

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 13 March 2024
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), Ken Arlett, Tim Bearder, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Ali Gordon-Creed, Sam James-Lawrie, Katharine Keats-Rohan, Axel Macdonald, Ben Manning, and Ed Sadler

Officers: Paula Fox (Development Manager), Kim Gould (Planning Officer), Andy Heron (Planning Officer), and Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Councillors: David Bretherton and Ann- Marie Simpson

Officers: Susie Royce (Broadcasting Officer) and Tom Wyatt (Planning Team Leader)

170 Chair's announcements

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

171 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Bretherton.

172 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

173 Declarations of interest

Councillor Ben Manning declared that he was the ward member for item 7 on the agenda, application P23/S2135/FUL at the Horse and Harrow, Main Street, West Hagbourne, OX11 0NB. Councillor Manning confirmed that he would stand down from the committee and not participate in the debate or vote on the item but would speak in the designated ward member speaking slot.

174 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

175 Public participation

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

176 P23/S2135/FUL - Horse & Harrow, Main Street, West Hagbourne, OX11 0NB

The committee considered planning application P23/S2135/FUL for the change of use of existing public house (Sui Generis) to provide a three-bed dwelling and a four-bed dwelling (Use C3), erection of two four-bed dwellings and a five-bed dwelling (Use C3) on land adjacent to the public house accessed from Main Street, with associated parking and landscaping, along with the demolition of existing outbuilding (amended site plan and highways technical note received 15 September 2023 to amend car parking and access and amended red line plan received 10 November 2023 and as amended by plans received 20 November 2023), on land at Horse & Harrow, Main Street, West Hagbourne.

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 application was brought to the committee due to the objection of West Hagbourne Parish Council. The parish raised concerns that the pub was not marketed, was intentionally rundown, and that the application would have an adverse impact on the conservation area.

The planning officer informed the committee that a previous application on the site was refused by the council as it was determined that the public house was viable, and that this decision was currently under an appeal with the planning inspectorate. He noted that the only difference between the current and previously refused application was an additional bedroom being added to plots four and five, along with a slight increase in floor space and an additional viability assessment and tenants' letter of support.

The planning officer noted the concerns of the parish council, and that the pub was the last community facility in West Hagbourne. However, the new viability assessment indicated that the village was too small to sustain a pub, and that there were numerous other pubs within a short distance that could be used by the residents – although noting the closure of a nearby pub the George and Dragon in Upton. On the other factors involved in the pubs non-viability, the planning officer noted the non-use by residents, no food offering due to the kitchen's limited size, not being on a major road, and that the historic investment of £195,000 had failed to turn around the business.

On the parish's concern that the pub had not been marketed, the planning officer highlighted that, although not a policy, the supporting text in the Local Plan was clear that the property should be marketed. However, he brought members' attention to the

viability assessment which claimed that, even if the property was marketed, it would likely receive minimal interest due to the £150,000 of investment needed.

The planning officer concluded by acknowledging the council's past decision to refuse the previous application but indicated that he thought the new viability assessment provided new material grounds to support the application. For this reason, he recommended that the application be approved.

Sheila Taylor spoke objecting to the application.

Jake Russell, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillors Anne-Marie Simpson and Ben Manning, local ward councillors, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee had conducted a site visit prior to the discussion of the application.

Members enquired with the planning officer why they were asked to determine the application before the outcome of the appeal on the previously refused application was known. In response, the development manager highlighted that the applicant was entitled to make the application and for it to be determined, and that any non-determination could be raised at the appeal.

The committee also enquired into the possibility of the pub being registered as an asset of community value but accepted the point by the planning officer that the opportunity for this had likely passed, although the applicant appeared open to accepting bids from the local community.

The committee discussed the viability assessment and its background, noting it was not produced by a pub landlord but by a national firm which the council had previous experience with. In addition, members indicated that residents from West Hagbourne could walk to nearby pubs but that residents from other villages around those pubs could also walk to the Horse and Harrow if it was an attractive destination. The committee acknowledged that there were several reasons for the pub's failure but that the owners had not tried all possible avenues to promote and invest in the premises, such as the use of food trucks to avoid needing a large kitchen, greater involvement with the local community, and additional road signage.

In response to a question about what impact the closure of the George and Dragon had on the Horse and Harrow's viability, the planning officer responded that it had little weight. Also, on a question about if the viability referred to lack of car parking, the planning officer confirmed that was the case and that the previous pub company sold the car park land which had since been developed into additional housing. However, he emphasised that the committee needed to examine the pub at its current point.

The planning officer read out the reasons for the refusal for the previous application and the committee agreed that the situation had not materially changed between that point and the current committee meeting.

Specifically, the committee noted that there were 11 pubs in the area that were successful, and with the right investment, they believed the Horse and Harrow could

be too. From the site visit, members noted that the pub was in a state of physical disrepair and agreed that the previous investment that had been put into the property was not done appropriately. In addition, it was highlighted that the pub was near to several rambling paths and a busy road, the main link road from Didcot to Harwell, and could be a focus point of passing trade.

The committee also took issue that the pub was not marketed and if it was turned into housing, that West Hagbourne would lose its only community facility.

As members were not convinced that the updated viability assessment addressed the issues that the council had raised in their previous refusal, they agreed that the application should be refused.

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

RESOLVED: to refuse planning application P23/S2135/FUL for the following reasons:

The Horse and Harrow public house is considered to be essential to the village, being the only community facility in West Hagbourne and one which fosters the engagement and involvement of the local community, as well as providing jobs for local people and local suppliers. The applicant has failed to explore other alternative uses which could run alongside the pub such as a village shop, nor has there been an attempt to market the premises. The Horse and Harrow has suffered from an historic lack of investment which, in turn, has deterred people from visiting the premises. With investment the public house could be economically viable in the future.

As such the proposed change of use of the public house would be contrary to policy CF1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 which seeks to safeguard existing community facilities and paragraphs 88 (d) and 93 (c) and (d) of the NPPF.

177 P23/S1723/FUL - Site at the entrance to the track to Warren Farm, Holton

The committee considered planning application P23/S1723/FUL for the construction of three bedroom house (as amplified by arboricultural information received on 26 September 2023, amended by plan 833 1 C to reduce the red site area received 12 December 2023, revised site plan received 18 December 2023 and ecological assessment and biodiversity metric calculation received 8 January 2024), on the site at the entrance to the track to Warren Farm, Holton.

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 Holton Parish Council as they believed that the application did not constitute infill development.

The planning officer informed the committee that the site was considered to be agricultural and formed part of the Shotover Estate, within in the Oxford Green Belt. She believed the principle of development to be acceptable as it was considered to be

limited infill in a village, something permitted in the Green Belt, as it formed part of a continuous line of development along the road. Holton was also noted as being a village where infill developments were acceptable.

The proposed dwelling was in a traditional style and in keeping with the surrounding character of the area, whilst providing generous private amenity space and not impacting neighbouring amenity. The planning officer also highlighted that the application had received no objections from Highways, and as they entered into the Great Crested Newt licensing scheme, there were no objections from the ecologist either.

The planning officer did note that she only considered one dwelling at the front of the site to be infill and any further development would be subject to a separate planning application.

As the application was considered to be infill development, and that there were no objections from technical consultees, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

Brian Pridmore spoke on behalf of Holton Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Councillor Tim Bearder, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application.

The committee asked the planning officer about the definition of infill and in response she clarified that that development in the Green Belt was inappropriate unless it came under one of several circumstances, limited infill in a village being one example. As she believed that the application site was a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage, she believed it was infill and therefore acceptable.

Members enquired into the possibility for the removal of permitted development rights and the planning officer confirmed that this had been a suggested condition on the approval of the application.

In response to a question about if a development in the proposed garden would also be considered infill, the planning officer indicated that each application would need to be assessed on its merits, and that the current application was considered infill development.

Members discussed the surroundings to the proposed application site and noted that there were dwellings on either side of the proposed property along the road. Therefore, as the committee agreed that the site was infill, they found that the principle of development to be acceptable. In addition, as they could see no other 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/S1723/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as on plan
4. New vehicular access
5. Vision splay dimensions
6. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained
7. Tree protection
8. Landscaping
9. Biodiversity measures
10. Ecology
11. Energy Statement verification
12. EV charging point
13. Surface water drainage details to be submitted.
14. Removal of Permitted Development (PD) rights Class A
15. Removal of Permitted Development (PD) rights Class E
16. Development in accordance with the Council's Organisational License
17. No development except in accordance with Part 1 of the Great crested newts (GCN) mitigation Principles.

Informatives:

18. Nature Space Best Practice
19. Great crested newts (GCN) District Licence
20. Criminal Liability in relation to District Licence.
21. Highways

178 P23/S3949/FUL - Glendale Barn, Glendale Farm, Northend

The committee considered planning application P23/S3949/FUL for the conversion of part of building adjoining existing dwelling to provide additional living space, and related works, including change of metal cladding to timber, altered fenestration and re-arrangement of external parking, on land at Glendale Barn, Glendale Farm, Northend.

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.

The planning officer informed the committee that site was within the countryside between Northend and Christmas Common and sat within the Chilterns National Landscape. He also noted that the barn was erected over 20 years ago.

The planning officer highlighted that a certificate of lawfulness had been given for the end bay of the barn on the basis that it had been present for more than four years. He noted that the application before the committee was for the extension of that dwelling into the two adjacent bays which were not used for agricultural purposes.

The dwelling was proposed to be entirely contained within the existing barn and included vertical timber cladding and several additional windows, a number of which

would be obscured by timber fins. The planning officer believed that the design of the dwelling would not be out of character with the surrounding area.

He also noted that the existing parking arrangements and garden used from the existing dwelling would continue to be used for the proposed application. However, he did indicate that a view of the extension would be possible from the nearby public right of way.

Overall, as the planning officer believed that landscape would not be harmed by the design and form of the building, he recommended that the application be approved.

Gill Bindoff spoke on behalf of Watlington Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Henry Venners, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee enquired into the use of the other bays of the barn and the planning officer confirmed that the last bay had been turned into a commercial workshop under permitted development rights, but that the other bays would be retained for the limited agricultural work that continued to be done near the site.

Members asked the planning officer if the applicant could change their windows under permitted development rights and he responded that this was possible, although the scope for them to do this would be limited with the suggested condition for the removal of permitted development rights.

The committee agreed that, in order to properly assess the impact of the proposal on the National Landscape, they wanted to examine the site from the nearby footpath. Therefore, they agreed that the application be deferred in order for a site visit to take place.

A motion, moved and seconded, for a site visit was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to defer application P23/S3949/FUL in order for a site visit to be held.

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm

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