

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 16 August 2023 at 7.00 pm in  
Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close,  
Abingdon, OX14 3JE

**Open to the public, including the press**

### **Present in the meeting room:**

Councillors: Val Shaw (Vice-Chair – in the chair), Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Robert Clegg, Jenny Hannaby, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Mike Pighills, and Emily Smith  
Officers: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer), Paula Fox (Development Manager), and Kerry Street (Planning Officer)

### **Remote attendance:**

Officers: Bertie Smith (Broadcasting Officer) and Abbie Barnes (Planning Officer)

### **33 Chair's announcements**

The vice-chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the meeting procedure to be followed. She also explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

### **34 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Max Thompson (chair), who was substituted for Councillor Robert Clegg, and Councillor Jill Rayner, who was substituted for Councillor Emily Smith.

### **35 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 26 July 2023 as correct records and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

### **36 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Val Shaw declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda due to application P23/V1093/HH being in her ward and so she would not take part in the debate or vote on this application.

### **37 Urgent business**

There was no urgent business.

### **38 Public participation**

The committee noted the list of the members of the public who had registered to speak at the meeting.

### **39 P21/V3520/FUL - 3-7 Marlborough Street, Faringdon, SN7 7JE**

The committee considered planning application P21/V3520/FUL for the redevelopment of an existing redundant site for mixed-use residential and retail development, including the provision of parking, refuse and cycle storage and associated works following partial demolition of the existing retail unit, as amended by: (additional and amended information received 28 February 2022), (additional and amended information received 22 November 2022 to revise site layout in respect of bins, cycle parking, pedestrian access and turning provision and provide PRA ), (amended elevation plan rec 5 Dec 2022), (amended plans rec 19 Dec 2022 revising car and cycle parking and providing bin presentation point), (additional bat surveys received 16 June 2023), on land at 3-7 Marlborough Street, Faringdon.

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 introduced the report and highlighted that the application was brought to the committee as the Vale of White Horse District Council owns the land to the rear of the site (Southampton Street Car Park).

The planning officer informed the committee that the site was located in Faringdon town centre and within the Faringdon Conservation Area. The site also fronted onto Marlborough Street to the north-west and Southampton Street Car Park to the south-east. In addition, the committee was informed that there were several grade II listed buildings near the site: the Roman Catholic Church of Blessed Hugh and St Thomas to the south-west, the Corn Exchange and former Savings Bank across Marlborough Street to the north, and the Red Lion former public house adjoining the site to the north-east.

The planning officer also noted that the frontage of the site onto Marlborough Street was a pair of 19th century town houses with a single-story link, in which one was occupied by Costa Coffee and the other was formerly occupied by Budgens, and the rear was enclosed and developed into retail space but was currently unused.

It was also noted that a previous scheme was approved in 2020 which accepted the principle of development due to the reduced floor space for retail which was believed to increase the viability of future retail occupants and in turn enhance the town. The dwellings were also sited further away from grade II listed church in the current application than in the previously approved one. Due to these amendments, the conservation officer viewed the present scheme as being better than the previously approved application.

As the application would provide seven new flats, the proposed car parking provision of 14 spaces was confirmed by the planning officer to be in compliance with the parking standards. The planning officer also highlighted a correction to the report as point 5.26 should read '14 unallocated car parking spaces', not 15.

On the character and design of the development, the planning officer informed the committee that it was officer's opinion that the application would be in keeping with the surrounding area as it would be traditional in appearance and so respond appropriately to the Faringdon Conservation Area. She also informed the committee that confirmation about the use of materials was proposed as a recommended condition on approval of the application.

Overall, the planning officer confirmed that the application complied with the local and neighbourhood plans, would provide additional residential dwellings in the town centre, utilise a brownfield site, include new and existing retail, whilst making them the site more viable in current economic climate, conserve and enhance the conservation area, and not damage nearby listed buildings or neighbouring amenity. For all those reasons, the planning officer recommend the application be approved.

Councillor Mike Wise spoke on behalf of Faringdon Town Council, in support of the application.

Johnathan Headland, the agent representing the applicant, and Gene Webb, spoke in support of the application.

The committee inquired into the carbon reduction and biodiversity features of the scheme and the planning officer confirmed that solar panels were proposed in the application as well as the use of gas- free heating and hot water. On biodiversity, she also noted that the application would achieve biodiversity net gain and that there were conditions on approval which required bird and bat boxes to be provided on site.

On a question about the potential for rear access for delivery lorries, the planning officer clarified that deliveries for the retail units were currently done via Marlborough Street. However, due to the proposed access improvements and the provision of a lorry turning point within the site which would allow them to leave onto Marlborough Street facing forward, she believed that the application would be an improvement to the current situation.

