

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 20 December
2023 at 6.00 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: Peter Dragonetti (Vice-Chair in the chair), Ali Gordon-Creed, Sam James-Lawrie, Axel Macdonald, Ben Manning, Jo Robb, and Ed Sadler
Officers: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer), Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Tom Wyatt (Planning Officer), Paul Bowers (Planning Officer), Lilua Ihezor-Ejiofor (Planning Officer), and Victoria Clarke (Planning Officer)

Remote attendance:

Councillors: Tim Bearder and Pieter-Paul Barker

131 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

132 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors Tim Bearder, Katharine Keats-Rohan, Ken Arlett, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, who was substituted for Councillor Jo Robb, and David Bretherton.

133 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

134 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

135 Public participation

The list showing members of the public who had registered to speak was tabled at the meeting.

136 P23/S2058/FUL - 2-6 Whizzkidz Ltd, Jefferson Way, Thame, OX9 3SZ

The committee considered planning application P23/S2058/FUL for the change of use of existing building, Childrens indoor playground E(d) to part retail unit E(a) and part Childrens Nursery E(f). Single storey extension. Recladding of building including new widows and roof, on land at 2-6 Whizzkidz Ltd, Jefferson Way, 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 the meeting.

The planning officer introduced the report and highlighted that the application was brought to the committee due to the objection of Thame Town Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application was within an industrial area in the southern part of Thame and had been used as an indoor play area since 2004. The proposal itself sought to divide the site into two separate spaces with different uses: a shop and nursery. He also noted that the application sought a small extension to the rear of the nursery and that it proposed to reclad the building.

As the site had Use Class E rights, the planning officer highlighted to the committee that the entire site could be converted into a shop without the applicants needing to submit an application to the Council.

The planning officer also commented on the size of the shop, noting its floor space and that it was designed to serve the local community and so would not be appropriate for a town centre location. He also mentioned that there was a proposed condition on the approval so that only convenience good could be sold.

Overall, as there were no objections from technical consultees, and the planning officer believed that the application would bring benefit to the local community, he recommended that the application be approved.

Graeme Markland spoke on behalf of Thame Town Council, objecting to the application.

Nik Lyzba, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee inquired into the parish council's comment about the closure of a shop in the centre of Thame which they believed could be replaced by a supermarket, and so why had the applicant not chosen to use that space. In response, the planning officer mentioned that the foot space of the town centre location was much larger than the one proposed in the application and also that the proposed site was designed to support the local community who lived further away from the town centre. He went on to reiterate that the existing building had Use Class E rights providing them a strong fallback position as the applicant could turn the whole building into a shop. In that situation, the council would not be able to control conditions, such as on parking, like they could through the current application.

Members asked about the parking provision proposed and the planning officer clarified that there was no defined amount required for customer parking for the nursery, only

for staff, and that the Highways Authority standards for a Class E shop of the size proposed in the application, was met. Some members did express concern that the staff for the shop would take up several of the spaces, reducing the amount available for customers. However, the committee did not believe that this was substantial enough of a reason to refuse the application as they noted that the shopworkers could walk in from the local community or use the onsite cycle storage provided. The committee also did not believe that the application would produce any noise nuisance to the residents nearby.

Overall, the committee agreed that the site would provide good services for the local community and would have sufficient parking for the size of shop that was being proposed, and that some of the nursery parking spaces could be used for the shop outside of their opening hours. In addition, they noted the credible fallback position of the application, of turning the entire block into a shop, but agreed that the subdivision and creation of a nursery was a better alternative.

Therefore, for these reasons, and as they were satisfied with the proposed conditions, the committee agreed that the application should be approved.

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

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P23/S2058/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement to begin within 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Development to accord with the approved plans
3. Parking and Manoeuvring Areas to be retained and laid out as approved
4. Details of soft landscaping to be submitted and approved in writing
5. Cycle Parking facilities to be submitted and approved in writing
6. A Travel Plan Statement to be submitted and approved in writing
7. Development to use materials as specified in the application plans
8. An external lighting scheme to be submitted and approved in writing
9. One electric charging vehicle point to be provided in accordance with details to be provided
10. No more than 20% comparison goods to be sold in the retail unit

137 P23/S2689/FUL - Ten Acre Farm, New Inn Road, Beckley, OX3 9SS

The committee considered planning application P23/S2689/FUL for the proposed agricultural barn (as amended by drawing re-siting the building and amplified by supporting information received 8 November 2023), on land at Ten Acre Farm, New Inn Road, Beckley.

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 due to the objection of Beckley and Stowood Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that there had been some corrections made to the report since the publishing of the agenda. These corrections included that; hay was actually moved onto site and was not derived from the site, that reference in paragraph 6.14 to grain should be hay, and that references to the National Planning Policy Framework had been altered due to it being recently updated.

The application itself sought permission for an agricultural building for the storage of hay and farming equipment for a farmer. Although the site was located in the Green Belt, the planning officer informed the committee that agricultural buildings are specifically excluded from prohibitions on building in those areas and so the principle of development was accepted. He also emphasised that a proposed condition on the approval of the application was to ensure that the building would only ever be used for the agricultural purposes described in the application.

On the building itself, as it was sited next to a larger agricultural building, the planning officer believed that it would have a minimal impact on the local landscape.

Overall, as the application was policy compliant and there were no objections from technical consultees, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

Gareth Jones, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Tim Bearder, a local ward councillor, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Ginette Camps-Walsh spoke on behalf of Beckley and Stowood Parish Council, objecting to the application. The parish council spoke last due to them having technical issues.

The committee asked about the need for the barn and the planning officer clarified there is no test about the need for a building. However, he clarified that the land was in agricultural use and that the building was supposed to assist a local farmer who worked on a number of farms in the area. On the issue that the parish council raised about there being no farming done on the site, the planning officer confirmed to the committee that there was agricultural equipment on the site and at one point he had seen livestock on the site. Therefore, he believed that the application was appropriate and that it would not change the sites use.

On another point the parish council made, about the farmer using other barns in the area, the member agreed that, for the storage of hay and the security of farm machinery, the other barns in the area would not be effective for this. The planning officer also added that the demolished barns to the northwest of the site would also not be able to offer the same provision as the one proposed in the application.

On a question about if the approval of the application could include conditions requiring the clean-up of the site or for the site to be levelled, the planning officer clarified that this could not be imposed as a condition as he did not believe it would meet the required six tests for conditions. He also clarified a point about land ownership which the parish council had mentioned and that, although the line had

changed on the amended plans, it was not materially relevant to the committees' decisions.

The committee agreed that they would like the inclusion of another bird box on the site, and that this be included as a condition on approval in order to encourage wildlife. As the applicant was agreeable, it was agreed to include this in the conditions.

Overall, as the committee could see no material planning reasons to refuse the application, they agreed that it 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 P23/S2689/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

Standard conditions:

1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans

Prior to commencement condition:

3. Surface water drainage works (details required)

Compliance conditions:

4. Materials as on plan
5. Agricultural use

Prior to first use condition:

6. Two bird boxes

138 P23/S3032/A - Yeats Lodge, Greyhound Lane, Thame, OX9 3LY

The committee considered advertisement consent application P23/S3032/A for 5 x flag poles, 1 x monolith, 2 x micro monolith, 4 x hanging signs; and various other signage, on land at Yeats Lodge, Greyhound Lane, 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 the meeting.

The planning officer introduced the report and highlighted that the application was called into the committee by a local ward member, Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker, and due to the objection of Thame Town Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the site was in the Thame Conservation Area and the signage was on the site of several retirement dwellings who had been given planning permission on appeal in 2018.

There were 20 signs proposed for the site across a range of different types for a total display period of three years. The planning officer also noted that this number was a reduction from the total of 24 signs that had been on the site in September 2022.

The planning officer highlighted that the signage had been in place as of May 2022 and that they were prominent from the street scene and the Conservation Area, although she did not believe them to be unduly harmful. She also did not consider that they posed any safety risk to the users of the highway.

The Town Council did not believe that the signage conserved or enhanced the Thame Conservation Area and that they were contrary to the Local Plan and Thame Neighbourhood plan. Despite the signs being prominent in the conservation area, as she did not consider them unduly harmful, the planning officer recommended that consent be granted.

Graeme Markland spoke on behalf of Thame Town Council, objecting to the application.

Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked about if the applicant needed permission to display any signage on the site and the Head of Planning confirmed there were permitted development rights for signage of a certain size, but that the signage requested in the application needed consent.

Members then inquired into the signages potential impact on highways safety and if they could be a dangerous distraction to motorists. In response, the planning officer confirmed that she did not believe that they would be a distraction as they were not illuminated, did not project onto the highway, and that the speeds in the town centre area were low so would be unlikely to cause dangerous distractions.

Members asked about the amount of signage that the application was requesting and if there was scope to approve less, but the Head of Planning informed member that the application was for all the signage and refusal would mean they would not have permission for any of it. If the consent was refused, the planning officer noted that the applicants could have directional signs and signs under permitted development rights.

On a question about the material issues to be consider on the application, the Head of Planning confirmed to members that determination of signage consent related to two aspects: local amenity and highways safety.

The committee agreed that the signage did not preserve or enhance the Thame Conservation Area due to the amount of signage proposed and that it was a visual detriment to the amenity and character of the area. In addition, members noted that the signage had been in place for over three years. And so, consent would permit the signage to be in place for six years. Members did not that the applicant could put up some signage under permitted development, but not to the extent proposed in the application.

Overall, as the committee agreed that the signage was detrimental to the amenity of the local area, including the Thame Conservation Area, they agreed that the application for consent should be refused.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse advertising consent was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to refuse advertisement consent application P23/S3032/A, for the following reasons:

The signage, due to their number, position and prominence, would adversely affect the visual amenity of the area and the character and appearance of the Thame Conservation Area. As such, the proposed advertisements would be contrary to Policies DES1, DES2, ENV6 and ENV8 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Policy ESDQ16 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP).

139 P23/S2534/HH - 4 Sycamore Drive, Thame, OX9 2AT

The committee considered planning application P23/S2534/HH for the part garage conversion. Single story front extension. Single story rear extension. Formation of new roof to include habitable rooms. Accommodation divided to form an annex (as amended by plans received 3 September omitting side door to garage and changing proposed rear garage window to a high level window), on land at 4 Sycamore Drive, 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 the meeting.

The planning officer introduced the report and highlighted that the application was called into the committee by a local ward member, councillor Pieter-Paul Barker.

The planning officer informed the committee that the site was in a residential area, on a corner plot, and not within any area of special designation.

The proposal included a single storey front and rear extension, an increase of the roof height to accommodate habitable rooms, the removal of gables in the roof, the conversion of half the garage into living accommodation, the removal of the pitched roof with a flat roof over the garage, and new render and timber cladding.

The planning officer considered that the proposed roof was acceptable and that the materials used would be proportionate and in character with the surrounding area. In addition, she noted that the windows had been placed in order to avoid overlooking. Finally, she noted that there was sufficient amenity space provided.

Overall, for these reasons, and as there were no objections from technical consultees, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

Graeme Markland spoke on behalf of Thame Town Council, objecting to the application.

Mr and Mrs Singleton, the applicants, spoke in support of the application.

The committee asked about the flat roof on a garage and if this were normally permitted. In response, the planning officer informed members that, as it was small and set back, it would not be harmful to the amenity of the area and would in fact reduce the impact to the neighbour. Members also asked about the residential use of the garage and if it might impact the neighbour, but she clarified that the subdivision was not considered harmful as the garage was still the closest section to the neighbours.

On a further question about the garage and some concern about the high window, the planning officer noted that high level first floor windows were allowed under permitted development, and so from an overlooking perspective they would be considered acceptable. She also reiterated that the part closest to the neighbour would be retained for the garage and not residential use.

Members noted the design of the properties in the area, but they did not believe that the application would be out of character or detrimental.

Overall, the committee noted that the application would be in keeping with the surrounding area and would not be unneighbourly. As they could see no material planning reasons for refusal, they 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 P23/S2534/HH, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within three years
2. Development in accordance with the approved plans
3. External materials for walls and roof to be as on plan
4. Parking & manoeuvring areas to be retained
5. No additional windows or doors in the south west elevation

Informatives:

- Bats Informative
- Wild Bird Informative
- Thame Town Council neighbourhood plan policies

The meeting closed at 7.41 pm
