

WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2024

Councillors Present: Phil Barnett (Chairman), Clive Hooker (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Paul Dick, Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Harriet Allen (Planning Officer), Sharon Armour (Legal Services Manager), Paul Bacchus (Principal Engineer (Drainage and Flood Risk)), Sian Cutts (Senior Planning Officer), Bob Dray (Development Manager), Paul Goddard (Team Leader - Highways Development Control) and Donna Toms (Planning Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Adrian Abbs and Councillor Tony Vickers

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nigel Foot declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that he was a local ward member. Also, he was a Member of the Newbury Town Council's Planning and Highways Committee on Newbury Town Council which had considered this application, but he indicated that he would consider the application afresh. As his interest was personal and not a prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Phil Barnett declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Newbury Town Council's Planning and Highways Committee, which had considered this application, but he indicated that he had not attended the meeting where this application had been discussed. As his interest was personal and not a prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Clive Hooker declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that he was a local ward member. As his interest was personal and not a prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Antony Amirtharaj declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(3) by virtue of the fact that he was a local ward member. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Nigel Foot declared that he had been lobbied on Agenda Item 4(1).

Councillor Cliver Hooker declared that he had been lobbied on Agenda Item 4(2).

3. Schedule of Planning Applications

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(1) Application No. and Parish: 24/00348/FUL Cold Ash

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 24/00348/FUL in respect of the erection of 6 dwellings with associated access, car parking and landscaping at Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Ashmore Green, Thatcham.
2. Ms Sian Cutts 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 conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
3. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard if he had any observations relating to the application. Mr Goddard indicated that he was content with the proposed layout and while there was a slight shortfall in parking spaces, it was not enough to warrant an objection. He confirmed that cycle parking and electric vehicle charge points would be provided. Also, the predicted 18 additional traffic movements was a small number. Overall, Highways Officers had no objections.
4. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Ms Vikki Row applicant, addressed the Committee on this application.

Applicant Representation

5. Ms Row addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

[Western Area Planning Committee - Wednesday 18th December 2024](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant

6. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - The applicant indicated that the timescale for development of the estate would be extended slightly if this application was approved.
 - Clarification was provided that although there had been no objections from statutory technical consultees, there had been objections from Cold Ash Parish Council and Newbury Town Council.
 - It was confirmed that alternative uses of the site had not been considered – the applicant was a housebuilder, so it was logical for them to build additional homes.
 - Assurances were given that silt build-up in the attenuation ponds was being actively monitored and action would be taken as necessary to clear this.

Ward Member Representation

7. Councillor Stuart Gourley addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

[Western Area Planning Committee - Wednesday 18th December 2024](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

8. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

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

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- Removal of the pumping station was seen as a positive outcome, since they were more prone to failure than gravity sewers. Removal of the rising main would reduce the risk of foul water flooding on the site and associated contamination of the nearby watercourse. The Council had little authority to refuse such as change, if Thames Water was willing to accept it.
- Hydraulic calculations had been submitted and checks showed that there would be no increase in flood risk. SuDS had been requested primarily for amenity and biodiversity benefits. The most severe recent rainfall event on the site had been 1:10 years. While a variation in the freeboard had been spotted, this was still within tolerable levels.
- Although metal sheeting was currently being used to prevent soil movement, it was part of the wider development of the site and did not relate specifically to this application. It was the developer's responsibility to ensure suitable foundations for the buildings, but this was an issue for Building Control rather than Planning. It was confirmed that geo-environmental reports had been submitted for the site.
- The developer had already installed features to control silt run-off from the site, including silt fences and hay bales. These measures were considered to be acceptable. Officers had initially expressed concerns about soil stockpiles on the site, but assurance was provided that contractors were doing what they could to manage silt, and stockpiles would be used within the coming months.
- It was confirmed that previously, the rising main had pumped westward towards Stoney Lane before going south to join the wider foul water network, but the gravity sewer would flow directly south to join the network at Laud Close. Outside of individual property boundaries, the sewer network would be the responsibility of Thames Water.
- Officers explained that the car port condition would ensure that it was not converted into a garage. Garages were not counted as car parking, since they were seldom used for this purpose.

Debate

10. Councillor Clive Hooker opened the debate. He considered the overall development of the site to be acceptable, and noted that three of the six houses were already approved. There would be no detriment as a result of the reorientation of the buildings. He felt that officers had provided a good explanation of the benefits from the removal of the pumping station, which would create the space for the additional homes. Overall, he felt that it was a good use of the land, and he indicated that he supported the proposal.
11. Councillor Paul Dick understood the controversial history of the site, but many of the issues raised were not relevant to the three additional homes, and reassurance had been given that any issues had been addressed. He welcomed the additional affordable housing and proposed to accept the Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update reports. This was seconded by Councillor Denise Gaines.
12. Councillor Nigel Foot recognised the objectors' concerns, but he noted that these mostly related to the wider site rather than the three additional houses proposed. He asked if the conditions could be rigorously enforced.
13. Councillor Antony Amirtharaj indicated that he was minded to support the application, but asked for changes to the conditions. For Condition 13a, he asked if responsibility for maintenance of the SuDS measures could be given to Thames Water or West

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Berkshire Council. For Condition 13b, he asked if this could apply for the lifetime of the development and not just the construction phase. He also asked if the Construction Management Plan could require that the metal sheeting being used to prevent soil movement be replaced with a concrete structure. However, these modifications of the conditions were not accepted by the proposer or seconder.

14. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Dick, seconded by Councillor Gaines to grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main and update reports. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main and update reports.

(2) Application No. and Parish: 24/01467/HOUSE & 24/01541/LBC Leckhampstead

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Applications 24/01467/HOUSE & 24/01541/LBC in respect of a two storey rear extension to create two en-suite bathrooms with internal alterations, relocation of existing oil boiler and increase in chimney height, at Catslide Cottage, Hill Green, Leckhampstead, Newbury, RG20 8RB.
2. Ms Harriet Allen 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 unsatisfactory in planning terms and officers recommended that the Development Manager be authorised to refuse planning permission for the reasons listed in the main and update reports.
3. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mrs Cis Taylor, applicant, addressed the Committee on this application.

Applicant/Agent Representation

4. Mrs Taylor addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

[Western Area Planning Committee - Wednesday 18th December 2024](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant

5. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Ward Member Representation

6. Councillor Clive Hooker addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

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Member Questions to the Ward Member

7. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

8. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
 - The previous approval application for a one-storey extension had originally been submitted as a two-storey extension. The Conservation Officer's comments had applied to the original application for the two-storey extension, so could also be taken to apply to this application.

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- The 1990s extension had increased the floorspace of the building by 6%, while the current proposal would increase the floorspace by 27% from the original. It was acknowledged that the catslide roof distorted the appearance of the property.
- It was confirmed that part of the catslide roof would remain if the proposed extension was built. However, the Conservation Officer had been concerned that the original 18th century catslide roof would mostly be lost. The Conservation Officer had also been concerned about the loss of the historic fabric of the building, the further erosion of the historic plan form, the obscuring of the house from that elevation, and the blurring of the distinction with the original house. It was suggested that these aspects were relevant to the listed building consent.
- The planning application considered wider issues such as the views from the public rights of way. However, Officers indicated that the public footpath was a considerable distance away, so views of the property were limited.
- The Conservation Officer's assessment had been that the proposed development would largely remove the original catslide roof from the appearance of the cottage.

Debate

9. Councillor Howard Woolaston opened the debate. He did not feel that the proposed development would have a fundamental effect on the building. He was also swayed by the needs of the family. He indicated that he was minded to go against the Officer's recommendations.
10. Members were advised that considerations for the listed building consent would be relevant to the planning permission. Members were further advised that personal circumstances would not normally be a relevant planning consideration, but ensuring a decent housing stock could be a relevant factor.
11. Councillor Denise Gaines disagreed with Councillor Woollaston. She felt that the catslide roof and thatch made it a distinctive property. Very few properties like this remained. She supported the Conservation Officer's recommendation to refuse the application. She noted that permission had already been granted for the ground floor bedroom.
12. Councillor Paul Dick agreed with Councillor Gaines. He acknowledged the needs of the applicants, but he recognised that these were not relevant considerations. He felt that the proposal would make a significant difference to this 300 year old property, so he was minded to support the Officer's recommendation.
13. Councillor Antony Amirtharaj noted that some of the catslide roof would be retained and highlighted that there would be no change to the front of the property. He did not feel that there would be a major loss incurred as a result of the development, and he did not consider the increase in floorspace to be a major change that would transform the building. He also noted that extensions had been permitted at other properties in Hill Green.
14. Councillor Nigel Foot declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he was the Council's Heritage Champion. He indicated that he would abstain in the vote.
15. Councillor Woollaston proposed to go against Officer's recommendation and grant planning consent for the following reasons: the proposal was an amendment to an existing extension carried out in the 1990s; it could not be seen by the public other than a distant view from the public footpath; and it would not damage the structure of

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the building. This was seconded by Councillor Amirtharaj who noted that the listed status of the building would not be affected by the proposed extension.

16. Officers suggested conditions requiring commencement within three years and approval of plans. These were accepted by the proposer and seconder.
17. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Woollaston, seconded by Councillor Amirtharaj to grant planning permission. At the vote the motion was not carried.
18. Councillor Gaines proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and refuse planning permission for the reasons listed in the main and update reports. This was seconded by Councillor Dick.
19. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Gaines, seconded by Councillor Dick to refuse planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.
20. Councillor Gaines proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and refuse listed building consent for the reasons listed in the main report and the update report. This was seconded by Councillor Dick.
21. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Gaines, seconded by Councillor Dick to refuse listed building consent. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to refuse planning permission and listed building consent for the reasons set out in the main and update reports.

(3) Application No. and Parish: 24/00925/FUL Newbury

22. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(3)) concerning Planning Application 24/00925/FUL in respect of the construction of single storey restaurant building using shipping containers, renovation and fit out of existing brick storage barn to form new barn and seating area, and external landscaping to form pub garden/seating area, at Cross Keys, 8 London Road, Newbury.
23. Ms Donna Toms 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 conditions outlined in the main and update reports.
24. The Chairman asked Mr Paul Goddard if he had any observations relating to the application. He highlighted that the proposed seating area would result in the loss of the pub's car park, but there was sufficient parking in nearby public car parks particularly given that peak parking demand for the pub would be in the evenings, when demand for town centre car parking was low. He confirmed that Highways had no objection to the proposal
25. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr David Cheeseman and Ms Helen Spriggs, objectors addressed the Committee on this application.

Objectors Representation

26. Ms Spriggs addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

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27. Mr Cheeseman addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

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Member Questions to the Objector

28. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Ward Member Representation

29. Councillor Antony Amirtharaj addressed the Committee. The full representation can be viewed on the recording:

[Western Area Planning Committee - Wednesday 18th December 2024](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

30. Members did not have any questions of clarification.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- A light assessment had been carried out on Ms Spriggs' property in accordance with BRE guidance. Although this had shown there would be a 25% loss of light, this was considered adequate and there would still be ample light from above.
- Members noted that the site was within a town centre location, so a degree of activity was to be expected. Officers had been guided by Environmental Health colleagues, who were satisfied with the proposal. Also, they had confirmed that licensing arrangements could control how the site was managed, and they were confident that they could respond to any issues that arose.
- It was confirmed that the wood-burner flue was over 6m from the neighbouring property, and it was pointed towards the car park. It was suggested that the wood-burner would not be used in the summer months when windows were more likely to be open. The Environmental Health Team considered significant adverse impacts from the wood-burner to be unlikely, but they had powers to act if there was a problem with smoke/odours in future.
- The structural integrity of the shipping containers would be a Building Control issue.
- It was confirmed that the proposal would not result in any change to the barn roof. This could not be conditioned, since it was not necessary for the planning permission to be granted.
- Members were advised that the proposal did not seek any alteration to the existing vehicular access from London Road.
- Confirmation was provided that the surfacing in the seating area would be permeable.
- Members noted that the Environmental Health Team had not requested any additional conditions related to ducting from the kitchen. However, they could require this if there was a problem in future.

Debate

32. Councillor Antony Amirtharaj opened the debate. He indicated that he was in favour of the proposal, which would extend the pub rather than converting it to residential use. The business was in the town centre, and he suggested that the pub was

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needed within the local area. He felt it was a sustainable enhancement to the current business. He stressed that traffic and parking would not be an issue, but he recognised that objectors' concerns needed to be addressed, and he suggested that regular monitoring should be carried out. He indicated that he was happy to propose to accept the Officer's recommendation to approve the planning application.

33. Councillor Denise Gaines pointed out that there were other restaurants in the local area, which could also generate noise. She noted that the neighbouring business was not open every day and on working days it closed by 8pm (12pm on Saturdays), so she did not feel that it would be greatly affected. She did not have concerns about loss of light.
34. Councillor Paul Dick noted that extensive conditions had been proposed. He also highlighted that Environmental Health had no concerns about the applications and were confident that if any problems arose, they had sufficient powers to deal with them. Overall, he felt that it was a good proposal.
35. Councillor Howard Woollaston indicated that he was minded to second the proposal to approve the application, since he felt it would improve the street-scene. It was an existing business and the proposed expansion would provide additional employment. He suggested an additional condition to stipulate that the restaurant and pub could not be operated as two separate businesses. Officers agreed that a condition could be imposed to keep it as a single planning unit and that it could not be sub-divided.
36. Councillor Howard Woollaston proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report and the additional condition regarding retaining a single planning unit. This was seconded by Councillor Antony Amirtharaj.
37. The Chairman asked if conditions could be attached to the fuel used in the wood-burner in order to restrict smoke generation. Councillor Clive Hooker asked if a condition could be imposed requiring the burner to be electric. Officers indicated that the Committee should not seek to condition against the wood-burner per se. However, if Members so wished, a condition could be attached stipulating that no development shall take place until a management and monitoring plan is submitted for approval that shall include details of monitoring of noise, odours, fumes, etc. Also, a clause could be added such that if an issue was raised through monitoring, that would trigger a requirement to provide some mitigation. The additional conditions were accepted by the proposer and seconder.
38. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Woolaston and, seconded by Councillor Amirtharaj to grant planning permission subject to the proposed conditions. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions in the main report, the update report and the additional condition set out below.

Conditions

5. Singularity planning unit / no subdivision

6. Management and Monitoring Plan

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(The meeting commenced at 6.32 pm and closed at 9.11 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature