

EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2024

Councillors Present: Alan Macro (Chairman), Richard Somner (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Cottam, Geoff Mayes, Justin Pemberton and Clive Taylor

Also Present: Alice Attwood (Senior Planning Officer), Simon Till (Development Control Team Leader), Gareth Dowding (Principal Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety)), Jessica Bailiss (Democratic Services Officer), Thea Noli (Acting Senior Paralegal) and Thomas Radbourne (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Paul Kander, Councillor Ross Mackinnon and Councillor Vicky Poole

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th June were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) Application No. and Parish: 23/01699/FULMAJ - Travellers Friend Crookham Common

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 23/016/FULMAJ in respect of Demolition of existing pub and reconstruction of 18 new flats with reception facilities for young people with autism and learning disabilities (falling within class c3 residential use) and alterations of existing B and B facilities into 2 no. of flats for young people with autism and learning disabilities (falling within class c3 residential (b) use) and alterations to existing shop and café to include alterations to windows and doors.
2. Mr Simon Till (Development Control Team Leader) introduced the report to Members, which took account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material planning considerations. In conclusion the report detailed that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and officers recommended that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a s106 obligation and to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports. It was highlighted that a revised recommendation had been included in the additional update information as follows: The officers recommendation is for conditional approval, subject to the conditions in the agenda report, the update sheet and additional update sheet; completion of a section 106 legal agreement to secure the use of the site; and to it being delegated back to officers to liaise with the applicant to secure appropriate drainage via additional information and conditions.

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3. Mr Gareth Dowding (Principal Engineer (Traffic and Road Safety)) confirmed that he had no further comments in relation to Highways Matters.
4. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Ms Watts Town Council representative, Mr Warren Richard, Mr Edward Sellick and Ms Rosie Palin, applicant, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish/Town Council Representation

5. Ms Watts (Thatcham Town Council) addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

6. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - The representation as on behalf of Thatcham Town Council, which had discussed the application at a meeting of its planning committee.

Applicant Representation

7. Rosie Palin addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#):

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

8. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - It was confirmed that the existing shop would be retained on site as it currently was.

Ward Member Representation

9. Councillor Owen Jeffery addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

10. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

11. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - In response to the possibility of revisiting the matter of lowering speed limits and if this would be feasible, it was confirmed that for a speed limit review to take place, the Ward Member or Town Council would need to apply through a separate speed limit review process.
 - Permitted Development rights in relation to C3 use were limited. However, if Members felt that a condition restricting permitted development was necessary this could be considered. Concern was raised that permitted development rights for C3 use fell under general residential rather than a care home and in essence, by restricting to the current use it was thought that any permitted development rights would fall away.
 - As noted in the Officer's report, the site location was not deemed sustainable for the proposed development. Normally Officers would expect such a development to be sited in accordance with Local Plan Policy however, there was a user demographic that had to be taken into consideration. Officers were not able to answer if any of the users would be drivers however, it was expected that they

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most likely would not. In terms of the particular application, Officers considered the lack of sustainability of the location provided some benefit. The balance was weighed positively in favour of specific areas of need.

- It was confirmed that condition six referred to foul drainage, which was a separate matter to surface water drainage. Under normal circumstances it was confirmed that there would normally be a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) condition. Officers were still waiting on this information and had therefore asked for this to be delegated back to Officer's so that the necessary discussions could take place with the applicant, to secure the required information and to ensure the drainage system was sustainable.

Members voted in favour to suspend standing orders so that the applicant could be asked to provide details regarding the users of the proposed site.

- Warren Davies (applicant) from the Care Quality Commission for Transforming Support confirmed that the individuals that lived within the type of service proposed would not ordinarily be drivers. They would likely have dedicated mobility cars driven by support staff and have access to specialist transport from the Care Quality Commission or the Local Authority.

Members voted in favour of reinstating standing orders.

Debate

12. Councillor Jeremy Cottam firstly commented on the sadness of the loss of the Travellers Friend, which had once been a much loved Inn. He however, felt that the proposal was excellent in terms of the benefit it would provide. He was aware of the poor internal condition of the pub and when viewed at the site visit, the condition had worsened further. The justification of going to a new build was an excellent idea and the proposal was well presented and fit for purpose. Councillor Cottam referred to comments and answers provided regarding the sustainability of the site and felt reassured that it was for the benefit of the residents.
13. Councillor Somner agreed with Councillor Cottam. The site had been visited previously and the out of the way location had been noted. It was a sad situation in current times that if a pub was not used it was lost. Councillor Somner was mindful of the conditions and the change in terms of drainage engineer's view (detailed in the additional update report), which need to be factored in. Councillor Somner proposed the Officer recommendation be approved with the inclusion of the recommended changes.
14. The Chairman clarified that the additional conditions for inclusion concerned the footpath and residential permitted development rights. Councillor Somner agreed with these conditions and felt that a condition of permitted development rights would offer some reassurance to those living in the area. Councillor Cottam seconded the proposal.
15. Councillor Pemberton queried if the SuDs precondition would also be included. Mr Till confirmed the revised recommendation proposed that this matter being delegated back to officers to liaise with the applicant to secure appropriate drainage via additional information and conditions. Mr Till clarified the further condition for inclusion, which had been requested by Members to restrict all residential permitted development rights and confirmed that a condition regarding the footpath was included within the update sheet.

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16. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Somner, seconded by Councillor Cottam to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions in the agenda report, the update sheet , additional update sheet and additional condition regarding permitted development rights detailed below; completion of a section 106 legal agreement to secure the use of the site; and to it being delegated back to officers to liaise with the applicant to secure appropriate drainage via additional information and conditions.

Permitted Development Rights

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking, re-enacting or modifying that Order with or without modification), no extensions, alterations, buildings or other development which would otherwise be permitted by Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C and/or E of that Order shall be carried out, without planning permission being granted by the Local Planning Authority on an application made for that purpose.

Reason: To prevent the overdevelopment of the site and in the interests of respecting the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Quality Design SPD (June 2006)

(2) Application No. and Parish: 23/02603/FUL - Barn, Hawkridge Farm, Bucklebury, Reading

17. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 23/02603/FUL in respect of Internal and external alterations to allow change of use of listed barn to dwelling, including erection of vehicular access, gate, car port and diversion of the definitive footpath.

18. Alice Attwood (Senior Planning Officer) introduced the report to Members, which took account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material planning considerations. In conclusion the report detailed that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and officers recommended that the Head of Planning and Development be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.

19. Mr Gareth Dowding confirmed that he had no further comments in relation to Highways Matters.

20. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr David Southgate, Parish Council representative, Russel Meadows and Christine Dunn, objectors, Kate Russell, supporter, Richard Beasley and Lisa Jackson, applicant/agent and Councillor Chris Read, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

Parish Council Representation

- Mr Southgate addressed the Committee (Bucklebury Parish Council). This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

21. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

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Objector Representation

22. Mr Russel Meadows and Ms Christine Dunn addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Objector

23. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:

- Mr Meadows confirmed that his property (Owl House, Hawkridge Farm) owned its own septic tank on the other side of Chapel Lane. Hawkridge Farm were also able to use this septic tank under a covenant. It was confirmed that the septic tank would not be available for use by the proposed barn conversion and would not be capable of coping with the extra four bedrooms.
- The septic tank owned by the Owl House at Hawkridge Farm was emptied every few years. The proposal would require a sealed cesspool because it would not have access to a septic tank and did not have the grounds available to accommodate one.
- Mr Meadows confirmed that the figures he had provided on cesspool capacity were based on the guidelines that one person equated to 150 litres per day and he further clarified how he had calculated the figures provided as part of his representation, relating to how often the cesspool would need to be emptied.
- The pond was fed into by water drainage from all the rooves and guttering of dwellings within Hawkridge Farm. The pond was the lowest point in the area and was therefore also fed into by water drainage from the road. The pond flooded each year during the winter and Mr Meadows had included pictures of this with his objection.

Supporter Representation

24. Ms Kate Russell addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Supporter

25. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Applicant/Agent Representation

26. Mr Beasley (Applicant) and Ms Jackson (Agent) addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

27. Members asked questions of clarification and the following responses were given:

- Ms Jackson was unable to clarify the heights of the bedrooms as the architect had drawn the plans. It was hoped that Officers would be able to clarify this point.
- In terms of the impact of light from the proposed dwelling on inhabitants in the close surrounding area, Ms Jackson reported that Officers had clearly considered this and felt that a planning condition would deal with external lighting issues. It was noted that internal lighting was a concern and Ms Jackson reminded members of the site visit and the existing large opening to the north of the barn. The barn also had high bay florescent lights that could be used at night and significantly in the winter. Mr Jackson suggested that domestic lighting would be

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much more sympathetic and curtains were often used. Ms Jackson did not agree that harm from the dwelling would be greater but felt it would improve the situation.

- Regarding the Conservation Officers comments concerning the impact of the obscured glazing and if an alternative had been considered, Ms Jackson acknowledged there was tension on this point. The front to front distance was within the standard required and obscured glazing had likely been suggested due to the strength of objection. The views were oblique and not direct due to the considerable distance of 12.5 metres. Obscured glazing did not need to be used if it was not felt to be necessary but it was likely Officer's would advise that it was.
- Regarding the tiles and whether they would all be reused, Ms Jackson confirmed that not all the tiles were original as the building was only listed in 1983. Tiles would be reused where possible. Most of the tiles were nailed and many of the rafters had been replaced.
- The barn had a gutter leading to down pipes and this would not change as part of the new proposal.

Ward Member Representation

28. Councillor Chris Read addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

29. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

30. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:

- In response to a question on the impact of internal and external lighting from the proposal, it was confirmed that the barn was currently in domestic use and had large opening, which caused light spill. Although plans had not been submitted comparing current lighting to the proposal there was a condition proposed ensuring a lighting scheme that was sensitive to biodiversity. The ecologist had been satisfied with the condition and did not believe that there would be any harm caused to protected species from light spill.
- It was confirmed that the barns current use was ancillary residential, which involved lighting intermittently. The Ward Member had referred to a possible future agricultural use of the barn and although Officers felt this was unlikely given the location and lack of viable farm land, if it were to be put to agricultural use (which would not require planning permission) then there could be a significant level of lighting with no way to control this, which could result in a large amount of light overspill. Compared to the level of lighting associated with agricultural use, a residential use in the Officer's view would result in considerably less light overspill, particularly with the conditions recommended. Members were reminded that it was also important to consider reasonableness when putting conditions place. Members were strongly to advised to consider residential use in comparison to a more intensified agricultural use. Members were also reminded that the recommendation was on balance where Officers were minded to support the ongoing viable use of the building and accept some undue impact. This was deemed favourable compared to the building falling into a state of disrepair. *(Councillor Jeremy Cottam disagreed that there would be increased light spillage with agricultural use as there would likely be motion detectors. He highlighted that*

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they were supposed to enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and looking after dark skies)

- The building was a listed building and therefore any additional light fixtures would require listed building consent. Members attention was drawn to condition 16, which dealt with a lighting strategy and external lighting within the AONB. This meant that the applicant would have to submit a lighting strategy in line with guidance and therefore dark skies would be protected by this condition.
- Condition 16 did not apply to internal lighting however, it had to be considered that there was existing internal lighting and by granting permission there would be more control over the existing lighting situation. Internal lighting of building could not be controlled.

Debate

31. Councillor Richard Somner understood the concerns and also the desire to develop. Lighting seemed to be the primary issue however, questioned if it was. He commented that there were 21 conditions, which for a single dwelling was considerable and showed the level of concern by Officers in ensuring that development was conducted in the right way. Councillor Somner stated that he was concerned about the size of the lane however, it was a rural area and if it the site was a working farm there would be sizable vehicles using it. Councillor Somner wished to listen to the views of other Members.
32. Councillor Geoff Mayes stated that he had looked in detail at the drawings and was impressed with the architectural changes. He raised concerned about the use of cork for the insulation and suspected that the barn would lose many of its existing tiles. Generally, he was in favour of the proposed building however was concerned about effluent removal and drainage aspects. He was concerned about the level of the pond and flooding of the subterranean car park.
33. Councillor Clive Taylor stated that like Councillor Somner and Mayes he also had mixed feelings about the proposal. He noted that there were more people in support of the application than objecting to it. Councillor Taylor was minded to support the application on balance. He noted concerns about glazed windows and the amount of visits required to empty water tanks however, his inclination was towards supporting the Officer recommendation.
34. Councillor Cottam stated that he was leaning towards rejecting the application. He was concerned about the impact of light pollution on surroundings. He felt it was a red herring to say that agricultural use would generate more lighting than that proposed. In his view, having visited many farms where motion detectors were used, this would not be the case. He queried if back lighting could be used within the bedrooms or if this would be unreasonable. If this could not be implemented or controlled then he did not feel planning permission should be granted due to the importance of the dark skies policy within the AONB. Councillor Cottam was also concerned about the sunken car port and this becoming flooded given increased rainfall, which he felt was unlikely to improve. He acknowledged on balance that there were positive elements to the application and he admired the architecture however, due to the concerns he had raised he would not be able to support the application.
35. Councillor Justin Pemberton acknowledged that the Committee was having to balance the competing priorities in deciding where its judgment should land. He felt the lighting issue was red herring and based on what he had heard could be controlled by planning conditions. He was aware that the area was already an

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established residential area to a point and there were already dwellings nearby. In his view Members needed to balance the risks associated with creating a new dwelling at the location with the existing structure falling into disrepair, if planning permission was refused. The long term viability of the area needed to be considered and what it was being used for currently. Councillor Pemberton felt that the application should be commended when there were not enough homes in the country although he appreciated the argument around affordable homes. He had listed to concerns, which he felt were valid however, he did not feel these were enough for him to object to the proposal and on balance he felt it should be supported.

36. Mr Till referred to points raised regarding internal lighting and advised that there would be a justified case for a condition on grounds of severe concerns on lighting overspill. If minded to approve the application, the condition would require detail of internal lighting to be provided and approved prior to occupation of the proposed dwelling.
37. Councillor Somner referred to comments about lighting and agricultural use. His understanding was that if the site was under agricultural use there would be no control over lighting whereas the proposal included two conditions on lighting with a potential of a third condition. Councillor Somner noted that the main reason raised for possible refusal of the application was associated with the lighting however, felt that with the conditions discussed there would be better control. On this basis Councillor Somner proposed with the proposed conditions and additional condition on lighting, that the Officer's recommendation to grant planning permission be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Pemberton.
38. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Somner seconded by Councillor Pemberton to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Service Director for Development and Regulation be authorised to grant refuse planning permission subject to the conditions in the report and update sheet and additional condition as follows:

Internal lighting condition

The approved dwelling shall not be occupied until a scheme for internal lighting to minimise lighting overspill, including details of lighting types and specifications to be used, and details of levels of overspill, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the internal lighting for the dwelling shall be implemented and retained in accordance with the approved scheme. No other internal lighting shall be installed except for in accordance with the scheme.

Reason: The site is located in a tranquil location of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. This condition is imposed in order to preserve the character and dark night skies of this part of the National Landscape in accordance with Policies CS14 and CS19 and the NPPF, and the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Board's guidance on Dark Night Skies.

(3) Application No. and Parish: 23/02604/LBC - Barn, Hawkrige Farm, Bucklebury, Reading

39. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(3)) concerning Planning Application 23/02604/LBC in respect of Internal and external alterations to allow change of use of listed barn to dwelling, including erection of vehicular access, gate, car port and diversion of the definitive footpath.

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40. Alice Attwood (Senior Planning Officer) introduced the report to Members, which took account of all the relevant policy considerations. In conclusion the report detailed that the proposal was acceptable in planning terms and officers recommended that the Head of Planning and Development be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
41. Mr Gareth Dowding confirmed that he had no further comments in relation to Highways Matters.
42. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr David Southgate, Parish Council representative, Russel Meadows and Christine Dunn, objectors, Kate Russell, supporter, Richard Beasley and Lisa Jackson, applicant/agent and Councillor Chris Read, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.
43. Mr Till clarified that Listed Building Consent considered only the impact of works on the fabric and the significance of the Listed Building and set out in detail what these were.

Parish Council Representation

44. Mr Southgate addressed the Committee (Bucklebury Parish Council). This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Parish/Town Council

45. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Objector Representation

46. Mr Russel Meadows and Ms Christine Dunn addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Objector

47. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Supporter Representation

48. Ms Kate Russell addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Supporter

49. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Applicant/Agent Representation

50. Mr Beasley (Applicant) and Ms Jackson (Agent) addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

51. Members asked questions of clarification and the following responses were given:
 - There was a detailed structural report, which formed part of the planning application and explained the sensitive repair of each of the beams, structures and joints. This had been considered in detail by the Conservation Officer who was satisfied with the works proposed.

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Ward Member Representation

52. Councillor Chris Read addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee - 10th July 2024 \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

53. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

54. Members asked questions of clarification and the following responses were given:

- Mr Till commented on the insulation proposed as he had drafted the condition on the matter. He provided Members with further details as this information had been provided through the additional update report. An objection had been received from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings on the grounds of some of the forms of insulation proposed. Officers were not of the view that this was a fundamental objection to the listed building consent and viewed it as a technical objection on the details currently proposed. Mr Till drew attention to point three on the amended update sheet, which provided the additional condition on insulation. Mr Till stated that he also wished to add the following wording to the condition 'this is not withstanding any details shown on the existing plans'.

Debate

55. Councillor Jeremy Cottam expressed his dissatisfaction with the application. He felt that the car port distracted from the view of the building but noted it had been highlighted a tractor could be parked there.
56. Councillor Geoff Mayes noted from the objector comments that an agricultural vehicle could be placed in the barn using it as a car port, which would avoid the need for the subterranean car port. He was unsure if this was a possibility.
57. Councillor Mayes commented on the insulation and that he had experienced similar issues with his own house. Wood ants were an issue with cork insulation and wasps and mice were an issue for some of the polystyrene alternatives. He was concerned about the materials proposed however, was supportive of the idea. He referred back to the car port and the possibility of fitting a tractor inside the barn as it could then be used as a car port. Councillor Mayes was reminded by the Chairman that the application before the Committee had to be considered.
58. Councillor Richard Somner noted the point by Councillor Mayes however, highlighted that the internal and external matters had already been considered as part of the previous application and the car port had been accepted. Councillor Somner was pleased to see Mr Till's response to the late consultation comment submitted and this addressed the scrutiny of the work that would be carried out and that any work would not be at the detriment of the current structure. Councillor Somner felt that the application was supportive of the application previously approved and therefore proposed the Officer recommendation to grant Listed Building Consent was approved subject to conditions in the main report and additional update sheet. This was seconded by Councillor Clive Taylor.
59. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Somner, seconded by Councillor Taylor to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Service Director for Development and Regulation be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions in the report and additional update sheet.

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(The meeting commenced at 6pm and closed at 8.53pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature