



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee facilitated via the Zoom Video Conferencing System at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 at 1:00pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr Bill Hunt (Chairman)  
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith  
Cllr Sue Austen  
Cllr David Brown  
Cllr Matt Downey  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Alec Jones  
Cllr Josh Schumann  
Cllr Lisa Stubbs (Vice Chair)  
Cllr John Trapp  
Cllr Gareth Wilson

### **OFFICERS**

Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager  
Angela Briggs – Team Leader  
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer  
Gemma Driver – Planning Officer  
Barbara Greengrass – Team Leader  
Toni Hylton – Senior Planning Officer  
Catherine Looper – Senior Planning Officer  
Andrew Phillips – Team Leader  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Cllr Julia Huffer

### **3. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Whelan, who had wished to speak on an application she had called in for discussion by the Committee, but was unable to attend this meeting. She had submitted a statement, with a request it be read out on her behalf at the appropriate time.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **5. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 be confirmed as correct records and be signed by the Chairman.  
The Chairman commented that following the previous meeting the Newmarket Journal, which had wrongly attributed a statement to Councillor Brown, had offered an apology and named the Member who had actually made the statement.

**6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**7. 19/01773/FUL – 11 ROBINS CLOSE, ELY**

Gemma Driver, Planning Officer, presented a report (reference V7, previously circulated) which sought full permission for additions and alterations comprising two storey side extension and necessary enabling work at 11 Robins Close, Ely.

The Planning Officer advised the Committee that the application sought a first floor extension over an existing single storey element. The application had been amended so that the weatherboarding would now be limited to the proposed extension only. This application had been called in to Committee by Councillor Christine Whelan, as there had been no objections from consultees.

The property was a detached dwelling within the development envelope, with a small grassed area to its front elevation. It was within an area of semi-detached and detached dwellings. The application proposed an extension measuring 4.1 metres wide by 9.3 metres deep above the single storey form. It included alterations to the porch and changing the roof. The proposal also included new windows within the extension.

The main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Impact on residential amenity;
- Impact on the visual amenity and character of the area.

**Residential Amenity**

The property was sited 11 metres away from 24 Merlin Drive and 15 metres away from 1 Heron Close. It was considered that the proposal would have no detrimental effect on residential amenity.

**Visual Amenity**

Under policy ENV1 any alterations should compliment and enhance the area's character. Under policy ENV2 consideration had to be given to its location, layout and massing. The Council's Design Guide also stated that any extension should be subservient to the main dwelling.

The proposed extension would be seen along Robins Close and Merlin Drive from all angles and was judged to be of considerable bulk. As a result there would be significant massing on the eastern boundary and it would change the

shape of the dwelling to an 'L'. The integrity of the existing building would therefore be lost.

On balance, the application was recommended for refusal as the extension would be overbearing due to its mass, would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the visual amenity and would not protect the character of the surrounding area.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Jamie Palmer, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The policies quoted were suitable for new properties, as new buildings should conform, but this was an existing dwelling.
- The Google photos used in the presentation were not up-to-date but the newer photos that had been circulated prior to the meeting showed that similar developments had been completed.
- The new built forms were close to pedestrian access and a footway, but this proposal was more acceptable as there is already a single storey built form and the proposal was not using garden space.
- The first floor extension includes a new bedroom for the family, due to limited floor space at present.
- Giving approval to the application would mean the unsightly flat roof would be removed, allow better materials to be used and would improve the overall design and street view.
- There had been no objections from any of the consultees nor neighbours.
- The precedent for this development in the area had already been set and it would not cause any harm to the area.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Palmer confirmed that the area adjacent to Merlin Drive was owned by the applicant and did consist of a gravelled area. There were around 4 or 5 properties in the area that had a similar extension developed.

The Chairman then asked that a statement submitted by Councillor Christine Whelan be read out. The statement stated the following:

I am in support of this application and would ask you consider this carefully. The application has been recommended for refusal by the officers on the grounds that it would not be in keeping with the street scene. Having looked at the area in question I am not convinced that the extension will have a massive impact on the area.

A similar extension was completed less than 100 metres down the street at No. 30 Merlin Drive in December last year only having had planning permission during the summer of 2019. There are many other similar extensions in the area, many on corners of cul-de-sacs.

This area has various designs including many extensions similar to this application. This area is not a conservation area, there would be no parking issues as there is no loss of parking spaces.

There were no concerns from the City of Ely Council and there have been no objections from the neighbours around the plot regarding this application.

Therefore, I am asking that the planning committee look at this application with the other similar properties in the area that have been approved and ask that you recommend that this application be approved.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Officer confirmed that the garage shown on one of the photos did belong to the applicant. An extension on 85 Downham Road was of similar scale but the site was located at the front of the estate, however, this application had to be assessed on its own merit. The only objection was due to its proposed bulk. The brickwork would be rendered with boarding above.

Councillor Ambrose Smith wanted to support the application as the existing single storey element was not pleasing to look at and the proposal could improve the dwelling's appearance so it would make a positive impact on the estate. Councillor Trapp thought there was not a lot to object to and it could enhance the visual impact. The flat roof was ugly and the extra storey would not cause overlooking. There had been no objections, so people were not worried about the extension being intrusive. Councillor Edwards, in agreeing with Councillor Trapp's comments stated that the second storey would improve the street scene. Councillor Wilson contended that it would not adversely affect any other residents, would improve the street scene and cause no harm. It would improve residents' amenity, provided the usual conditions were applied. Councillor Downey did not consider that any harm would be done, no damage to residential or visual amenity, it would not be overlooking and the corner would look more pleasing.

Councillor Brown supported the officer's view in that the proposed extension would be too big and intrusive.

Councillor Downey proposed that the officers' recommendation be rejected and that the application be approved, seconded by Councillor Trapp, as it would not damage the visual or residential amenity and that authority be given to the Planning Manager to agree suitable conditions.

When put to the vote the application was approved.

It was resolved:

- That planning application reference 19/01773/FUL be APPROVED as it would not significantly impact on residential amenity or the visual amenity of the area.
- It was further resolved that the Planning Manager be given delegated authority to impose suitable conditions.

**8. 20/00194/FUL – SITE REAR OF 38 HIGH STREET, CHIPPENHAM**

Catherine Looper, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (reference V8, previously circulated) which sought permission for the construction of 2 no. three bed detached two storey dwellings with attached single carports, access,

parking, on site turning and site works to site to the rear of 38 High Street, Chippenham.

The Senior Planning Officer advised the Committee of some 'housekeeping' in that Councillors should have received a copy of a letter from the neighbour who had objected to the application, stating that they were now satisfied with it and had withdrawn their objection.

The map included with the report showed the location of the site to the rear of 38 High Street, which was within the Conservation Area and Development Envelope. There was already existing access to the site and the proposal consisted of two detached dwellings with parking at the front and with carports. The overall heights of the dwellings would be 7.6 metre but they were set back on the site. There would be no first floor rear facing windows included.

The main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of development;
- Residential amenity;
- Visual impact;
- Impact on the Conservation Area;
- Highway matters.

#### Principle of Development

The site was within the development envelope and a previous application for one dwelling had been approved. Although permission for this had lapsed it was still relevant to this application.

#### Residential Amenity

The new dwellings would not harm nearby dwellings. There would be no habitable windows overlooking No. 37 High Street. It would have no significant impact on No. 38 High Street and it was located far enough away from No. 2 Scotland End.

#### Visual Amenity

The proposal and resultant change to the street scene would be in keeping with the area. The Appeal Decision on the previous application had not considered the development would be harmful to visual amenity. Nor was it considered that it would harm the Conservation Area or nearby buildings. Overall the public benefit outweighed any harm.

#### Highways

Two parking spaces would be provided on the site and a condition would be included to prevent the carports being converted. The central driveway would be used by both properties to turn vehicles around so they exited the site forwards. A condition would be included to prevent the installation of any gates

or other obstacles to block the central turning area. Highways had no objections to the proposals and the site would have no detrimental impact.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Jamie Palmer, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- Following the usual consultation only the Parish Council had objected to the proposal, due to its concern about highway safety and parking.
- The previous application had been refused and appealed and the Planning Inspector did not raise any concerns in relation to the visual appearance.
- So the previous application for larger dwellings had been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.
- The two dwellings proposal would result in a reduction of 12% of plot coverage from the previous application and with a reduction in height.
- The new scheme proposed two dwellings set further back into the plot to allow a vehicular turning area at the front.
- The communal areas led to individual parking spaces with no tandem parking and space to reverse.
- So vehicles would access the highway in forward gear.
- The access would remain free to accommodate vehicle turning.
- The ridge heights had also been reduced compared to the previous application, to limit the sense of scale.
- There were no concerns regarding visual amenity, residential amenity and the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- This application addressed all the reasons for dismissal at the Appeal and complies with policy.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Parish Councillor Fiona Maxwell, on behalf of Chippenham Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The Parish Council objected to the application and reminded the Committee that the previous application had been refused for this small site.
- The new application had not done enough to address the concerns raised.
- The conditions suggested would address those concerns but the Parish Council was concerned that they would not be enforced or if new residents would even be aware of them.
- Parking was an ongoing problem in the village and people parked in the village hall car park opposite the application site.
- That car park might have to close, so on-road parking would increase.
- The junction at Scotland End was already very busy.
- Ten new dwellings had already be approved in Scotland End so traffic congestion would increase, and the High Street was already used as a 'rat run'.
- This meant residents already had difficulty accessing that road.
- The District Council's 2015 Local Plan suggested that Chippenham should have three new dwellings but already eighteen had been approved.
- One dwelling on this site should be sufficient, not two, to make a positive contribution to the housing supply.

At the invitation of the Chairman, District Councillor Julia Huffer, Ward Councillor for Chippenham, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- One dwelling had been approved but now there was an application for two instead.
- The previous 4 bedroom dwelling approved would have been more in keeping with the area than this new application.
- Four cars at these dwellings would struggle to move out of the drive to access the highway.
- No visitor parking would be included.
- The Highways condition in the report, that vehicles left the site in a forward gear, could not be guaranteed.
- The Planning Committee had already approved an application for ten new dwellings in Scotland End and vehicles from there would exit onto the High Street close to the entrance to this site.
- So the one dwelling previous approved should only be allowed, to keep residents safe.

Following the comments made, the Senior Planning Officer advised the Committee that the application had been assessed against the Local Plan and two parking spaces per dwelling were permissible and in accordance with policy. Highways were satisfied that residents could use a forward gear to exit the site. The Committee was reminded that County Highways had no objections to the proposal.

In response to Members' questions, the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that Scotland End was a dead end, the garden space would have no impact on other houses, and the carports' ridge heights would be lower than the main houses.

Councillor Brown commented that this was a policy compliant scheme and that he totally agreed with the officer's recommendation.

Councillor Jones thought that the site was not the best location but the application adhered to relevant policies and therefore the application should be approved.

Councillor Stubbs agreed, stating that, although there was every sympathy with the Parish Council, the principle of development had already been established. It was hoped that the new residents would be sensible when emerging from the site. The application adhered to the Local Plan, so she was minded to support the application.

Councillor Ambrose Smith has visited the site twice recently, so was aware of its context. Unfortunately we did not live in an ideal world, so she would be supporting the application.

Councillor Schumann was a local Ward Member and found it very difficult to support this application. There were highways concerns, which had been reiterated by the Parish Council, and serious concerns about the potential for

serious accidents. Due to his knowledge of the site he could not support the application, even though it was policy compliant he believed refusing it would be the right thing to do.

Councillor Trapp also found it difficult to agree to this application, as an application for a single dwelling was granted 3½ years ago but had not proceeded and now there was an application for twice as many houses. This demonstrated that buildings were not being built and, if this application was accepted, it would send a message that developers could increase the number of dwellings it wanted once the principle of development had been granted. The site would be quite densely built compared to nearby houses which had substantial gardens. This application could not be supported.

Councillor Brown then proposed, seconded by Councillor Jones, that the application be approved.

When put to the vote the application was approved.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 20/00194/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

**9. 20/00258/FUL – PATTERSONS STORES, 11 MILL STREET, ISLEHAM**

Toni Hylton, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (reference V9, previously circulated) which sought consent for the erection of six dwellings with associated parking at 11 Mill Street, Isleham.

The Senior Planning Officer advised the Committee that the site was in the Conservation Area and within the Development Envelope. The six new dwellings would also include the creation of vehicular access. Plots 1, 2 and 3 will face Mill Street in a terrace with Plots 1 and 2 being 3 bedroom dwellings, Plot 3 a 4 bedroom dwelling. The simple design of these plots was in keeping with the surrounding area. Plot 4 would be a barn style 4 bedroom dwelling. Plot 5 was of a similarly designed 4 bedroom dwelling and Plot 6 would be a 2 storey 2 bedroom dwelling.

In considering this application, it should be compared with the previous application 18/01375/FUL which had been refused by Planning Committee. The main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- The principle of development.
- Residential Amenity.
- Visual Amenity.
- Ecology.
- Highways matters.

The development would be under 1000 square metres, so there would be no affordable housing included. The previous application had been refused due to a number of reasons relating to the demolition of the existing buildings. The



new application had changed the layout of the dwellings, which now included a terrace of dwellings with parking to the rear. Plots 4 and 5 now included carports and Plot 6 had been reduced to a 2 bedroom dwelling with no wing to the rear and had been re-sited adjacent to neighbouring outbuildings. Planting to the borders would also be included. This demolition of the old Pattersons Stores was not part of this application, as the building had already been demolished on health and safety grounds, due to the potential danger to the public and supported by Building Control.

#### Principle of Development

The application site was within the Development Envelope and would provide a net gain of 5 dwellings. The application would provide an efficient use of the land.

#### Residential Amenity

There would be no direct overlooking of properties in Limestone Close, so there would be no demonstrable harm. A condition could be applied to remove permitted development rights to ensure no additional windows could be added without the relevant permissions. Plot 6 had also be re-positioned following the previous refusal to reduce overbearing on the properties on Limestone Close.

#### Visual Amenity

The site was in a central location within the settlement. The proposed 3 dwellings to face Mill Street would be of a simple design with good garden sizes and would retain the character of the Conservation Area.

#### Highways Matters

The application would deliver 2 parking spaces per dwelling as well as visitor parking. The road was not to an adoptable standard. All highway safety requirements would be met and there were no objections from the Highways Authority.

#### Ecology

There would be a net biodiversity gain.

Overall this application overcame the reasons for refusal from the previous application. There would be no overlooking, Plot 6 had been revised, 50 square metres of garden per plot would be included, there would be adequate parking spaces and materials would be re-used. Therefore the application was recommended for approval.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Kelvin Morgan, in objecting to the application, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- There was little change from the previous application, which had been refused.
- It would have a negative impact on Limestone Close.

- Plot 6 would be overbearing, as it would be built on a bank and would be only 12 metres from, and over look, his home and other dwellings.
- The scale of Plot 6 would also block some views.
- The bank edge would not support any development.
- Increasing the heights of the buildings would make matters worse.
- The development would fail to give sufficient separation.
- The suggested Planning Conditions would be hard to enforce.
- The proposed hedges would not be sufficient.
- It would fail to enhance the Conservation Area.
- It would be an overdevelopment of the site.
- Fewer larger plots would be less likely to be overdevelopment.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Linda Walker, agent for the application, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The report was comprehensive and gave a history of the site.
- It showed that the applicants had worked closely with Planning officers on the application, with numerous pre-application meetings being held.
- This application had been deemed acceptable by all concerned and a high quality construction can be achieved.
- The proposed conditions would ensure high quality materials would be used.
- Paragraph 4.3 of the report noted that the Pattersons Stores had become vacant in 2008 and had been in a poor state before the current owner bought the site.
- Because of health and safety issues, caused by storm damage and not neglect, the building had to be demolished.
- The applicant refutes claims he purposely damaged the property.
- The design of the new dwellings had been informed by Council officer, including the conservation Officer.
- The designs were of a simple appearance to respect the locality.
- The poor quality clunch wall would be rebuilt and extend along the full boundary.
- The new dwellings would not be overbearing and no existing properties would be overlooked.
- Plot 6 had been reduced in size to a simple rectangular form, to address the concerns raised by the previous refusal.
- Amenity would not be an issue.
- Only 26% of the site would be built on, so there would be no overdevelopment.
- If the store was still open then an outbuilding could be constructed on the site under permitted development.
- The reasons for refusal of the previous application had been addressed.

Councillor Schumann asked whether the agent was aware that the windows on the Pattersons Stores building had been left open and whether that had been dealt with, as it incumbent on the owner to protect it.

In response, it was revealed that once the issue had been brought to the owner's attention it had been dealt with. The owner did not occupy the building. When it was demolished the Council officers stated that it was not of historic importance.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Parish Councillor Richard Radcliffe, on behalf of the Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The Parish Council objected strongly to this application.
- The application had not been locally led and there had been no engagement.
- It would cause an unacceptable impact on the community.
- The property was occupied until 2016 not 2008 as stated.
- The Design Statement stated that it would use a blend of sympathetic materials, but there was no evidence for that.
- The layout would not line up with the historic village or represent the history of the site.
- Shifting the dwellings further north would obstruct the view of the church tower, part of the listed building. This is a view the Parish Council wished to preserve.
- The three rear dwellings would dominate existing buildings.
- The position of Plot 6 and its form would be overbearing and cause demonstrable harm.
- The site density has been compared to Limestone Close which has a higher density as it is sheltered housing, whereas other dwellings in the locality were not as dense.
- It was noted with dismay that part of the site would include some gravel, which would be spread about.
- The application was hardly likely to enhance the Conservation Area, so the application should be refused.

Councillor Jones asked which properties would lose the view to the church. Councillor Radcliffe stated that if you were on Mill Street the church could be viewed via the open space at the north end of the site. In answer to Councillor Trapp's enquiry the Committee was informed that the land was 4.2 metres higher than Limestone Close.

At the invitation of the Chairman, District Councillor Julia Huffer, Ward Member for Isleham, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- Isleham was 'under the cosh' for development with many applications being sought and it had taken enough development.
- The demolition of the existing stores had been tragic.
- This application would be out of kilter with the essence of Isleham.
- It would destroy the quiet and enjoyment of Limestone Close.
- A smaller scheme would have been more sympathetic and could have been better.
- This is unnecessary and unwanted.

In reply to Councillor Hunt's questions, the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the Conservation Officer and the Historic England reference was from the Conservation Officer and had no issues with the application, there would be a condition to re-use

old materials in the wall, carports would be incorporated as well as parking to the front and this would include the three dwellings fronting the main road.

In response to Councillor Trapp's query about the gravel, the committee was informed that the area concerned appeared to be tarmac. Gravel would be retained on the public right of way at number 30. The Agent stated that the area would be tarmac but gravel could be compressed into it to give a softened appearance. The only gravel related to number 30, as the other areas would be block paved, but the applicant would be happy to deal with this under a relevant condition. The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that under proposed Condition 18 the applicant would have to submit details of the hard landscaping materials to be used.

Councillor Ambrose Smith had visited the site a few months ago and was familiar with Limestone Close. If the site had remained as commercial land the village could have ended up with a large unsightly shed. The site was in the heart of the village and was not seeking to stretch into the countryside. It would be a good use of the site. Although she understood the residents' misgivings the housing design would be better than a commercial building.

Councillor Schumann asked whether buildings over 2 metres could be built under permitted development rights as the agent had suggested if it was still in its previous use or if they needed planning permission. The Planning Manager explained that the permitted development legislation allowed for the erection of some buildings but it would depend a number of different criteria being met. Councillor Schumann thought the Parish Council representative had articulated their arguments well and acknowledged the adverse impact of the application on the Conservation Area due to the proposed bin store at the front of the site and massing. He agreed that the proposal would have a negative impact and would be out of keeping with the built form. It would also completely block the view of the listed building. It would be naïve to think that the 4.5 metre higher building overlooking existing dwellings would not have an impact. He was very disappointed over the performance in neglecting the stores building as this was not an acceptable way to get round planning regulations.

Councillor Trapp considered the application would be overbearing and over development of the site. It was more like a suburban development and would not be in keeping with the village.

Councillor Brown had hoped that something in the heart of the village would have been much better designed. The buildings would be crammed into the site, causing over development, and the location of the bin stores was unsuitable. Plot 6 would be squeezed into the site and it had no garage and don't like the parking arrangements for plots 1-3.

Councillor Jones was not concerned about the density of dwellings proposed and thought the scheme would be sustainable due to its central location, as it met some criteria. It would give an opportunity for local buyers to purchase a home. Plot 6 was always going to be a problem, but the amendments to the proposal would make it less intrusive. Any development on this site would be objected to but development could not be stopped. The proposed buildings would not overlook directly and there were no concerns about the proposed material to be used. Overall the application was borderline but could be accepted.

Councillor Hunt considered the site to be important and that the site was sustainable and there will be development and houses on this site. However, this application had not quite got things right yet.

Councillor Schumann proposed that the application be refused, as it was out of keeping with the street scene, would be overdevelopment, would impact the Conservation Area, would block the view to a listed building and Plot 6 would be overbearing to residents in Limestone Close. This was duly seconded by Councillor Trapp and when put to the vote the application was refused.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 20/00258/FUL be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- Out of keeping with the street scene
- Overdevelopment
- Detrimental harm to the Conservation Area and setting of St Andrew's Church, a Listed Building
- Plot 6 overbearing to residents in Limestone Close.

**10. 20/00286/VAR – 55 POUND LANE, ISLEHAM**

Catherine Looper, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (reference V10 previously circulated) which sought to vary Condition 1 of previously approved 19/01115/OUT for construction of 2 no. detached single storey dwellings and associated works at a site north of 55 Pound Lane, Isleham.

The Senior Planning Officer reminded the Committee that the previously approved application involved 2 single storey dwellings on a site with a significant hedge around it. The only difference the variation sought to change was to allow the insertion of rooms in the roof space. This would lead to an overall height increase of 0.9 metres and the installation of dormer windows. The overall design would not change. The site was currently vacant but it was previously used as garden land and not agricultural.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of Development
- Residential Amenity
- Visual Amenity
- Highways Matters

**Principle of Development**

This had already been established with the previous approved application, as the site was close to a settlement and the number of dwellings proposed remained the same

### Residential Amenity

There would be a suitable relationships between the dwellings and the addition of rooms in the roof did not alter the relationship between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring dwellings. The amenity space had been approved as part of the previous application and there were no changes to this.

### Visual Amenity

The proposed scale of the dwellings was appropriate. The retention of the hedge, to be secured by condition, would mitigate any impact. The installation of dormer windows would have no impact.

### Highways Matters

Access to the site and parking provision had not changed from the previously agreed permission.

No objections had been received and, on balance, the variation was recommended for approval as it would not do any significant or demonstrable harm.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Parish Councillor Richard Radcliffe, on behalf of the Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The Parish Council had consistently objected to developments in the open countryside.
- The Parish Council objected strongly to increasing the mass of the proposed dwellings.
- Previously the District Council had agreed that the dwellings would be of a suitable scale to nearby dwellings.
- This variation would change the dwellings to 1.5 storey height, which the District Council still accepts as a size similar to nearby dwellings.
- This proposal would change the dwellings from 2 bedroom to 4 bedroom.
- Isleham had seen an imbalance of larger dwellings being built, so no more were needed.
- The design would be radically different, as the roof mass would increase by 20%, thereby affecting the visual amenity.
- The real impact would be along Little London Drove, which was heavily used, as its views of the church would significantly impacted.
- The application should therefore be refused.

The Senior Planning Officer reminded the Committee that the application was not for a new development. It was the same development with the same footprint. There would only be a slight increase in roof heights by 0.9 metres, which would not protrude above the neighbouring roof line, with additional windows. Relevant planning policies and been complied with and the application did not warrant refusal.

Councillor Brown queried whether reserved matters applied to this variation. The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that only landscaping matters were outstanding and they would require a reserved matters application.

Councillor Ambrose Smith thought this minor variation would not make any difference. The two extra bedrooms would be very useful, allowing people to work from home.

Councillor Schumann was concerned that the applicants had applied for more, after achieving planning permission on their previous application. Visually this was for a very small addition and the Planning officers had got their recommendation right. Conditions 17 and 18 were crucial in preventing 'mission creep'.

Councillor Trapp was also concerned about applicants seeking further permissions as this application had been granted only 6 months ago. The variation would make little difference, though the height would be quite visible.

Councillor Jones agreed there would be no significant impact and therefore proposed that the officer's recommendation to approve the variation be agreed.

Councillor Brown seconded the motion, but also expressed concern about people trying to add more once they had obtain permission. Officers had to be wary of this during pre-application negotiations.

When put to the vote the application was approved.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 20/00286/VAR be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

## **11. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (reference V11, previously circulated) which outlined the performance of the Planning Department from January to April 2020.

The Planning Manager advised the Committee that due to committee meetings being cancelled and then the introduction of remote committees the report had not been presented to Members as it normally would, but would become a regular item again going forward. . The report set out the number of applications received and determined, enforcement cases received and closed and appeals received for each of the four months.

January and February had seen an increase in applications but, since the Council had announced that it had a 5-year housing supply, there had been a drop in applications in March and April, which could also be down to the current situation. There had been a number of Appeals received and appeal decisions received, as set out in the report. The Planning Inspectorate was currently

amending how they work due to the COVID outbreak and this had meant a delay in some appeals starting and also being determined.

The Planning Department were still operating as normal and were open for business and site visits were being made, but officers were advised not to enter houses or buildings and we were not carrying out face to face meetings. Councillors Brown and Schumann expressed thanks for the efforts being made by the Department to continue working and providing a service.

It was resolved:

That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 3:15pm.