Members then asked about if there was a lack of parking provision for the retail workers. In response, the planning officer highlighted to the committee that the retail units proposed were reduced significantly in size and that, as the site was in a very sustainable location due to the close proximity of public transport links and the car park to the rear, Oxfordshire County Council highways had raised no objection on those grounds as they did not believe dedicated parking for those workers was required.

Overall, as the committee were was satisfied with the planning officer's response to their questions and that the application would be a positive redevelopment of a brownfield site in the conservation area, would enhance the street scene, deliver additional dwellings to bring more vitality to the town centre, and was a large improvement on the original scheme, they it was agreed that the application should be approved subject to conditions.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to approve planning application P21/V3520/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

Standard:

1. Commencement within three years
2. Approved plans list

Pre-commencement:

3. Sample materials to be submitted
4. Schedule of external repairs and alterations to retained building to be submitted
5. Surface water drainage scheme to be submitted
6. Foul water drainage scheme to be submitted
7. Construction Traffic Management Plan to be submitted
8. Archaeological Watching Brief and Written Scheme of Investigation to be submitted
9. Refuse and recycling details to be submitted
10. Landscaping scheme to be submitted (and implemented)
11. Contamination land phased risk assessment to be submitted
12. Biodiversity strategy to be submitted
13. Details of balcony screening to be submitted

Pre-occupation:

14. Access and visibility splays provided in accordance with plans
15. Turning area provided in accordance with plans
16. Car parking provided in accordance with plans
17. Cycle parking provided in accordance with plans
18. Contamination validation report to be submitted

Compliance:

19. No gates to be erected at the site access/within 10m of highway
20. Implementation of programme of archaeological works

**40 P23/V1093/HH - 39 Wootton Village, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5HP**

As the acting chair, Councillor Val Shaw, stood down from the committee for this item as she was the local ward member, the committee held an election for a chair.

**RESOLVED:** that in the absence of the chair and vice-chair, Councillor Mike Pighills be elected as chair.

The committee considered planning application P23/V1093/HH for the proposed driveway / dropped kerb, (as amplified by additional information received 22 June 2023), on land at 39 Wootton Village, Boars Hill, Oxford.

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 introduced the report and highlighted that the application was called into the committee by the local ward member, Councillor Val Shaw.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application was for an additional access for one of the two detached dwellings approved in 2021 on the west side of Wootton Village Road.

In response to the original objection from Oxfordshire County Council highways, a vision splays plan was submitted. When reconsulted, highways removed their objection subject to conditions but noted that the nearby conifer tree would need to be regularly maintained.

The planning officer informed the committee that although the access would remove some greenspace, area of verge to the north and south would remain, as well as the recently planted tree. In addition, as she believed that the application would not harm the appearance of the area or neighbouring amenity, and that as highways had no objection, she recommended the application be approved.

Councillor Gerardine Quaghebeur spoke on behalf of Wootton Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Councillor Val Shaw, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked about the representations from Oxfordshire County Council highways and what the reasons were behind the change from their initial objection. In response, the planning officer confirmed that when the applicant submitted additional information around visibility splays, although it did not cover all the points they raised, highways were no longer able to maintain an objection. Members noted the position of highways and that as the land of proposed driveway belonged to them, and as they had no objection, they had given permission for the application. However, the committee maintained concerned about some of the points detailed in highways first representation and felt that they were not addressed.

When asked about how many other driveways on the road had a similar access, the planning officer confirmed there were several such accesses in both directions along the road.

The committee also inquired into the potential loss of street parking for school pick up and drop off, but they accepted the input from the planning officer that street parking was not a material planning consideration for the application as there was no allocated parking for school pickup and drop off that would be affected by the application, so it could not be protected for that use.

Members discussed the area around the site and weighed up the planning balance between providing the access and the potential loss of amenity, greenspace, and the impact on pedestrians. They also noted that the site was unique from other points along the road due to the green verge and that only some of the verge to the north and south would be kept if the application were to be approved.

Members then inquired into how enforceable the turning area, noted in the current plan, would be and how the council could ensure that it would not be used as another parking space. In response, the planning officer confirmed that there were conditions on the application to ensure the use of the land as approved and that if this was not

used as a turning space in practice it could be subject to enforcement action. However, it was also noted that this was not material to the current application.

Although some members believed that, as highways had no objection, the application should be approved, the committee maintained concerned that the application would have safety implications for the people walking from the school and that there would be a loss of green amenity space. For these reasons, members did not vote to approve the application.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was not carried on being put to the vote.

Overall, the committee agreed that there was not enough information on the access, erosion of the greenspace, and about the loss of amenity to make a decision on the application. Therefore, they agreed that the application should be deferred in order for a site visit to take place where the highways officer could be present to walk members through the site.

A motion, moved and seconded, to defer the application in order to carry out a site visit with highways officers present was carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to defer application P23/V1093/HH in order for a site visit to take place, with Oxfordshire County Council Highways officers present.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm