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Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2024

Councillors Present: Alan Macro (Chairman), Richard Somner (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Cottam, Paul Kander, Ross Mackinnon, Geoff Mayes, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole and Clive Taylor

Also Present: Michael Butler (Principal Planning Officer), Sam Chiverton (Clerk), Gareth Dowding (Principal Engineer – Traffic & Road Safety), Emma Howard (Trainee Solicitor), Thomas Radbourne (Zoom Host), Simon Till (Team Manager – Development and Planning).

PART I

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Vicky Poole declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that she was the Executive Portfolio Holder: Transformation and Corporate Programme, but reported that, as her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and abstain from voting on the matter.

Councillor Richard Somner declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that he knew Councillor Joanne Stewart who was speaking as ward member, but reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Clive Taylor declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(2) by virtue of the fact that he was the Chairman of Tilehurst Parish Council, but reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

10. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) 24-01672-HOUSE, Crevan, Beals Lane, Tilehurst

1. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 3(1)) concerning Planning Application 24-01672-HOUSE, Crevan, Beals Lane, Tilehurst in respect of a proposed Garage to the front garden.
2. Mr Simon Till 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, Mr Mike Ford, objector, Ms Nicola Taplin, agent, addressed the Committee on this application.

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Objector Representation

4. Mr Mike Ford addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – 4 December 2024 Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Objector

5. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- The garage at the rear of the property was accessed via the gate opposite the school and was the only garage accessible via Little Heath Lane.
 - The garage at the rear of the property was used for extra storage. It had stored vehicles in the past.

Applicant/Agent Representation

6. Ms Nicola Taplin addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – 4 December 2024 Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

7. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- The lane to the rear of the property was shielded from view from the four properties with limited surveillance and could be entered into undetected by residents.
 - The front of the site was more secure.
 - There were a number of security methods that could be employed to secure the rear of the site, which would involve installing security lights, which could be harmful to the rural character and appearance of the area.
 - Further along Beals Lane there were dwellings in front of the building line, with a forward projecting garage. The building line was scattered and had a rural layout, and did not have an urban building line.
 - The applicant would be prepared to accept a change to the proposed roof if members agreed that it would lessen the impact on the character of the lane.

Ward Member Representation

8. Councillor Joanne Stewart addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – 4 December 2024 Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Ward Member

9. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- The volume of traffic would be the same whether it was in front or behind the building.
 - If the volume of traffic was directed to the rear of the property it would increase noise and disturbance, impacting residents using their back gardens.

Member Questions to Officers

10. Members asked questions of clarification and were given the following responses:
- Officers noted the location of the trees, which appeared to be mature hedges and trees, but were unable to comment on the height of the trees.
 - Officers noted that building lines were in terms of the prevailing character and appearance of an area rather than a fixed reference point. Where properties

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honour a traditional uniform setback from the highway or roadway, that would be considered to be a strong building line and formative within the character and appearance of the area.

- Officers noted that there were five dwellings in the lane where their foremost projections were within the building line, with a deep setback from Beals Lane.
- Officers noted that in planning terms, garages were generally used for storage rather than vehicular parking.
- Officers stated that a flat building roof would create a functional appearance that would not be in keeping with the prevailing character of buildings in the area.
- Officers noted that landscaping conditions could be added, but considered that it would not offer sufficient mitigation, as it could be mitigation of a potentially transient nature, as the mature trees and hedges at the front of the property could be removed once the condition time limit expired.
- Officers noted that Tree Protection Orders were used to protect mature trees that have particular area character value and were at direct risk of being removed due to development that may be undertaken, and any landscaping mitigation in the application would not fit the usual justification for a TPO. Trees needed to be present before a TPO, and there was a high potential that a TPO would be found unsound procedurally on new landscaping.
- Officers had not sought amendments to the application because the impact of the building both as proposed and with any likely potential alternatives to be proposed would be too significant to be acceptable.

