

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Planning Committee

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021 AT 6.00 PM

THIS WAS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Present:

Ian Snowdon (Chair)

Peter Dragonetti (Vice Chair), Ken Arlett, David Bretherton, Elizabeth Gillespie, Kate Gregory, Lorraine Hillier, George Levy, Axel Macdonald (substituting for Celia Wilson), Jo Robb and Ian White

Officers:

Paul Bateman, Victoria Clarke, Sharon Crawford, Paula Fox, Paul Lucas, Susie Royse and Davina Sarac

119 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the procedure to be followed in virtual meetings.

120 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Celia Wilson. Councillor Axel Macdonald was substitute for Councillor Wilson.

121 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2021 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

122 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

123 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.



Listening Learning Leading

124 Proposals for site visits

A proposal, moved and seconded, for a site visit in respect of application P20/S0740/FUL, 18 Harcourt Close, Henley-on-Thames, to ascertain the layout of the site, was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of application P20/S0740/FUL, to allow members to visit the site.

A proposal, moved and seconded, for a site visit in respect of applications P20/S2809/HH and P20/S2812/LB, 11 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames, to ascertain the layout of the site and view the inside of the listed building, was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to defer consideration of applications P20/S2809/HH and P20/S2812/LB, to allow members to visit the site.

125 Public participation

The list showing members of the public who had registered to speak had been sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Statements received from the public were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

126 P20/S0740/FUL - 18 Harcourt Close, Henley-on-Thames

Consideration of this application had been deferred, pending a site visit.

127 P20/S2809/HH & P20/S2812/LB - 11 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames

Consideration of this application had been deferred, pending a site visit.

128 P20/S4632/FUL & P20/S4633/LB - 20, Upper High Street, Thame

The committee considered applications P20/S4632/FUL and P20/S4633/LB for the change of use and conversion of ground and first floor to number 20, to form a single dwelling and reinstate its historic residential use at 20 Upper High Street, Thame.

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 this meeting.

The planning officer reported that 20 Upper High Street was a two-storey grade II listed building, listed as a pair with number 19. The ground floor retail unit had been vacant for some time. It was not within the primary retail frontage but was located within the secondary retail frontage and was positioned directly next to a residential dwelling, at 21 Upper High Street. Officers had given weight to the historic original use of the building, which was a residential dwelling prior to its conversion into a retail use on the ground floor. Located in the centre of the town, which was a highly sustainable location, officers considered that the principle of change of use and the conversion of the ground floor to a residential use was acceptable, and would provide a welcome smaller dwelling within the town. The internal works at 20 Upper High Street required to convert the building would not substantially harm the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties. The applications

had been assessed by the council's conservation officer, who has raised no objection to the principle of changing the use to residential use and was supportive of the proposal.

The planning officer reported that Thame Town Council had objected to the applications; it considered that the dwelling would have inadequate overall internal space, as it fell short of national space standards. The planning officer advised the committee that the nationally described space standard applied only to new dwellings, whereas this was a conversion of an historic mid-eighteenth-century listed building, with smaller rooms than those of a modern new house. Officers considered that this conversion of such a listed building was an appropriate use of an existing historic building, reverting it to its original intended use, and thus the size of the dwelling was acceptable in this instance.

Councillor Linda Emery, a representative of Thame Town Council, spoke objecting to the applications. The democratic services officer had sent a statement by Councillor Emery to the committee prior to the meeting.

Mr. Robert Hutton, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. The democratic services officer had sent a statement by Mr. Hutton to the committee prior to the meeting.

In response to a question regarding the contention of Thame Town Council that the proposal was contrary to Thame Neighbourhood Plan Policy WS2, "in proposing residential use within an A1 unit with a long history of continuous use", the planning officer advised the committee that in the view of district council officers, the applications conformed with that policy. In response to a question about the length of time that the retail use had lapsed, and the extent of efforts to market the site, the planning officer reported that the conservation officer had been consulted but that the duration had been unclear. Councillor Emery advised the committee that it had been about two years since any retail activity at the site, owing to the retirement of the proprietors. The planning officer reported that in respect of marketing, there was no requirement in either the Thame Neighbourhood Plan nor South Oxfordshire Local Plan to market retail properties. In response to a question, the planning officer advised the committee of the nature of the different Class A uses, all being associated with main retail activities on a high street, uses A2 to A5 being food outlets.

In response to a question regarding permitted development rights, the planning officer reported that under the planning acts, buildings could normally be converted, however, as this property was in a conservation area and was listed, there were no permitted development rights.

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

The committee were keen to preserve the vitality and viability of Thame Upper High Street and considered that the planning application would represent a loss of a potential retail unit to the Upper High Street. The proposal was considered to be contrary to the overall policies of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

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

RESOLVED: to refuse planning permission for application P20/S4632/FUL for the following reasons:

1. Loss of a potential retail unit to the Upper High Street
2. Contrary to Thame Neighbourhood Plan

In respect of the application for listed building consent, the planning officer advised the committee that no external changes were proposed and that internally, the alterations would be minimal. The conservation officer considered that the proposal represented a restoration to historic use. The committee was advised by the senior planning officer that consideration of a listed building consent application could not be simultaneously linked to a planning application; the main consideration should be the impact on the historic character of the building and on this basis there were no grounds to refuse listed building consent.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant listed building consent was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to grant listed building consent for application P20/S4633/LB with the following conditions:

1. Commencement of works within three years.
2. Works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Development in accordance with relevant works, of upgrading to the partition wall.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Chairman

Date