carry out works on the Waingels Road in the future which could help the area. Regarding the absence of a bat survey, Simon stated that officers had taken note and were comfortable with the proposals as the closing time of 9.15pm minimised any harm. In addition, bats would also hibernate for between 6 to 7 months of the year. Referring to biodiversity net gain, Simon stated that officers were satisfied that the proposals would produce a suitable net gain of biodiversity.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether there was another suitable part of the site to accommodate the proposals which was not in designated countryside, and queried why consultees had been given late notice of items coming to this meeting. Simon Taylor stated that all playing fields on the site were located within designated countryside, and policy CP11 allowed for recreational facilities in the countryside. Simon added that although the proposals included some urbanising elements, the proposals were still deemed acceptable. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that officers aimed to tell Members and residents that items were heading to Committee on the day of agenda publication. On this occasion, there was an issue which meant that some consultees were not informed with the usual one weeks' notice. All consultees had been emailed, and all previous comments had been taken into account.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried why the proposals did not include focussed lighting, and queried whether the proposed 3G pitch would increase flooding. Simon Weeks clarified that the proposed 3G pitch would not cause any additional water run-off when compared to the existing pitches. Simon Taylor stated that the proposals included 15m high floodlights which were downward focussed and provided a satisfactory outcome in terms of light spill, whilst being consistent with other recent approvals at the school and in the area.

Gary Cowan queried what hours of use had been applied to the Luckley House School application. Simon Taylor stated that the original proposal for Luckley House School was for a 10pm finish time, which was then amended to be variable from 6.30pm in March to 9pm in the summer. Luckley House School was slightly different as the pitch itself adjoined a woodland.

Gary Cowan felt that he could not support the proposals as there were a lot of on balance conclusions within the officer report. In addition, Gary was of the opinion that an ecological appraisal should have been carried out for this application, and felt that trees were proposed to be cut down without assurances that they would be suitably replaced. Regarding the proposal to fell trees, Simon Taylor clarified that 3 trees were of substandard quality with the 4th tree being more sizeable however it was easily replaceable.

Simon Weeks commented that the trees lost at the temporary entrance should be replaced afterwards in situ.

Abdul Loyes stated that the traffic on Waingels Road was very poor, and was of the opinion that this item should be deferred in order to receive answers regarding some outstanding issues. Simon Taylor stated that the proposals would allow for some additional

afterschool sports activities on the site, which could extend the pickup and drop-off times and thereby reduce traffic on the road at peak times.

Stephen Conway commented that whilst he was sympathetic to the concerns raised both on the evening and during the consultation period, as a Committee Member, he had to listen to the professional advice which stated that the proposals were acceptable. The Committee would need to come up with specific technical reasons in order to present a robust case to overturn the recommendation.

Malcolm Richards queried whether the 9.15pm cut-off time was the time that the site must be vacated. Simon Taylor stated that due to the community use of the site, most bookings would be for 30 minute or 60 minute slots, meaning that a slot would end at 9pm allowing time for users to vacate the site prior to the lights switching off automatically at 9.15pm.

Angus Ross stated that many of the concerns had been addressed either within the report or on the evening by officers. Angus added that the site currently had 3 pitches on site now which were likely to be used, and the proposals would provide a surface which could be used in poorer weather conditions and would possibly make the use of the site more regularised. Angus stated that the community use agreement would allow residents to raise concerns should aspects of the usage of the site become troublesome. Angus stated that he would support the application.

Carl Doran queried what existing cycling infrastructure was present in the area as a comment within the report stated that the existing cycling infrastructure was adequate, and queried why trees had to be felled for the temporary access. Roger Johnson stated that he could not state what cycling infrastructure was available in the area. Simon Weeks clarified that the tree removal was to reduce interference with a better specimen tree and to remove a dead tree stem.

Chris Bowring stated that he was supportive of the application, and noted that the facility would bring a range of community benefits.

RESOLVED That application number 203456 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 16 to 23, amendment to the heading of condition 19 and additional condition 20 as set out in the Members' Update.

65. APPLICATION NO.203534 - LODDON COURT, LAMBS LANE, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of land from agricultural to mixed equestrian/agriculture plus erection a stable buildings with associated hardstanding. (Part Retrospective)

Applicant: Mr Kingsbury

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 59 to 82.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

Emily Temple, agent, spoke in support of the application. Emily thanked officers for their thorough report. Emily stated that the family were expert horse owners, and the family itself was quite large and required space for them and their horses to live, and as such the use of the site would not be commercial. Emily added that the base of the stable buildings

had been constructed, however construction ceased when they were advised that full planning permission was required. Once the application was submitted, full reports related to trees and ecology were submitted. Emily stated that the stable would be timber clad in appearance, and away from the road and vantage points. The application would allow for mixed use to allow for grazing of both sheep and horses. Emily concluded by stating that no other changes were proposed to the wider land on the site.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether any additional large trees would be harmed by the proposals, and queried whether named permission could be applied to the family. Mark Chancellor, case officer, stated that the tree officer was happy with the proposals, as encroachment of the root protection area of the large tree was around 17.5 percent, and it was at around 20 percent when arboriculturists usually raised concerns. In addition, holes would be drilled on the base of the structure and the existing storage would be removed to help protect the tree. Mark added that officers were content with the relationship between the closer large tree and the proposed structures, and therefore the other large trees situated further away from the proposed structures would also be acceptable. Regarding personal permission, Mark stated that it would be unreasonable to apply a personal permission as the permission was being applied to the owners of the property, and planning policy guidance stated that personal permission should be avoided wherever possible.

RESOLVED That application number 203534 be approved, subject to conditions and informative as set out in agenda pages 60 to 61.

66. APPLICATION NO.203514 - 34 HILLTOP ROAD, EARLEY

Andrew Mickleburgh declared a prejudicial interest in this item and therefore took no part.

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed conversion of bungalow to form two self-contained dwellings comprising 1 x 3 bed apartment at ground floor and 1 x 1 bed apartment at first floor. (Following recent construction of extensions permitted by application 191411) and installation of four roof lights (part retrospective)

Applicant: Mr J Singh

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 83 to 106.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included additional conditions 7, 8, 9, and an additional informative.

Brenda Cutler, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Brenda stated that the area was already overdeveloped, with parking already being an issue. Brenda added that the proposals would create 6 properties in the space of the original single dwelling. Brenda stated that the flats would be out of keeping with the character of the area, and would add to parking issues. Brenda concluded that residents were upset with the proposals, and cited that number 30 Hilltop Road had been divided into two dwellings which had created issues including additional traffic.

Tim Marsh, on behalf of the ACER residents' association, spoke in objection to the application. Tim asked that a glazed window be provided on the proposed roof light, as it was only 1 metre in height rather than the standard height of at least 1.7 metres. Tim

added that the parking standards related to new developments, rather than within existing housing stock. Tim stated that development of rental properties within existing housing stock generally resulted in more vehicles within an already busy residential area. Tim was of the opinion that the proposals were out of keeping with the character of the area whilst being an example of overdevelopment. Tim asked that the application be refused.

Shirley Boyt, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Shirley stated that a previous application on this site granted permission to turn habitable rooms into bedrooms, and this application followed up by turning a single property into an 8 bedroom dual property. Shirley was of the opinion that there was potential for the site to house 8 permanent residents, with only 4 car parking spaces. Shirley stated that the new dropped kerb was not present on the site drawings, and there would be no access to the front of the site for vehicles to park. Shirley added that soft landscaping was recommended for this scheme, however implementation was a different matter in this area.

Carl Doran queried 4 parking spaces met parking requirements, queried where the conditioned soft landscaping would go if the proposed car parking spaces went ahead, queried how the upper floor flat would use the rear amenity space, and queried why the roof light at 1 metre height was not considered as overlooking. Roger Johnson, Senior Assistant Engineer – Highways, stated that the parking requirements were met via the provision of 4 car parking spaces. Natalie Jarman, case officer, stated that 4 car parking spaces already had planning permission with no landscaping condition attached, and should this application be approved than landscaping would be conditioned which would provide betterment to the street scene. Regarding access to the amenity space, Natalie Jarman stated that the plans showed that both proposed properties would have access to the amenity space and refuse storage via gated access. Simon Weeks stated that he had sympathy regarding the concerns with the roof light, and suggested that the Committee may wish to condition the window to be fix shut and obscure glazed. Carl Doran stated that he would second this proposal should the Committee be minded to approve.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried where the landscaping would fit in amongst the driveway. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that landscaping could be placed to the right hand side of the driveway, and in front of the bay window.

Adbul Loyes queried how policy CP3 applied to this application. Natalie Jarman stated that this application was starting at a point where planning permission had already been granted for the extensions. There could be some introduction of residential paraphernalia, however the only physical change would be the introduction of the roof lights. Based on this, officers felt that it was acceptable in terms of the character of the area.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether there was a risk that a future application could convert the garage to a dwelling with side access. Simon Weeks clarified that the garage would provide storage for residents, and access needed to be maintained. Simon added that the Committee could not place a condition on a possible future application.

Stephen Conway stated that the Committee was being asked to judge the proposed change from two dwellings to one. Stephen felt that it was imperative to have obscure glazing on the roof light window. Stephen queried that as the rear window of the first floor dwelling would overlook the rear garden, whether this was acceptable in this specific instance. Natalie Jarman stated that on balance, the rear gardens would provide some

form of private amenity space. In many instances, flats would have a solely communal outdoor amenity space.

Malcolm Richards queried how 4 vehicles would could safely get in and out of the driveway. Natalie Jarman stated that the photo presented to the Committee was taken before the works, and it was proposed to extend the dropped kerb to allow the vehicles to reverse or drive straight on to the driveway.

Simon Weeks proposed that the roof light window on the flank of the property be conditioned to be obscure glazed and fixed shut. This was seconded by Carl Doran and carried by the Committee.

Carl Doran queried whether the issue of a window overlooking a neighbouring private garden went against the Borough Design Guide. Justin Turvey stated that it was standard for maisonettes to overlook rear amenity space from the upper floors.

RESOLVED That application number 203514 be approved, subject to conditions and informative as set out in agenda pages 84 to 85, amended condition requiring the roof light to be obscure glazed and fixed shut as agreed by the Committee, additional conditions 7, 8, 9 and additional informative as set out in the Members' Update.

67. APPLICATION NO.210022 - 33 COTTESMORE ROAD, WOODLEY

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor side extension and part two storey part single storey rear extension, plus conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation and changes to fenestration

Applicant: Amandeep Garcha

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 107 to 124.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included clarification that the revised plans were received on 9th February, and then re-advertised on 10th February.

Jenny Cheng, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Jenny stated that when Woodley Town Council first saw the planning application for this large extension, their reaction was that it was huge and it would change the street scene and make number 33 Cottesmore Road appear very different to other properties. Jenny added that the first version of this application had the first and second storeys extend to the boundary, creating a terracing effect. Jenny stated that the current application had not done enough to mitigate the issues caused by the extension. Jenny felt that there was insufficient parking provision considering the proposed 5 bedrooms within the extended house, whilst it would be impossible for three cars to come off of the road at the same time to park as there was a wall in the way which was not proposed to be demolished as part of this planning application. Jenny added that the extension would cause loss of light for neighbouring properties, and urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Barry Morfett, on behalf of a neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Barry stated that he was speaking on behalf of one of the owners of a neighbouring property, Mrs Jane Plank. Barry stated that he and Mrs Plank would like to support the reasons for refusal as outlined by Woodley Town Council. In addition, the proposed extension would cause a significant loss of light to Mrs Plank's first floor landing window and rear garden. The loss

of light would require a house light to be on when using the first floor landing, which was not the case at present. When the properties were originally built, those with rear gardens were designed to ensure that they had a significant amount of natural light. Barry stated that the Borough Council's own planning guidance cited loss of light as a reason to refuse. Should this application be approved, it would ruin 25 years of careful gardening by Mrs Plank, and prevent future plantings. Should the application be approved, Mrs Plank requests that the side extension element be restricted to ground floor only. Barry concluded by stating that other concerns relating to inadequacy of parking provision, overdevelopment and terracing remained.

Simon Weeks sought clarification as to whether the proposals met parking standards. Roger Johnson, Senior Assistant Engineer – Highways, stated that the proposals would meet parking standards, and officers have asked for an extended dropped kerb allowing for each car to access its own parking space without the need to move other cars. Mark Croucher, case officer, confirmed that planning permission was not required to remove the wall in front of the driveway.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the loss of light to the neighbouring first floor landing window. Mark Croucher stated that officers had conducted the 45 degree test, and found that the proposals would not breach this for habitable windows. Mark added that the two storey element of the proposals had been moved back from the boundary by 1 metre. Mark stated that from the existing neighbouring garage, the extension would extend approximately 2.2 metres beyond that which was fairly modest, which was considered acceptable and met the tests within the Borough Design Guide. Mark clarified that the landing window area would not be classed as a habitable room, and the loss of light to the garden would primarily occur in the morning hours.

Simon Weeks queried whether the applicant could use permitted development rights to develop a single storey rear extension which was significantly larger than the proposed extension of 2.2 metres. Mark Croucher stated that the applicant could develop a single storey extension of 3 metres under permitted development.

Angus Ross queried why there was no landscaping requirement for this application. Mark Croucher stated that some landscaping had been removed at the front of the property under permitted development. The front of the property had a drainage system, which meant that any hard surfacing would meet the drainage requirements. Where the proposals were in situ, and were lawful, landscaping requirements could not be imposed.

Malcolm Richards queried whether there was a percentage limit on extensions in urban areas. Mark Croucher stated that there was no percentage limit on extension increases in residential areas, and each application was based on the merits of how the proposals would impact neighbours and the appearance of the proposals.

RESOLVED That application number 210022 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 108 to 109.