Debate

11. Councillor Ross Mackinnon opened the debate by stating that Officers had given one reason for refusal of the application and noted that it rested on the committee's view on whether the erection of the garage would affect the setting of the site within public views from the out of settlement ruling. Councillor Mackinnon did not see how the application could not have an adverse impact.
12. Noting the building line on Beals Lane, Councillor Richard Somner felt that landscaping amendments would likely not mitigate the impact of the proposal on the local area. He noted that the proposed building could be built to the rear of the property, and reasonable security measures could be taken. Councillor Somner noted that the proposal would likely only be relevant to the current owners, and it would likely have a different use with new owners.
13. Councillor Jeremy Cottam noted that the storage of sports cars was not a planning condition. He felt that the proposal would be intrusive into the character of the lane and supported the Officer's recommendations.
14. Councillor Justin Pemberton noted that the proposal was in front of the building line and would change the street scene. He supported the Officer's recommendations.
15. Councillor Clive Taylor had been unable to attend the site visit, but he knew the lane well. He supported the Officer's recommendations.
16. Councillor Cottam proposed to accept Officer's recommendation and refuse planning permission for the reasons listed in the main report and update report. This was seconded by Councillor Geoff Mayes.

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17. The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Cottam, seconded by Councillor Mayes, to refuse planning permission. At the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the Development Manager be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

Refusal Reasons

1. Character of Area/NWDNL

The proposed works are for a garage stood proud from the frontage of the main dwelling within the site and adjacent to Beals Lane. The surrounding properties all conform to a clear, well-defined building line, which is a feature of the street scene and is not interrupted by development in front of dwellings. By virtue of interrupting this orderly pattern of development the proposed garage would appear at odds with the pattern of surrounding built form and thereby visually detract from the open frontage character of its surroundings. As such it would have an adverse impact on the setting of the site within public views from the out of settlement rural lane. The impact of the proposed development would therefore be contrary to the WBC House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004), as well as Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy, which require that new development demonstrates a high quality of design and respects the settlement form, pattern and character, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. 24/01288/REG3, Walnut Close, Thatcham

18. The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 3(2)) concerning Planning Application 24/01288/REG3, Walnut Close, Thatcham in respect of change of use from class C2 [nursing home] to sui generis use comprising accommodation for those in housing need plus retention of family contact centre-part retrospective.

19. Mr Michael Butler 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.

20. The Chairman asked Mr Gareth Dowding if he had any observations relating to the application. Mr Dowding confirmed the statements from Mr Butler regarding the parking ratio and the number of spaces offered. Considering the intended use of the site, Highways Officers had no concerns with the number of car parking spaces provided in the proposal.

21. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Pierre Vagneur-Jones and Mr Nick Caprara, applicant/agent, addressed the Committee on this application.

Applicant/Agent Representation

22. Mr Vagneur-Jones and Mr Caprara addressed the Committee. This representation can be viewed on the recording: [Eastern Area Planning Committee – 4 December 2024 Recording](#)

Member Questions to the Applicant/Agent

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

- The housing would be for people who were deemed in priority need from West Berkshire.

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- There would be communal areas near the entrance and other communal areas within the site. There would be staff onsite every day during the working day, and a security guard in the evening.
- Housing would provide the EV charger.
- No areas in the building would be shared between the two functions, there would be separate entrances, with staff unable to access the other sides of the building.

Member Questions to Officers

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

- Officers noted that it was West Berkshire policy to encourage the use of charging points wherever possible, and the development control team insisted that the charging points were a condition as part of the application.
- Officers stated that the application proposed a condition with two electric vehicle charging points, but the Committee were unable to condition such charging points outside of the red line or the blue line.
- Officers noted that single entry points security systems, and CCTV of the building and the car park were legitimate and appropriate conditions that members could add to the application. Since West Berkshire Council was the applicant and had already given an undertaking to carry out the works, a separate condition was not considered necessary.

Debate

25. Councillor Richard Somner opened the debate by noting that the application was straightforward and expressed his concern regarding the EV charging point. If the charging point was for public use, there would be no guarantee that the space would be available, and it would generate a cost. Councillor Somner supported the application.
26. Councillor Jeremy Cottam supported the inclusion of CCTV conditions on the building and the car park.
27. Councillor Justin Pemberton supported the inclusion of a condition for an appropriate security system confirming a single point of entry and CCTV coverage of the building and car park.
28. Councillor Paul Kander noted that the condition would need two single points of entry for the building.
29. Councillor Somner proposed to accept Officer’s recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed in the main report and update report. This was seconded by Councillor Cottam
30. 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 main report and update report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.57 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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