

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee

held on Wednesday, 27 January 2021 at
6.00 pm



A virtual meeting

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Max Thompson (Chair), Val Shaw (Vice-Chair), Jerry Avery, Ron Batstone, Hayleigh Gascoigne (substituting for Councillor Robert Maddison), Jenny Hannaby, Diana Lugova, Mike Pighills and Janet Shelley

Officers: Paul Bateman, Martin Deans, Sarah Green, Emily Hamerton, Andy Heron, George Jackson, Susannah Mangion

Also present:

Councillor Paul Barrow, Councillor Eric de la Harpe

Number of members of the public: 11

PI.205 Chair's announcements

The Chair ran through housekeeping arrangements appropriate to a virtual meeting.

PI.206 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Maddison.

PI.207 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 and Wednesday 2 December 2020, were agreed to be a correct record of the meetings. It was agreed that the chair sign them as such.

PI.208 Declarations of interest

Referring to 39A and 39B Ock Street, Abingdon, (item 10 on the agenda, applications P19/V3158/FUL and P20/V2131/LB) the Chair declared that he was a resident of Ock

Street, Abingdon, but lived at a sufficiently great distance from the application site to not have an interest in the proposals.

PI.209 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

PI.210 Public participation

The committee had received a list of public speakers and statements which had been made by the public in respect of the applications. These had been circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

PI.211 P19/V1728/RM - Land at Appleford Road, Sutton Courtenay (Former Amey Works)

Councillor Jenny Hannaby joined the meeting after its commencement and did not hear the whole debate on this application and did not participate in the vote on this application.

Owing to telecommunication difficulties, Councillor Diana Lugova did not hear the whole debate and did not vote on this application.

The committee considered application P19/V1728/RM a reserved matters application for details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the proposed development following planning permission P18/V0069/O. (Amended plans received 1 October 2020 and 4 December 2020 to show amendments to design, housing mix and layout, and landscaping).(Residential development of 91 dwellings and associated access) on land at Appleford Road, Sutton Courtenay (Former Amey Works).

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer reported that the proposed development comprised 91 dwellings of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed units, with a mixture of flats, terraces, semi-detached and detached properties. Planning officers had worked hard together to provide safe and attractive accessible public open space for the residents. It was intended that a locally equipped area of play (LEAP) would be situated to the eastern central area, and a smaller local area of play (LAP) would be situated to the south-western corner of the site. The LAP would be 100 square metres, the minimum sized requirement. The planning officer provided the committee with a slide in connection with the management plan. Although this was not a matter covered by the planning permission, it was important to inform the committee that a private a management company would gift half of the bund area to residents to use and to manage.

The planning officer clarified paragraph 5.31 regarding car parking. The development would provide 223 car parking spaces, which equated to 2.5 spaces per property, representing 43 spaces above the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) standard.

Mr. Ian Bush, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application.

Ms. Caroline Green, the agent, spoke in support of the application.

In response to a question, it was reported that 12 of the dwellings out of the 91 in the development would be installed with electric vehicle (EV) charging points. The committee were most supportive in principle of EV points in developments. However, it considered that 12 dwellings represented an unacceptably low proportion of all the properties.

In response to further questions, it was confirmed that the application did not include access to Millennium Common; a pedestrian link between the development and Millennium Common had been removed at the landowner's request. The planning officer also confirmed that there would not be an environmental impact assessment at this site, as the development would not meet the threshold for an assessment. With reference to paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 of the report concerning 'movement and access', the planning officer reported that OCC as highway authority had reviewed the proposal and raised no objections in terms of highway safety. Improving the infrastructure outside the development area would not be possible.

In respect of a question regarding a better market housing mix, to include a larger number of smaller units, the planning officer reported that the developer had made changes to the mix, but overall, the figures were acceptable to the council. The committee were concerned at the small size of some of the gardens.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant planning permission, failed on being put to the vote.

A motion moved and seconded, to defer determination of application P19/V1728/RM to have a site visit and to allow for further negotiations was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: that consideration of application P19/V1728/RM be deferred to facilitate a site visit and to allow for further negotiations.

PI.212 P20/V0526/FUL - Westcot Farm, Westcot, Wantage

Councillor Jenny Hannaby encountered technical communication problems during the presentation of this item. The councillor was unable to participate in or hear the whole debate and did not vote on this application.

The committee considered application P20/V0526/FUL an application for the conversion of existing farm buildings to form seven family homes with associated parking, amenity areas, landscaping, and associated works. (Amended plans and information received 24 August 2020 as detailed in the accompanying covering letter). (Additional waste vehicle tracking plan received 4 September 2020) at Westcot Farm, Westcot, Wantage.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer reported that the proposal site was not located within a designated conservation area but was in a rural location. This conversion of redundant farm buildings to dwellings had a number of innovative design aspects associated with it. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) placed significant weight on innovative design promoting sustainability. The proposal included making the dwellings sustainable in terms of energy use, with solar panels, heat recovery and electric vehicle charging points.

