

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 11 October 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: David Bretherton (Chair), Peter Dragonetti (Vice-Chair), Ken Arlett, Tim Bearder, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Ali Gordon-Creed, Sam James-Lawrie, Katharine Keats-Rohan, Axel Macdonald, Ben Manning, and Ed Sadler

Officers: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer), Paula Fox (Development Manager), Sharon Crawford (Planning Officer), Paul Bowers (Planning Officer), and Ben Silverthorne (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Susie Royce (Broadcasting Officer), Nicola Smith (Planning Officer), and Marc Pullen (Planning Officer)

91 Chair's announcements

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

92 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

93 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

94 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

95 Public participation

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

96 P21/S1848/FUL - Blounts Farm, Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9PA

The committee considered planning application P21/S1848/FUL for the refurbishment of Buildings 12 and 13 for storage use with ancillary offices (4 units); Replacement of Building 4; Refurbishment of Buildings 14 for storage use with new archway feature linked to Building 4; Erection of Building 1 for office use; Change of use of Units 2-3 (Dutch Barn) to provide storage and distribution of gas bottles and storage and construction of outdoor structures; Change of use of land opposite Units 2-3 to display of outdoor structures; Provision of parking for proposed new uses – Part Retrospective. (As amplified by additional information received 19 July 2022 and 15 August 2022 and as amplified by plan received 1 December 2022 and 16 January 2023), on land at Blounts Farm, Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common.

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 objections of both Sonning Common and Rotherfield Peppard Parish Councils.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application was for various changes of use to buildings and that the site had a complex planning history, noting specifically that the application was mostly retrospective. The site was highlighted as being within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) but that the proposed building would be in the farmyard and enclosed by other surrounding buildings. The planning officer also noted that a number of buildings on the site benefited from lawful development including the use of land for storage of motor-vehicles, and that several buildings were established business sites. She also noted the Local Plan and Sonning Common neighbourhood plan which supported proposals to retain business.

The planning officer informed the members about the varying uses of the buildings, what they were proposed to be, and what works were proposed and already carried out. She emphasised that the work completed had used good materials and was sympathetic to the area and therefore, she found it acceptable. She also highlighted that a building on the site was built without permission but was subject to a separate application.

The planning officer noted that a primary concern by some members of the public who made representations was about the bridleway through the site. As it formed an important part of the public rights of way network, concerns were raised about the bridleway becoming more dangerous due to the intensification of site leading to increased traffic volumes. However, she noted that the applicant had agreed an alternative path which went around the site and was detailed in a proposed condition on the approval of the application.

Since the site visit was conducted, the planning officer made several alterations to the proposed conditions as there was no longer a need for pre-commencement conditions five and six as the existing buildings were seen to be constructed with good materials and that their style was sympathetic to surrounding area. A new condition to remove

permitted development rights was also proposed on all the buildings covered in the permission.

Overall, the established business site was promoted by local plan policy and that, although it was in the AONB, it was sympathetic to the surrounding area. Therefore, on the planning balance, the planning officer considered that the application was acceptable but found it regrettable that the applicant had not originally submitted a planning application.

Neil Davis, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee had conducted a site visit prior to the discussion of the application. Members inquired into one of the objections which referred to lighting and asked for clarification about the proposed condition around this. In response, the planning officer confirmed that a lighting scheme would need to be submitted within three months of the application being granted to ensure that they would be suitable for their position in an AONB.

On the bridleway path, members asked the planning officer if she was satisfied with the change in layout as it was originally suggested to go around edge of the site, but the agent and applicant agreed with the rights of way team to move that bridleway further out into the field to allow for viable farming either side of the path. The planning officer confirmed that if rights of way team accepted the change, then they would have no objection as well. She also noted that the treatment of the bridleway would be addressed in the conditions and agreed with the county council's rights of way team. The committee also inquired into when the new bridleway would be completed and the planning officer confirmed that the details for it, including a timetable for completion, would be need within three months of the permission being granted.

Members asked about the potential use of permitted development rights for the site and if they could be used to complete some of the applied for works and the planning officer confirmed that none of the application was covered by permitted development rights.

The committee thanked the officer for the detail in the application and for the site visit which they found very informative. Members acknowledged that the quality of the works already done was excellent and that while on site there was few vehicular movements. Although they agreed that they would have like to see the application before the work on the site was started, they were satisfied that the buildings were being refurbished and retained for business use and complied with local plan policies.

The committee emphasised the importance of the redirected bridleway being implemented in a prompt manner after the approval of the application and that it would be essential given the increased use of the site that would result from the application, although some questioned the space provided on both sides of the proposed path, overall, they accepted the route that was proposed.

As the committee agreed that the application should be approved but there should be explicit reference to the proposed bridleway in condition 11, they agreed to authorise the head of planning to approve the application, in consultation with the chair, as to ensure the wording on the bridleway was appropriate.

A motion, moved and seconded, to authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the chair, to approve the application was carried when put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to authorise the head of planning to approve planning application P21/S1848/FUL, in consultation with the chair of the planning committee, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans
3. Cycle parking
4. Vision splay details
5. Landscaping Scheme
6. Lighting
7. Tree Protection
8. Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy
9. Specified use within Use Class E(a)
10. Withdrawal of Permitted Development commercial to residential use
11. Public right of way details

Informative:

Thames Water

97 P23/S1925/O - 81 Oxford Road, Garsington, OX44 9AD

The committee considered planning application P23/S1925/O for the outline application for subdivision of residential garden and erection of new dwelling (as amended by drwgnos 002a and 004 to provide access details received on 04/07/23), on land at 81 Oxford Road, Garsington.

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 Garsington Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the site consisted of a two-storey dwelling set back from road, befitting from large garden in built up area of village, in Green Belt. The proposed dwelling would be to rear of 81 with only the principle of development and the access arrangements being in the application with all other matters being reserved for a future application.

It was highlighted that Local Plan policy H16 allowed for back land and infill development in Garlington, provided it would maintain the privacy of residents, and also that the application was acceptable in Green Belt terms.

The planning officer noted that the existing access would be used for proposed dwelling and that there would be a new vehicle access proposed in front of number 81. The highways officer had no objection to the proposal on highways safety grounds, subject to sufficient vision splays, turning area, and surface water drainage conditions.

Overall, as there were no objections from technical consultees subject to conditions, and as the application complied with Local Plan policies, she recommended that the application be approved.

The committee inquired into the reserved matters but was satisfied that the appearance and layout of the building would be considered in a future application.

On amenity space, members asked about the approximate size the proposed dwelling would have relative to other dwellings. As the number of bedrooms, the dwelling would have could not be confirmed at this stage, the planning officer was not able to confirm but was satisfied that a satisfactory size garden could be provided. Although some members maintained concerns about the plot size and amenity space that would be provided, the committee agreed that the application could be considered a back land infill development, with sufficient amenity space, and would not overlook or negatively impact neighbouring amenity.

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

The development manager reminded the committee that the application was on the principle of development and access details, rather than a specific building application. That being considered, the committee noted the lack of planning reasons to refuse the application as it conformed with the Development Plan and Planning Policy.

Overall, as the application met the requirements of the Green Belt as it was an infill development, and as it provided sufficient amenity space as required in the council's design guide, members agreed that the principle of development and access arrangement laid out in 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/S1925/O, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement - Outline Planning Permission
2. Approved plans
3. New vehicular access
4. New Access – Structural Calculations
5. Vision splay dimensions
6. Turning Area & Car Parking
7. Cycle Parking Facilities
8. No Surface Water Drainage to Highway
9. Surface water drainage works (details required)
10. Foul drainage works (details required)
11. Contaminated Land – Linked Conditions (1)
12. Contaminated Land – Linked Conditions (2)
13. Unsuspected Contaminated Land Condition
14. Energy Statement
15. Electric Vehicles Charging Point (implementation)

98 P23/S2644/S73 - Ten Acre Farm, New Inn Road, Beckley, OX3 9SS

The committee considered planning application P23/S2644/S73 for the variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) on application reference number P23/S0291/FUL (as amplified by energy statement received 22 September 2023) (Proposed Demolition of Barns and Erection of Single Dwelling) - to provide for amendments on the first and ground floors, 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 Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application was for the variation of condition on an extant permission for the site, with new most significant change between the approved and proposed schemes being the increase in height by 1 meter. The planning officer believed that the height increase was acceptable in the Green Belt and as it was separate from the nearby properties it would not cause a material harmful impact on character of the area.

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

Councillor Ginette Camps-Walsh spoke on behalf of Beckley and Stowood Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Sam Peacock, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

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

The committee asked about the biodiversity and why it was not part of the application. In response, the planning officer highlighted that it was dealt with in the parent permission that was already approved and that the current application was just covering the variation of the height of the dwelling.

Members noted the existing planning permission for the site and that the proposed increase in height was not out of character with the properties in the area and so they could not see any material planning reasons to refuse the application. However, members did note the poor state of the site and that they were looking to see the site improved.

Overall, the committee agreed that the proposed increase in height was not out of character with the surrounding area and so 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/S2644/S73, subject to the following conditions:

Standard conditions:

1. Time Limit - Variation of Condition
2. Approved plans

Compliance conditions:

3. Surface Water Drainage
4. Foul Water Drainage
5. Schedule of Materials

Prior to occupation conditions:

6. Bat Box
7. Energy Statement Verification

Compliance conditions:

8. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained
9. Electric Vehicles Charging Point (implementation)
10. Demolish specified buildings
11. Withdrawal of Permitted Development (Part 1 Class A) - no extensions etc
12. Unsuspected Contaminated Land Condition

99 P23/S1070/FUL - The Walled Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames, RG8 7EP

The committee considered planning application P23/S1070/FUL for the demolition of existing dwelling and rear outbuildings, replacement by a detached dwelling and detached double garage (Amended application following withdrawal of application P22/S3901/FUL and as amplified by additional information received 31 July 2023), on land at The Walled Garden House, High Street, Whitchurch-on-Thames.

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 Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that permission was sought to demolish the existing dwelling on the site and erect a new replacement dwelling. The parish council objection was based on the scale, bulk, and massing of the new dwelling being harmful and adversely impact the townscape, harming the nearby listed buildings, and increase flood risk. He also informed members that since the publication of the agenda, an additional neighbour response was received which commented on the loss of privacy to neighbours.

The planning officer did not believe that the proposed dwelling would adversely impact neighbours, although he confirmed that it would command strong visual presence on the Highstreet. However, he highlighted to the committee that the proposed dwelling would better correspond to the conservation area than the existing building, be better in-keeping with its surroundings due to its design and use of materials, and not be substantially taller than buildings on the other side of the Highstreet.

As there were no objections from technical consultees, the drainage engineer did not believe it would result in any increase flood risk, and the conservation officer believed that the proposal would not adversely impact surrounding listed buildings, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

Councillor Jim Donahue spoke on behalf of Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Mr Armstrong spoke objecting to the application.

Tony Thorpe, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Peter Dragonetti, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked about the size of the property on its plot and if it the plot was sufficiently large to hold the property and the planning officer confirmed that he did not believe it to be overdevelopment for the plot size. He also noted that the dwelling was proposed to be moved south which would give more space to the north and so preserve the spacious nature of the plot.

On the neighbouring property and if the property overlooked the neighbours, the planning officer confirmed that there was a condition for obscure glazing to be installed on the first-floor windows on the site facing the immediate neighbours to prevent overlooking.

Members asked about the current 'neutral impact' the dwelling had on the conservation area described in the report and if the increased size of the property meant that there would be a more than neutral impact. However, the planning officer highlighted to the committee that both the size and quality of the dwelling were factors in that calculation, so although the size increased the historical qualities and architecture would be more positive. Overall, this satisfied members as they agreed that the building would be more sympathetic to the conservation area than the present building.

Although some member noted the size of the dwelling that would be visible above the wall and the impact this would have when viewed from the Highstreet, they agreed that there were a number of large dwellings along the road and that the wall would shield most of the views of the dwelling, although it was higher than the existing dwelling. Therefore, the committee were satisfied that the application was proportionate and appropriate for the plot and in keeping with the surrounding character of the area.

Some members commented on the size of the site, and how it was preferable to have one large property over many smaller properties, although they agreed that it was not the committee's place to speculate on the use of the site.

Although some members had concerns about the potential for flooding, the committee were satisfied that the proposed conditions would mitigate any potential flood risk and could not see it as a reason to refuse the application.

Overall, as the committee were satisfied with the officers' responses to their questions, and that the proposed application would be sympathetic to the surrounding area and the conservation area, that it would preserve neighbouring amenity, and would not cause increased flood risk, 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/S1070/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement of development within 3 years of date of permission
2. Implement development in accordance with plans
3. Photographic schedule of all external materials to be agreed prior to development
4. Surface water drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed in writing
5. Flood/Drainage measures to be implemented in accordance with details submitted and agreed
6. Foul drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed in writing
7. Flooding compensation compliance report to be submitted and agreed in writing
8. Obscure glazing to first floor side facing windows
9. Electric Vehicle Charging Points to be provided on site
10. Protected species mitigation measures to be implemented as agreed
11. Ecological mitigation measures to be submitted for approval
12. Verification report to be submitted demonstrating compliance with Energy Statement measures
13. Landscaping to be provided in accordance with landscaping plan
14. Tree Protection measures to protect existing trees on site, to be submitted and agreed in writing

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm

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