

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13 MAY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.37 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

Officers Present

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Mark Croucher
Andrew Fletcher
Natalie Jarman
Senjuti Manna
Brian O'Donovan

101. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

102. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed physically at a later date, subject to the following minor clarification:

Item 95: **RESOLVED** That application number 193059 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 16 to 22, and additional three conditions as resolved by the Committee (*delegating officers to assess a reasonable vehicle weight limit and condition it to the subject application site; 2m boundary fence; and an 8am opening time*).

103. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

104. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

**105. APPLICATION NO.192280 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 20 & 22 STATION ROAD,
TWYFORD, BERKSHIRE, RG10 9NT**

Proposal: Full application for the erection of a 1No bed two storey dwelling following demolition of existing workshop

Applicant: Mr Ray Cook

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 17 to 56.

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

In line with the given deadlines, two public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. A summary of the submissions can be found below.

Selena Durrant, neighbour, provided a submission objecting to the application. Selena stated that the subject application was situated towards the rear of her property, alongside her garden. Selena added that her personal view, and the view of her family, had not changed since the subject application was first submitted. Selena stated that the Twyford conservation area was unique, and included special architectural and historical aspects. Selena was of the opinion that the development of the garages was completely wrong for the conservation area, which residents and the Council should be working together to protect and maintain. Selena added that the modern design of the proposals were not in keeping with conservation area, and did not enhance the conservation area. Selena stated that any loss of parking spaces would only add to the existing poor situation in the area, creating further friction within the community which would lead to anti-social behaviour. Selena added that the close proximity of the development would encroach on her family's right to privacy, with any owner or occupier of the proposed development being able to see directly into the rooms at the rear of her house, particularly affecting the privacy of her young son whose bedroom is at the rear of the property. Selena concluded by stating that the proposals would result in a life changing impact on her family's lives.

Thomas Rumble, agent, provided a statement in support of the application. Thomas stated that at the March Committee, he mentioned a previous Inspector's decision that established important parameters for how this application should be considered. Thomas added that the Inspector referred to the site's existing negative contribution to the Twyford Station Conservation Area ('CA') and this brownfield site's highly accessible and sustainable location. Thomas commented that the Inspector also identified that a contemporary design forms an approach that would be far better than a pastiche of the existing nearby buildings. Thomas stated that the Inspector had previously found two revisions that should be made to the scheme's design, namely a glazed first floor and the first floor being realigned by half a metre to be in line with its neighbour. Thomas stated that both of these revisions were included within the scheme before the Committee. Thomas added that the Inspector did not consider the amenity space to be in conflict with the development plan or design guide. Thomas stated that the development would release a new property appropriate, for example, to a first-time buyer and removed an existing workshop use inappropriate to its surrounding residential environment. Thomas was of the opinion that refusal of this would unduly delay a scheme that is development plan compliant and appropriate in its overall design, having made revisions as suggested by the previous planning Inspector. Thomas concluded that the scheme before the Committee was a sensitive, contemporary dwelling on a brownfield site; a new property in a sustainable location; was wholly consistent with the clear advice of the Inspector; and was supported by the Borough's planning officers.

Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, reminded the Committee that a previous scheme was refused by the Inspector, however the Inspector had offered advice to the appellant which had now been followed. Given how clear the guidance from the Inspector had been, it would be difficult to refuse the application.

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that a small portion of the brick wall was proposed to be removed to improve manoeuvrability for car parking. Judy added that

there were no highways concerns with this application and access would be made easier as a result of the proposals.

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Stephen Conway commented that Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) own conservation Officer had consistently objected to all versions of this application. On that basis, having the expert advice to refer to, Stephen proposed that the application be refused on two grounds, firstly on the basis that the proposed dwelling would overlook the neighbouring dwelling, and secondly that the proposal would disturb the harmony of the street scene and would not enhance or protect the historic Twyford conservation area. Pauline Jorgensen commented that she would second this proposal.

Justin Turvey stated that the separation distance was 11.7m, where 12m was required by guidance. However, the separation distance had not changed from the previous application and it was not considered an issue by the Inspector. The flank window could be conditioned to be obscure glazed, and therefore the first proposed reason for refusal could be overcome by condition. With regards to the second proposed refusal reason, the conservation officer had objected to the previous scheme and these comments had been dismissed by the Inspector. If refused, it could be seen as unreasonable behaviour at a future appeal.

Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, stated that officers were trying to avoid what could be seen as an unreasonable behaviour by refusing this scheme when the applicant had met the alterations to the scheme as suggested by the Inspector. It was possible that a costs application could be made against WBC in this scenario.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that it was strange to have a conservation officer's professional opinion seemingly ignored. Pauline added that a considerable amount of obscure glass would be needed to overcome the overlooking element. Pauline queried whether the parking spaces were currently used, and whether they met WBC standards. Judy Kelly stated that the spaces were used currently, and the removal of part of the wall would help with manoeuvrability. The spaces met WBC parking standards.

Gary Cowan commented that the Inspector had made comments based on the scheme's design, and not on policy elements. Gary added that the WBC conservation officer had made many comments which could not be ignored. Gary stated that if approved, the scheme would destroy the fabric of the conservation area. Gary was of the opinion that the scheme was completely unacceptable.

Carl Doran commented that the conservation officer opposed the scheme, as did the Ward Members, as did WBC planning officers on the original scheme. Carl added that the amenity space was also under standard, and the amount of obscure glazing required would only make the proposal more out of keeping with the conservation area.

Abdul Loyes commented that it was difficult to refuse the scheme as it was very likely that WBC would get challenged by the Inspector.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that he could not see how the proposals would not harm the conservation area in addition to being contrary to planning policies. Andrew sought clarification as to whether the building line issue had been fully addressed. Justin Turvey

stated that the first floor level was now proposed to be set back by a further 0.5m. The ground level building line was no different to the line of the current garages.

Malcolm Richards commented that on balance, he was minded to refuse this application. Malcolm added that the parking issues had been addressed in addition to the two points raised by the Inspector, however the designs were still out of keeping with the conservation area, as referred to by the conservation officer.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that the Inspector was happy with the design, and WBC were very likely to lose this case at appeal given the applicant had addressed the Inspector's concerns.

Stephen Conway queried how the obscure glazing flank could be added as a condition should the scheme be refused and subsequently be sent to appeal. Justin Turvey stated that officers would ask that the flank windows, from 1.8m, be obscure glazed at appeal. Justin added that if officers thought there was a reasonable chance of a successful defence at appeal, this scheme would have been refused under delegated powers.

Stephen Conway withdrew the overlooking reason for refusal, and proposed that the scheme be refused for the following reason (the wording was advised by the Operational Manager – Development Management): The proposed development by reason of its stark form, siting and discordant design within the street scene would result in significant harmful impact on the character of the area, failing to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed development is contrary to Policy CP1, CP3 of the Core Strategy and TB24 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and the NPPF. This was seconded by Pauline Jorgensen and put to the vote.

RESOLVED That application number 192280 be refused, as the proposed development by reason of its stark form, siting and discordant design within the street scene would result in significant harmful impact on the character of the area, failing to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area; the proposed development is contrary to Policy CP1, CP3 of the Core Strategy and TB24 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and the NPPF.

106. APPLICATION NO.193047 - GTO HOUSE, FLORAL MILE, BATH ROAD, HARE HATCH, RG10 9ES

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a workshop including associated office accommodation and storage following demolition of existing outbuildings

Applicant: Mr Lyon

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 57 to 78.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Confirmation that the overall volume increase on site would be net zero, as the other buildings on site were due to be demolished;
- The previous appeal decision.

Simon Weeks commented that some Committee Members would have visited this site previously. Simon added that the current proposals were now single storey, well set back

from the road, and there was clear guidance from the Inspector's report with regards to this application.

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Carl Doran queried whether additional landscaping would be required on site, and whether condition 2 would restrict the usage of the outside area of the site. Mark Croucher, case officer, stated that additional landscaping would not be required as there was already sufficient screening from the Bath Road and the standard landscape plan would suffice. With regards to usage of the outside area of the building, Mark stated that the previous owners had used this area for storage, however it would not be appropriate for the outside areas to be used for more general B2.

Abdul Loyes asked for clarification as to whether car breaking could be allowed on site under the proposed B2 classification. Justin Turvey, Team Manager (Development & Regeneration), stated that car breaking would solely be a *suis generis* use which would not be covered under B2. In addition, the owner restored classic cars in a forensic and calculated operation, and it was very unlikely that any car breaking would be considered within this operation.

Andrew Mickleburgh whether any additional parking spaces would be required on site, and whether additional screening would be required on parts of the site away from the entrance. Mark Croucher stated that the proposed 20 additional staff would be accommodated by the existing car parking on site, which currently had a good amount of extra capacity above 20 spaces. Mark stated that the proposals amounted to a relatively discreet development and it was felt that additional landscaping would not be required.

Malcolm Richards asked for further clarification with regards to the demolition condition. Mark Croucher clarified that occupation of the proposed building could not take place until the other building had been demolished.

RESOLVED That application number 193047 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 57 to 62, and subject to completion of a legal agreement.

107. APPLICATION NO.193356 - BALCOMBE NURSERIES, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SWALLOWFIELD, RG7 1PY

Proposal: Full application for the erection of 5 No detached dwellings, one with separate garage and four dwellings with internal garages. Associated landscaping works including one balancing pond. 2 No accesses with entrance gates and 1.2m post and rail fencing

Applicant: Woodridge Developments

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 79 to 114.

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

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Gary Cowan queried whether this specific application had taken into account the comments of the current AWE leadership, or the comments of the former AWE leadership. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that further consultation may be required in the future, however based on current legislation it was unlikely that the scheme was unacceptable. The scheme before Members had taken into account the consultation responses previously received relating to this scheme.

Simon Weeks proposed that the legal agreement have a timescale of three months imposed upon it, unless agreed by the head of development management and the Chair of the Planning Committee. This was put to Committee Members and agreed.

RESOLVED That application number 193356 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 80 to 87, subject to satisfactory completion of a legal agreement within three months unless agreed by the head of development management and the Chair of the Planning Committee.

108. APPLICATION NO.193422 - LAKE LODGE, WARGRAVE ROAD, WARGRAVE

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed change of use from agricultural to personal leisure use including erection of summer house. (retrospective)

Applicant: Mr Justin Fletcher

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 115 to 132.

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

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether the summer house could be used as a form of permanent or semi-permanent residential accommodation. Brian O'Donovan, case officer, clarified that the proposals did not include permission for residential accommodation. The applicant would be required to apply for a change of use permission if they wished to use the dwelling as residential accommodation.

A number of Members commented that it was regrettable that this application had come to Committee as a retrospective application.

RESOLVED That application number 193422 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 116 to 117.

109. APPLICATION NO.200323 - ASHRIDGE MANOR GARDEN CENTRE, BINFIELD

Proposal: Full planning application for the erection of a single storey extension to the sales area to include 2No roller doors and 2No security doors

Applicant: Ashridge Manor Garden Centre

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 133 to 152.

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

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried where the proposed extension would be situated on the site. Brian O'Donovan, case officer, stated that the extension was to be located on the southernmost point of the site.

RESOLVED That application number 200323 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 133 to 134.

110. FOOTPATH 20 HURST DIVERSION

Proposal: Diversion Order Hurst Footpath 20

Applicant: St. Nicholas Hurst C of E Primary School

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 153 to 160.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) were the landowners of the playing field where the footpath ran, and the WBC commercial property team were in support of the proposals;
- The stile at Point E on Plan No. 1 had now been removed by the School.

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks queried whether all gates could accommodate wheelchairs and buggies. Andrew Fletcher, case officer, clarified that the proposals were compliant to accommodate both wheelchairs and buggies.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the school was happy with the removal of the top fence rail, with regards to safeguarding. Andrew Fletcher stated that the removal of the top fence rail had been proposed by the open spaces society. These proposals had been agreed in conjunction with the school.

Malcolm Richards queried whether approval of this footpath would nullify the existing footpath. Andrew Fletcher confirmed that if approved, the existing rights would be removed and the new lines would be officially added.

A number of Members commented that they were pleased that the proposals increased the safety of children at the school and safeguarding measures.

RESOLVED That the diversion order be made, subject to the points contained within the recommendation set out in agenda pages 153 to 154.

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