The planning officer reported that paragraph 79 of the NPPF also supported homes in the countryside if the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. The planning officer also reported that under Policy DP7 in Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2), "Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy". This proposal complied with that policy.

The planning officer advised the committee that the conservation officer considered that there was scope to convert the existing barns, which would enhance the setting of the grade II listed barn and the non-designated assets on the site. In conclusion, the planning officer reported that in the view of officers, the proposal represented a good use of a brownfield site which was not harmful to neighbours' visual amenity and was not out of character with the area. There were no outstanding technical objections to the proposal, notably no highways objection. Officers therefore recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Councillor Tim Comyn, Chairman of Sparsholt Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application.

Mr. Tom Tuke-Hastings, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application.

Mr. Tom Pryor, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application.

Mr. David Burson, the agent, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Paul Barrow, the local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

In response to a question, relating to paragraph 5.29 of the report, the planning officer reported that the intention of a grampian condition was to ensure that off-site works were completed prior to the commencement of the main development. The committee noted that an aspiration of the development was to install electric vehicle charging points in the residents' parking bays and also the visitors' parking spaces. Minimal gas boilers would be subject to future discussions at the next design stage. It was noted that window louvres would be added to afford additional screening to prevent overlooking.

In respect of Barn G, the committee was concerned about the preservation of a tall leylandii hedge along the north and west boundaries of the site and considered that the proposed 2 metres height was not adequate for screening purposes. Therefore, an additional condition would be required, in the event of permission being granted, to preserve its height to a minimum of 3 metres and to ensure that replanting took place in the event of its removal or dying.

The planning officer reported, in response to question from the committee regarding potential light pollution, that external lighting on buildings would be controlled by condition, whereas internal light emanating from windows was not included.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant planning permission was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to grant planning permission for application P20/V0526/FUL, subject to the following conditions, including an additional condition in respect of the preservation of the hedge along the north and west boundaries of the site:

1. Commencement three years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans

Pre-commencement

3. Off site highway improvements to passing places
4. Bat licence submission
5. Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement strategy submission
6. Surface water drainage scheme submission
7. Foul water drainage scheme submission
8. Landscaping and boundary scheme submission

Pre-occupation

9. Access, turning, parking in accordance with plans
10. Contamination remediation and validation report completed
11. External lighting scheme submission
12. Electric charging points in accordance with plans
13. Bicycle storage in accordance with plans
14. Removal of buildings in accordance with plans
15. Materials in accordance with plans/information

Compliance

16. Landscaping scheme implementation
17. Retention of hedges
18. Permitted development removal for alterations and outbuildings
19. Permitted development removal for boundary changes

PI.213 P20/V2180/HH - 22 Thornley Close, Abingdon

The committee considered application P20/V2180/HH for the erection of 1.8m fence. (Retrospective) (Additional information - visibility splays rec 29 Oct 2020) (Additional information - revised visibility splays and photo rec 11 Nov 2020) at 22 Thornley Close, Abingdon.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer reported that the premises where the 1.8 metre fence was located were on a corner location on a road with modern housing. The site featured existing close board fencing either end of the road, and a nearby communal car parking area also had this fencing. It was reported that Abingdon Town Council had concerns about the possible impact of the fencing on the character of the area. Council planning officers considered that this retrospective application would not be detrimental in the context of this modern development, with hard surfacing as a feature, and was in keeping with existing visual amenity.

The democratic services officer reported that a statement by the Abingdon Town Council, received on the day of the meeting, had been emailed to all members of the committee.

Mr. Jeremy Phelps, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application.

Mr. Sumon Bhattacharrya, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Eric de la Harpe, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

Mr. Andrew Mason, of Oxfordshire County Council highways department, advised the committee regarding visibility splays on this road. He referred to an analogous appeal decision in this area of Abingdon, stating that although the visibility splay at Thornley Close might not meet normal standards, namely that a driver should see the edge of road from 43 metres distance and 2.4 metres back into the turning, it would be possible to edge forward in safety, as this was a road having very low levels of traffic. Therefore, there were no highways safety issues upon which to object.

In response to a question from the committee regarding flooding, the planning officer reported that flood mapping of this area was out of date. This was an issue examined during the initial modelling for this application and there did not appear to be any flooding issues at the present time.

The committee, whilst always supporting the principle of green space features, accepted that the landscaping of the area was limited, but in keeping with the local area's character. In addition, it was satisfied with the explanations regarding highways safety, and considered that permission should be granted.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant planning permission was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to grant planning permission for application P20/V2180/HH, subject to the following conditions:

Standard:

1. Approved plans

Compliance:

2. Materials in Accordance with Application

PI.214 P19/V3185/FUL & P20/V2131/LB - 39a & 39b Ock Street, Abingdon

This application was deferred due to the meeting guillotine having been reached prior to its consideration. It would be considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 11 February 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm