

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 31 MAY 2023

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Yeo (Vice-Chair), Davies, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Moore, Robinson, Rowland and Williams

Apologies: Councillor Cresswell

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair welcomed the new and returning members of the Committee for the new Municipal Year and paid tribute to Councillor Page who had been elected as Mayor for 2023/24 and had stepped down from the Committee. The Committee recorded its thanks to Councillor Page for his many years of diligent service as a member of the Planning Applications Committee.

RESOLVED ITEMS

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications.

It was reported at the meeting that officers would trial videoing the next accompanied site visit to see if this would be helpful for members of the Committee who could not attend site visits in person. Updates on the plans for previously agreed site visits were also given as follows:

- 220409 - Caversham Park – accompanied site visit on 31 August 2023 or later if necessary
- 221345 - Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road – unaccompanied site visit
- 221364 – Central Club, 36-42 London Street – accompanied site visit on 15 June 2023
- 221130 - Fire Station 103 Dee Road – accompanied site visit carried out on 25 May 2023

Resolved –

That the report and position be noted and no additional applications be the subject of site visits.

3. PLANNING APPEALS

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(i) New Appeals

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule giving details of notification received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding one planning appeal, the method of determination for which she had already expressed a preference in accordance with delegated powers, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(ii) Appeals Recently Determined

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted details of four decisions that had been made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose, which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions

There were no reports on appeal decisions.

Resolved –

- (1) That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted.
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;
- (3) That the reports on the appeal decisions in Appendix 3 and the update report be noted.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of twelve prior approval applications received, and in Table 2 of 17 applications for prior approval decided, between 17 March and 17 May 2023.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL 2022/23

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out details of the work and performance in the Planning Development Management, Planning Enforcement, Planning Policy and Building Control teams during 2022/23.

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The report included details of the improvement in dealing with the backlog in the Planning Enforcement team's work and explained how further improvements were being made and staff recruitment was being carried out.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the new Planning Enforcement Team structure and plans for handling the backlog of work, and then an interim report be submitted to the Committee after six months, providing an update on planning enforcement.

6. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - CORNER OF GOSBROOK ROAD & GEORGE STREET, CAVERSHAM

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on an objection to Tree Preservation Order No. 6/22 relating to Land on the corner of Gosbrook Road and George Street, Caversham. A copy of the TPO plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that, following the land being sold in 2022, tree works had commenced on the site and an emergency Area TPO (ref 3/22) had been served on 8 June 2022 to protect all Poplar trees on site until discussions with the new owner could take place and the condition of the trees established. Following service of the TPO, it had been agreed that one of the Poplar trees could be felled under the 'dead dangerous' exemption and permission had been given to fell three Poplar trees due to their poor condition under tree works application 221187/TPO. Replacements were required for all four trees and were outstanding.

One Poplar tree remained and a new, individual TPO (6/22) had been served on 7 December 2022 to protect that tree, with the Area TPO (3/22) being allowed to lapse, as of 8 December 2022.

The report summarised an objection to the TPO that had been made by the new landowner and set out officer comments in response. It explained that no evidence had been submitted to support the objection that the tree was dangerous. Details of the correspondence between the officer and the objector were attached in Appendix 3 and photographs provided by the objector were attached in Appendix 2.

The report concluded that the new landowner had had since 7 December 2022 to submit evidence to support the concern raised that the tree was dangerous, but none had been forthcoming. The TPO was warranted to protect the one remaining tree on the land until such time as evidence was provided, if at all, to demonstrate that the tree warranted removal and the recommendation was therefore to confirm the TPO.

Resolved –

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That the Tree Preservation Order be confirmed.

7. 220189/FUL - 205-213 HENLEY ROAD, CAVERSHAM

Demolition of nos. 205-213 Henley Road and rear gardens of nos. 205-219 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks (C3 use-age restricted) including communal spaces with supporting car parking, open space landscaping and associated infrastructure. Access into the site from the adjacent development on Henley Road.

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

It was reported at the meeting that a further submission had been received since publication of the report from a nearby resident who had already commented on the application, expressing concerns about the lack of time to consider the application and to respond opposing the application. It was explained that the standard procedures for informing neighbours of the meeting had been followed.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved –

That consideration of application 220189/FUL be deferred for further information on matters including:

- the poor clarity and visibility of some of the maps and plans within the report
- the loss of trees, effect on tree canopy cover and the form and nature of the proposed trees
- more explanation of how flooding would be prevented
- why the condition regarding the water network infrastructure was pre-occupation not pre-commencement
- an explanation of the different calculations of the financial viability deficit and whether the development was likely to be built given the size of the deficit
- the suitability of the site for over 65s given the number of steps and slopes in the development
- the location and suitability of wheelchair-accessible flats
- the provision of Electric Vehicle charging points and whether they were all within disabled bays

8. 201138/FUL - 12-18 CROWN STREET

Change of use of building from 44 serviced apartments (Class C1) to 44 flats (C3) comprising of 4no studios, 27 x one bedroom and 13 x two bedroom units with associated parking.

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

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Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 30 June 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended.

9. 221130/FUL - 103 DEE ROAD, TILEHURST

Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 54 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking, public open space and landscaping (Amended Description).

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which provided additional information about additional trees to be planted and clarification on pre-commencement conditions. It also corrected a typographical error on the proposed completion deadline for the Section 106 agreement.

It was reported at the meeting that it was proposed that the heads of terms for the Section 106 agreement should include all six of the 3-bed affordable houses being delivered prior to occupation of the 11th market dwelling, and the remaining ten affordable flats being delivered prior to occupation of the 26th market dwelling. It was also proposed that an additional condition should be added to secure the details of solar panels and the air source heat pumps.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Stuart Newton and Jo Unsworth, the applicant's agent, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 24 August 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report, with the

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additional triggers regarding affordable housing as proposed at the meeting and set out above;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the additional condition on solar panels and heat pumps proposed at the meeting and an additional informative requesting the developer to ensure that the residents of 26-36 Spey Road had temporary access to Leven Street through the back alley on the site for waste bin collection until completion of the development;
- (4) That the Construction Method Statement be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors;
- (5) That the hard and soft landscaping details, particularly in relation to the boundary with Gairn Close, be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors.

10. 230241/FUL - LAND ADJACENT TO 114-116 SCHOOL ROAD, TILEHURST

Change of use of ground floor retail unit to a residential apartment including fenestration alterations.

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 2 June 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.27 pm)