

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Tuesday 16 April 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, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Ali Gordon-Creed, Georgina Heritage, Katharine Keats-Rohan, and Ed Sadler
Officers: Paul Bowers (Planning Officer), Will Darlison (Planning Officer), Paula Fox (Development Manager), Marc Pullen (Planning Officer), and Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Bertie Smith (Broadcasting Officer) and Tom Wyatt (Planning Team Leader)

189 Chair's announcements

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

190 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Axel Macdonald, David Bretherton, Ben Manning, who was substituted for Councillor Georgina Heritage, Sam James-Lawrie, and Tim Bearder.

191 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

192 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

193 Public participation

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

194 P23/S2889/FUL - The Mole Inn Toot Baldon, OX44 9NG

The committee considered planning application P23/S2889/FUL for the demolition of existing building and erection of replacement building to provide Bed and Breakfast accommodation to be used in connection with adjacent public house (As amended by plans removing dormer window and conference room and amplified by additional ecological and parking information received 10 January 2024) and the removal of dormer window and conference room, on land at The Mole Inn, Toot Baldon.

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 Toot Baldon Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the bed and breakfast would be connected to the existing business and highlighted that support for existing local businesses was in both the adopted local plan and the Baldons neighbourhood plan.

The site itself was adjacent to the local conservation area and a listed building, being the Mole Inn. As the proposal included a revision to remove the proposed dormer window, the planning officer did not consider that the application would be harmful to the conservation area, listed building, or the Green Belt.

The planning officer noted the concerns locally and from the parish council around parking on the public highway and over drainage. As the specialist drainage officer had no objection, the planning officer considered that the drainage aspects of the scheme were acceptable. On highways, the local highways authority had confirmed that 46 parking spaces were available on the site for the Mole Inn and the bed and breakfast and that this would be sufficient. In order to ensure more flexibility with the spaces, the planning officer suggested amending the details of suggested condition 9 to ensure that both parking areas could be used by customers of both the Mole Inn and the proposed bed and breakfast.

The planning officer highlighted that the applicant had a fallback position that was material to the application as they had permitted development rights to convert the existing building into a 12-room bed and breakfast. For this reason, the planning officer considered that the principal of development was acceptable. However, he clarified that even without that fallback position, he considered the application acceptable.

For these reasons, and as the design and appearance of the development were also acceptable, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

Sally Anne Williams spoke on behalf of Toot Baldon Parish Council, objecting to the application.

Phil Collins spoke objecting to the application.

Sarah Heather-Holt and Charlotte Dunne, the applicants, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye, a local ward councillor, spoke on the application.

The committee asked about the proposed amendment to the parking condition and the planning officer confirmed that this would mean that all car parking spaces could be used by both the Mole Inn and the bed and breakfast and that 46 spaces was considered a sufficient number.

In response to a question about if the committee could defer the application to request that a parking survey be done during peak times for the Mole Inn, the development manager indicated that she believed this would not be reasonable as the applicant was entitled to a timely decision. The committee also noted the concerns of the parish council around potential light pollution caused by the development but were satisfied this could be dealt with by conditions.

The committee debated the highways implications of the application, with some members raising concerns about the additional parking need that would be generated by the bed and breakfast. They also discussed the adjacent private road to the site which had been used by some customers of the Mole Inn but did not consider this to be a permanent parking solution. However, the committee noted the lack of objection from the highways authority and agreed that the parking provided on the site was sufficient. Members also indicated that any issues around individuals parking on and blocking the highway was something that should be looked at by the highway's authority separately from the application.

Noting the extant permission under permitted development rights for a 12-bed bed and breakfast, as well as the lack of objection from the highway's authority, members agreed that the local business should be supported. For these reasons, the committee agreed to approve the application subject to an additional condition on external lighting to prevent light pollution and the suggested amended condition 9 wording on parking.

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

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P23/S2889/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

Standard conditions:

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

Prior to commencement of development (other than demolition):

3. Surface Water Drainage
4. Foul drainage works (details required)

No development above slab level conditions:

5. Schedule of Materials

Prior to occupation conditions:

6. Construction phase – surface water drainage

7. Bird Boxes
8. Demolition - Nesting birds
9. Parking and manoeuvring areas retained

Compliance condition:

10. BREEAM Design Stage Certificates
11. External lighting

195 P23/S2641/FUL - Land adjacent to 1 Cullum Road Wheatley, OX33 1XD

The committee considered planning application P23/S2641/FUL for the erection of single storey, two-bedroom, detached bungalow (as amended by drawings GA.01 rev 05, GA.02 rev 05 and GA.03 rev 06 on 08/11/2023 and amplified by Energy Statement and Ecological Statement received on 27/11/2023 and 15/03/2024), on land adjacent to 1 Cullum Road, Wheatley.

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 Wheatley Parish Council.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application site comprised an area to west of the Cullum Road, in the built-up area of Wheatley. He also noted that the site was not in any specially designated area.

As the development was in a large residential area, the principle of development was acceptable and local plan policy compliant. In addition, the planning officer considered that the design and appearance of the development was in keeping with the surrounding area. He also indicated that the proposed amenity space complied with the joint design guide and would not negatively impact neighbouring amenity.

The planning officer highlighted that the application was policy compliant and had received no objections from technical consultees, and for these reasons, recommended that it be approved.

The committee asked about how the council could ensure that the nesting birds would not be disturbed during the removal of vegetation and the planning officer indicated that a consultant ecologist would likely be an onsite advisor to ensure this was carried out appropriately.

Members also raised the possibility of including swift bricks in the development, hollow brick that provide a home for cavity-nesting species of birds. The development manager highlighted that ecological considerations were outlined in suggested condition 9 on the approval of the application and that swift bricks could be considered.

As the committee considered that the application was policy compliant and that 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/S2641/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans *
3. Materials as on plan
4. Surface Water Drainage
5. Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained *
6. Cycle Parking Facilities
7. Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)
8. Energy Statement Verification
9. Integrated Biodiversity Enhancements (prior to slab level)
10. Wildlife Protection - Birds

196 P22/S2582/FUL - Shiplake College, Reading Road, Shiplake, RG9 4BW

The committee considered planning application P22/S2582/FUL for the development of new artificial pitches, non-turf cricket nets and fencing (as amplified by supporting information received 06 June 2023) amended with further biodiversity net gain details submitted to demonstrate compliance with Policy, on land at Shiplake College, Reading Road, 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 objection of Shiplake Parish Council. The concerns of the parish focused on the visual impact of the development on the character of the area the ecological harm caused by the artificial turf.

The planning officer informed the committee that the site was agricultural but had extant planning permission, secured in 2021, for the conversion of the field into a grass playing field. He also highlighted that the application would provide a sporting facility for the college which would also be open to the wider community on occasions. The planning officer indicated that the wider community use aspect of the development was given planning weight and formed a significant part in his decision on the application.

Due to the conditioned landscaping and external lighting restriction, the visual impact on the area was considered to be acceptable. On ecology, the planning officer was satisfied that the loss of ecology onsite could be offset by provisions offsite and that the ecologist had studied the plans in detail and had no objection to the application.

As the application complied with all local plan policies and as it was acceptable in terms of ecology and its visual impact, the planning officer recommended that the application be approved.

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

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

The committee asked for clarity around the biodiversity net gain achieved by the application and the long-term ecological consequences of the artificial turf. In response, the planning officer noted that the artificial playing field could be reversed over time, but that the application was for playing fields and that was how he assessed the application. In addition, it was emphasised that the ecology team had considered the application in depth and that the application had reached a point where they had no objections. Specifically, the planning officer noted that they could not achieve a biodiversity net-gain onsite, but that it would be provided off-site as compensation. Members noted that the presence of the ecology officer at the meeting would be helpful for similar applications in order to help answer the more technical questions.

In response to questions about if there would be more habitat lost with the installation of a grass playing field or artificial turf, the planning officer responded that both would have ecological impacts, but that the artificial turf would have a larger one. The planning officer also indicated that the college would not need to travel to Reading for playing fields and that this was a consideration in his recommendations.

The committee debated the application and several members believed that the proposed fencing around the site was out of character with the surrounding area. In addition, the fields distance from the college was also raised as a potential issue.

Although concerns were raised about the biodiversity impacts of the artificial turf, the committee were satisfied that these impacts had been properly investigated by the ecologist and planning officer and had been mitigated as much as possible. In addition, they noted that biodiversity net gain was being achieved through the application.

A motion was moved and seconded to refuse the application on the grounds that it would have a negative visual impact on character and appearance of the area. However, the committee did not believe this to be sufficient grounds for refusal as the scheme could be softened through a landscaping condition.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was not carried on being put to the vote with the chair issuing his casting vote.

Overall, the committee considered that the landscaping condition of the scheme would ensure that the visual impact of the development was acceptable, and they were also satisfied with the suggested condition to prevent any external lighting. For these reasons, and the lack of objection from the ecology officer, the committee 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/S2582/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as on plan
4. No external lighting
5. Surface water drainage works (details required)
6. Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan
7. Ecology (Mitigation)
8. Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)
9. Sport Field - Management and Maintenance Scheme
10. Removal of Permitted Development rights

197 Appeals Information

The committee received the appeals information report, presented by the development manager. This report detailed the Council's appeal performance from April 2020 to end of March 2023, the appeals started in March 2024, and the appeal decisions received in March 2024.

The development manager confirmed to the committee that the item would be regular item for members to note. She also highlighted the strong performance figures from the council as measured by central government metrics. The development manager also brought the committee's attention to the two appeal items that were decided by the committee with one decision being supported and one being overturned.

The committee were satisfied with the report and agreed to note the appeal information report.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm

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