

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 1 February 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), Elizabeth Gillespie, Lorraine Hillier, Alexandrine Kantor (in place of Victoria Haval) and Alan Thompson
Officers: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer) and Paula Fox (Planning Manager)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Susie Royce (Broadcasting Officer), Tom Wyatt (Planning Officer), Paul Lucas (Planning Officer), Marc Pullen (Planning Officer)

122 Chair's announcements

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

123 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Bretherton, Ken Arlett, Tim Bearder, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Axel Macdonald, Ian Snowdon, and Victoria Haval, who was substituted by Councillor Alexandrine Kantor.

124 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

125 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

126 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

127 Proposals for site visits

There were no proposals for site visits.

128 Public participation

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

129 P22/S3363/FUL - Grove Farm, Patemore Lane, Pishill, RG9 6HH

The committee considered planning application P22/S3363/FUL for the conversion of existing barn into single four bedroom dwelling, construction of new car port and renovation of existing stables. Demolition of all other site buildings and upgrade of existing vehicular entrance (as amended to detail the extent of the domestic garden and to reduce the areas of glazing), on land at Grove Farm, Patemore Lane, Pishill.

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 Watlington Parish Council. This site itself was part of a narrow valley floor within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with its immediate surroundings largely comprising areas of unspoilt woodland and pasture. The planning officer also informed the committee that a past application for the site had been dismissed at appeal due to its failure to conserve or enhance the beauty of the area.

The application sought to demolish all the existing buildings on site apart from a barn, which would be converted into a dwelling, and a stable building. The planning officer also confirmed that the result of the works would lead to a reduction in the site's overall building footprint and the re-landscaping of most of the currently built-up area.

Overall, the planning officer believed that the application would be an enhancement to the site and an appropriate reuse of an existing building in an AONB. Therefore, he recommended that the application be approved with the additional suggested condition for a requirement that the buildings shown for demolition on the plans were actually demolished.

Andrew McAuley spoke on behalf of Watlington Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Chris Wilkinson, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Anna Badcock, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee raised concerns about the comments of the highway authority and its belief that the site lacked transport sustainability. The committee asked the planning

officer if this concern was due to a lack of provision of accessible public transport and he confirmed that this was the case.

In addition, members asked about potential flooding issues as this was raised by the parish council. The planning officer then confirmed that there was an issue with drainage in the valley but was satisfied that the conditions were satisfactory, and that the drainage engineer had no objection subject to those conditions.

Although some members considered that the demolition of the buildings on the site would be beneficial, and the change of use of the barn acceptable, a motion to approve the application was not carried due to the majority of the committee maintaining strong concerns about the impact that the development would have on the AONB and about the transport sustainability concerns.

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

On balance, as members believed that the building would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty due to its design and conversion into domestic use, and due to its unsustainable location transport wise, members agreed that the application should be refused.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was carried on being put to the vote, with the chair issuing his casting vote.

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P22/S3363/FUL, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, due to its design and siting, would represent an inappropriate domestication of the site in this countryside location and would detract from the landscape character and natural beauty of this part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As such the development would be contrary to Policies STRAT1, ENV1, H1, DES1, and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Policy P3 of the Watlington Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The application site is in a rural location with poor access to local services and facilities, therefore the development would be highly dependent upon car use, with there being no practical opportunity to use public transport. The location of the site is, therefore, considered unsustainable in transport terms. As such the development would be contrary to Policies DES1, TRANS2, and TRANS5 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

130 P22/S3194/FUL - Whiteleaf Furniture Ltd, Lupton Road, Thame, OX9 3SE

The committee considered planning application P22/S3194/FUL for the alterations to an existing building and use as altered as a builder's merchant (storage, distribution, trade counter, offices, tool hire and ancillary retail) with associated external storage, resurfacing of yard, erection of 2.4m high fence and gates. (Amended plans received 22 November 2022 showing some changes to the layout, parking, vehicle tracking and

the removal of the new access on Lupton Road and the description has been amended to reflect the removal of the new access on the application. As amended by information received 09 January 2023), on land at Whiteleaf Furniture Ltd, Lupton Road 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 site itself formed part of an employment site on the south-eastern edge of Thame and was surrounded by other commercial premises. The planning officer informed the committee that the building was currently unoccupied but that the previous occupant possessed a class b2 general industrial use.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application sought full planning permission to change the use of the building to a builder's merchant and for associated works to the building and yard. Thame Town Council raised an objection as it did not believe the site would be used for employment and therefore would not comply with the Thame Neighbour Plan. However, the planning officer informed members that the neighbourhood plan was out of date due to the introduction of Class E uses and that the local plan policy, which was adopted after this and did not seek to restrict employment use to specific classes, carried more weight in planning terms. In addition, as the planning officer believed that the builder's merchants fell within class sui generis as it was a mixture of retail and storage, it would be used for employment and so there would be no conflict with the neighbourhood plan.

The planning officer also informed members that the location of the site within an industrial estate was appropriate for the proposed use and that the proposed physical alterations would be in keeping with surroundings. Also, as the nearest residential properties were over 90 metres away from the site with intervening buildings and activity in the area, it would not be detrimental to neighbouring amenity. Finally, the planning officer confirmed that the highway officer had no objection as the amended plans removed a previously proposed highway access.

Overall, as there were no objections from technical consultees, and the planning officer did not believe there would be an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, he recommended the application should be approved subject to conditions.

Councillor Linda Emery spoke on behalf of Thame Town Council, objecting to the application.

Christopher Kendall, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee inquired about the two letters of support for the application and if they were from local residents or business. The planning officer confirmed that the letters were received from local businesses. In addition, the planning officer confirmed that the letter of objection was submitted to the original plans and that the amended plans had received no new objections.

Overall, as members believed that the amended entrance dealt with the highways concerns, that the application would bring employment to a site vacant since March 2021, and that there would be no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, 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 P22/S3194/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Development to commence with three years
2. Development to be built in accordance with the approved plans
3. Development to be constructed in materials specified on the plans
4. Parking and manoeuvring areas retained as shown on plans
5. Cycle parking facilities to be covered and details to be provided
6. A Travel Plan Statement shall be submitted
7. Land contamination investigation required should any unsuspected contamination be encountered

131 P22/S2790/FUL - Kingsley House, Crowsley Road, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3LU

The committee considered planning application P22/S2790/FUL for the alteration and refurbishment of existing building containing four flats to create six flats (2 x 3-bed, 2 x 2-bed, 2 x 1-bed) with associated car parking, landscaping, and alterations to driveway to provide passing places (additional bat survey report received 27 September 2022 and changes to turning island, increased planting area and information on construction methodology and section details for lightwells as shown on amended plans and additional information received 1 November 2022 and details of adjoining Kingsley Court corrected as shown on plans received 5 January 2023), on land at Kingsley House, Crowsley Road, Lower Shiplake.

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 Shiplake Parish Council. The application itself was for full permission for alteration and refurbishment of Kingsley House from four to six flats, and associated works including to the driveway and parking area.

The planning officer informed the committee that the further residential subdivision was supported by local plan, subject to criteria. In addition, the planning officer did not believe that the application would be harmful to neighbouring amenity and that the physical alterations would also not cause visual harm to the landscape, or the special character area identified in the Shiplake neighbourhood plan. The council's conservation officer also confirmed that desirable characteristics of the building would be retained.

The planning officer also noted the comments of the highways officer who believed that the application would result in a modest increase to vehicle numbers but that the proposed access alteration would mean this would not be detrimental to highway or pedestrian safety. In addition, environmental health was satisfied that the increase in the number of flats would not cause a significant noise nuisance to adjoining residents.

Overall, as the planning officer considered that the application complied with the relevant policies and received no objection from technical consultees, he recommended that permission was granted, subject to conditions.

Chris Penrose spoke on behalf of Shiplake Parish Council objecting to the application.

Alan Giles spoke objecting to the application.

Nik Lyzba and Paul Southouse, the agents representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor David Bartholomew, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked the planning officer about potential conditions and if an explicit condition could be put on the application, if approved, requiring that two trees be planted for every one that was removed. In response, the planning manager confirmed with members that the full wording of suggested condition 11 would reflect what the applicant had shown in the plans and that this requirement could be included in that.

Members then raised concerns about the driveway and the impact that its intensification would have, as well as the effects of the increased size of the proposed car park. As the committee also believed that the application did not give regard to the area that was identified in the neighbourhood plan as being in the setting of a special designation, these were considered to be sufficient grounds for refusal.

Overall, as members believed that the intensification of the use of the access road and the expansion of the car parking would detract from the character of the area, they agreed that the application should be refused.

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

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P22/S2790/FUL, for the following reason:

The proposed development, through increasing the size of the car park and intensifying the use of the driveway, would have an urbanising impact on the sylvan character and appearance and the setting of the Special Character Area 6 designation in the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan. As such, the proposal would be in conflict with policies DES1 and DES2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and policies SV7, SV23 and SV24 of the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan.

132 P22/S1193/HH - Willows Reach, Mill Lane, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3LY

The committee considered planning application P22/S1193/HH for the variation of condition 2 (approved plans) – two additional shipping containers for storage and associated roof/wall amendments to suit on planning application P18/S1837/HH. (As amended by plans received 28 November 2022 to render the exterior of containers). Demolition of existing mono-pitched gymnasium, erection of replacement flat roof gymnasium to match the architectural style of the main house and garage building. Replacement front boundary treatment from close boarded timber fence to rendered blockwork with new vehicular gates, on land at Willows Reach, Mill Lane, Lower Shiplake.

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 David Bartholomew. The application itself sought to address a breach of planning control by seeking permission for the placement of two shipping containers which at the time already sat within the curtilage of Willows Reach on the Thames tow path.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application would also clad both containers to match the general appearance of the existing dwelling and its other outbuildings, but that they were both visible from public footpaths. However, the planning officer believed the exterior cladding would obscure them and help assimilate them withing the built form of the site

Subject to the implementation of the cladding within six months, the planning officer believed that the containers would not be harmful to the overall character or appearance of the site and so recommended the application be granted subject to conditions.

Chris Penrose spoke on behalf of Shiplake Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Councillor David Bartholomew, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked the planning officer about the planning history of the site and the ongoing planning enforcement investigation, and the officer confirmed that planning enforcement was unable to take any action until after the application was determined. Therefore, the enforcement application was still ongoing.

Members also raised the potential issue of flooding as the site sat within flood zone 3, but the planning officer confirmed with members that as the containers were raised off the ground to a satisfactory height, they would be protected from flooding.

Members remained concerned about the development as they believed it to be out of character with the surrounding area and that the material and form of the container design would detract from the special setting on the Thames tow path, something

mentioned in the neighbourhood plan. In addition, the committee was also opposed to the increase and consolidation of the built form on the site.

Overall, as the proposed development was considered to be out of character with the surrounding area and a detriment to its special setting, the committee agreed to refuse the application.

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

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P22/S1193/HH, for the following reasons:

Having regard to the materials and form of the development it represents inappropriate design which consolidates the built up appearance of the site and fails to respond to the character and appearance of this Special Character Area, as identified by the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan (2022). As such, the proposed development fails to adhere to Policies DES1 and DES2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2035) and Policies SV10, SV11 and SV23 of the adopted Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan (2022).

133 P22/S3602/S73 - Grove Hill Farm, Manor Road, Towersey, OX9 3QT

During this agenda item, the meeting length had reached almost two and a half hours. In accordance with the council's Constitution, the committee voted to extend the meeting in order to finish this item.

The committee considered planning application P22/S3602/S73 for the variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on planning application P22/S0537/FUL to consider the acceptability of constructing the proposed dwelling at existing ground level in light of additional support information in the form of a Landscape and Visual Technical Note. (As amplified by additional information received 02 December 2022). Erection of replacement dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. Erection of a replacement pool house, machinery store and gates, on land at Grove Hill Farm, Manor Road, Towersey.

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 Towersey Parish Council. The application sought to vary the existing permission for a replacement to an existing building with a larger building. The variation itself was to build the dwelling at ground level, rather than 1.4 metres sunk into the ground, thereby increasing the visible height of the building, and for the provision of new landscaping.

The planning officer informed the committee that the reason for the parish council's objection was that the application increased the visual height of the dwelling and would therefore be detrimental to the landscape from public vantage points. The landscape officer however, believed that that revised landscaping scheme with the provision of new taller trees, would mitigate this impact and therefore the planning officer was satisfied that there would be no visual harm from the proposed variation.

For these reasons, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

Councillor Mark Davies spoke on behalf of Towersey Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Ciro Paradiso, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee then asked about the exact change in height and the planning officer clarified that the proposed building would be 2.2 metres taller than existing building. Further to this, members were concerned that this increased height would mean that the proposed building would be more prominent on the skyline and therefore that the application would not meet the local plan policy requirement for replacement buildings to cause less harm than the building they were replacing.

The committee also discussed the revised landscaping in the application and, even though the landscape officer was satisfied that this mitigated some of the visual impact of the increased building height, members considered that the time taken for the landscaping to take effect and the extent of the screening provided by the additional trees was simply not sufficient to mitigate the harm by the increased height and prominence of the building.

Overall, as members believed that this application would go against the local plan policy relating to replacement dwellings and that the increased prominence of the building would cause harm to the character of the area, they agreed that the application should be refused.

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

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P22/S3602/S73, for the following reasons:

The proposed development would result in a higher building on site, that would exceed the height of the existing buildings on the site and the previously approved development. As a result it would appear more visible and dominant in the local landscape to the detriment of the rural character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies H18, DES1 and DES2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

The meeting closed at 8.57 pm

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