



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange,
Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday, 24th September 2018
at 3.00pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Joshua Schumann (Chairman)
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Derrick Beckett
Councillor David Chaplin
Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Stuart Smith

OFFICERS

Tim Driver – Planning Solicitor
Oli Haydon – Planning Officer
Chris Hancox – Planning Officer
Catherine Looper – Planning Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Anna Bailey (Agenda Item No. 9)
Councillor Julia Huffer (Agenda Item No's 10 & 12)
Approximately 28 members of the public

55. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Austen and Mark Goldsack.

There were no substitutions.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Edwards declared an interest in Agenda Item No 6 (18/00531/FUL, Witcham Lodge, Headleys Lane, Witcham, CB6 2LH) saying that in the interests of openness, she wished it to be noted that one of the applicants was the Principal of the fee paying school which her granddaughter attended and for which she paid the fees. She stated that she had had no discussions with the applicants.

- Concerns regarding highway safety; and
- Concerns regarding pedestrian access to and from the site.

65. 18/00840/OUT – COLLEGE FARM, MAIN STREET, WENTWORTH, CB6 3QG

Andrew Philips, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (reference T106, previously circulated) which sought permission for 6 self build units at the end of Main Street that would involve the demolition of the existing barn on site. This was an outline application with only access seeking to be determined at this stage. The Planning Team Leader confirmed that it was only Councillors Cheetham and Hugo who had objected as Ward Members, and not Councillor Smith

The application had been amended to remove some of the passing bays in order to overcome concerns raised regarding character and tree protection; in addition, the developer had provided an updated statement on biodiversity.

The main entrance to the site was via Main Street, but it had a country track that connected onto Haddenham Road to the east. Main Street was a single track lane that had several Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) either side of the road and there was also a TPO in the small copse of trees adjacent to the site entrance. The site was defined by a large barn structure; to its north were the existing dwellings along Main Street and there was open countryside to the south and west.

It was noted that the application had come to Planning Committee because Ward Councillors Steve Cheetham and Mark Hugo were seeking refusal of the scheme and the Officer's recommendation was one of approval.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. They included a map, an aerial image outlining the site, a plan of the access and another showing the proposed passing bay.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle;
- Highway Safety;
- Visual Impact/Historic Environment;
- Residential Amenity; and
- Ecology.

With regard to the principle of development, the Planning Team Leader reiterated that the Council was currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of land for housing and therefore the presumption should be in favour of sustainable development.

The site was adjacent to the village framework and the proposal was not an infill site but was replacing an existing relatively large barn. Members noted that the Parish was isolated and did not have any services beyond what was provided by the Church. Existing and proposed houses within the village would be considered to be unsustainable due to the reliance on private vehicles to access services, facilities and employment. However, the proposed development was small and would provide much needed self-build plots that would help to provide a continuous 5 year land supply.

Paragraph 78 of the NPPF made it clear that additional dwellings could help maintain the vitality of rural communities and that services could be located in a nearby settlement. In this case, the neighbouring villages of Sutton and Witchford offered a range of services and facilities to the village of Wentworth. On this basis the principle of development was considered to be acceptable.

It was considered that the proposal would generate little additional traffic along Main Street and while it was likely that each dwelling would have two cars, they were very unlikely to leave or enter the site at the same time. Main Street was a very narrow lane with limited passing spaces. The developer was seeking to provide an additional passing bay near 1 Main Street and while it would be adjacent to an approved driveway for a new dwelling, it was not considered that it would interfere with it. A Grampian Condition for the provision of the passing bay could be added and this would be under the control of the Local Highways Authority.

As the application was not determining scale, layout, design or landscape, it was only possible to consider potential impacts at this stage. It was likely that the built form on the site would not dramatically increase, so the visual impact on the character of the area would be relatively minor. The proposal would lead to the loss of some trees due to the widening of the entrance road but this could be mitigated by planting additional trees along the boundary; this could be secured at reserved matters.

Speaking next of residential amenity, the Planning Team Leader said that as the proposal was a very low density scheme, it should be possible to design the 6 dwellings to ensure there was no detrimental overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact on both the existing and proposed dwellings. The development might cause some disturbance to residents and with a single width lane, there was a reasonable concern that large vehicles might block the highway. It was therefore recommended that conditions be added requiring the developer to provide a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and to keep construction work within set socially acceptable time periods.

Members noted that the developer had provided an additional biodiversity Survey in order to update those carried out in 2017. The ecologist did not believe there would be any detrimental impact on protected species and a condition would be added to enhance ecology.

On balance it was considered that the benefits of the proposal outweighed the identified harm and the application was therefore recommended for approval.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Parish Councillor Soames Springthorpe, Wentworth Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- He was representing the Parish Council and parishioners;
- The housing figures were wrong because they were taken from the 2015 Local Plan. Wentworth had been identified to deliver 11 new homes by 2031 and 12 houses had already been approved ahead of that date;
- The Parish Council had actively engaged in all applications except this one, and the applicant did not attend the meeting;
- Development needed to be infill, not backfill. This would be a satellite development outside the development envelope and it would promote backfill. It was urban sprawl and if approved, would set a precedent;
- Two of the local District Councillors supported refusal and there were far more suitable locations for the development;
- The location was unsustainable and the passing place was not needed;
- Wentworth had embraced the need for new houses, but the proposal was counter to Green Policies for the village;
- The development would do harm and the only beneficiary would be the applicant.

Councillor Ambrose Smith asked Councillor Springthorpe if he thought a group of people building homes for their own occupation was an attractive prospect. She believed it presented the opportunity for 5 families to move into the village. Councillor Springthorpe replied that they wanted people to move into Main Street, inside the village framework.

Councillor Cox wished to know about the centre of the village, what land was available and who owned it. Councillor Springthorpe replied that the centre was towards the church and it was owned by the Church Commissioners; there was land available with road frontage next to the play park.

Councillor Ambrose Smith next asked if the site of the barn was brownfield land. The Planning Manager advised Members that General Development Permitted Order (GDPO) applications could convert barns into dwellings and there were up to 5 criteria to be satisfied under Permitted Development Rights.

Councillor Smith said he shared the concerns of the Parish Council and residents; isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided and this proposal would not be in keeping with the street scene.

Councillor Hunt proposed that the Officer's recommendation for approval be rejected, as he believed the development would have a negative impact on the character of the area, and it would damage village cohesion.

He felt that notice should be taken of the views of the Parish Council and local District Members. Councillor Smith seconded the motion for refusal.

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and to consider whether the proposal caused significant and demonstrable harm. He could not see that it would, and besides which, not everyone wanted to live in a town. He thought this to be a truly different option and said that some growth was needed in the smaller villages or they would lose their amenities.

The Committee returned to the motion for refusal. When put to the vote, it was declared lost, there being 2 votes for, 5 against and 1 abstention.

It was proposed by Councillor Cox and seconded by Councillor Ambrose Smith that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 5 votes for, 2 against and 1 abstention.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 18/00824/OUT be APPROVED subject to the conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

66. 18/00914/OUT – 34 MARKET STREET, FORDHAM, CB7 5LQ

Oli Haydon, Planning Officer, presented a report (reference T107, previously circulated) which sought outline planning consent for four dwellings, garaging and parking to the rear of 34 Market Street, Fordham. Access and scale were to be considered at this stage, with the matters of appearance, landscaping and layout remaining as reserved matters.

On a point of housekeeping, Members were asked to note that the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan had met the examiner's basic conditions and would now proceed to referendum. It should now be referred to as the '*Post Examination Neighbourhood Plan*.'

The site was located adjacent to the development envelope for Fordham. Running along the northern boundary was the 'Townsend Wood' Woodland Trust Reserve, an area of protected woodland. To the east of the site was open paddock land with residential development beyond. Immediately to the south-west was a recently approved development for two dwellings to the rear of 32 Market Street.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor Joshua Schumann for the reason stated in paragraph 2.3 of the Officer's report.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. They included a map, an aerial image outlining the site, an outline of the access and scale, and a photograph of the street scene.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of Development;