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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, 16 OCTOBER 2013

Councillors Present: Peter Argyle, Pamela Bale, Brian Bedwell (Vice-Chairman), Richard Crumly, Alan Law, Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Geoff Mayes, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask and Quentin Webb (Chairman)

Also Present: Sarah Clarke (Team Leader - Solicitor), Gareth Dowding (Senior Engineer), Charlene Myers (Democratic Services Officer) and David Pearson (Team Leader - Development Control)

PART I

40. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2013 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Geoff Mayes declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(1), but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

42. Minutes

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43. Declarations of Interest

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44. Schedule of Planning Applications

44(1) Application No. & Parish:13/01612/HOUSE - 55 The Avenue, Mortimer Common

(Councillor Geoff Mayes declared a personal interest in Agenda item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that he knew the objector. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 13/01612/HOUSE in respect of a single storey front addition to the garage together with a new pitched roof over the existing garage.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Councillor M Dennett, Parish Council representative and Mr Roger Jones, objector, addressed the Committee on this application.

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Councillor M Dennett in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- The Parish Council objected to the original plan as in their opinion it constituted over development of the site and would result in an extension forward of the building line.
- The revised plan still sought to increase the overall footprint of the development which would set a precedent in the area.
- The amended roof design was an improvement based on the previous design but the extension would still be forward of the building line.
- They were concerned that the proposed plans resulted in a loss of the parking space to the front of the site due to the extended garage.

Mr Roger Jones in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He had occupied number 53 The Avenue since 1955.
- The original development plans would result in a loss of sunlight in his garden; the revised plan sought to lessen the impact upon neighbouring amenity but still failed to fully alleviate his concern.
- The garage wall was on the property boundary of number 53 The Avenue, not number 52 as stated during the site visit. Development of number 52 had to take place on the applicant's site; therefore it was difficult to see how the contractor would access the garage wall without entrance via number 53.
- The footings and overall structure of the garage would need to be considered prior to development and incorporate an assessment made by a building surveyor of impact on his property.
- The amended proposal remained over development
- In response to questions asked, Mr Jones advised that he preferred the proposed design with a hipped roof line. Mr Jones stated that the gable would reflect the design already to the front of the property but felt that it would still appear overbearing.

Councillor Mayes, Speaking as Ward Member, raised the following points:

- The revised plan sought to improve the appearance of the development but this remained questionable in his view.
- The development of the garage could prove problematic and required the expertise of a building surveyor.
- The development would set a precedent in the area.
- The north side boundary belonged to 53 The Avenue.

Councillor Richard Crumly apologised for not being able to attend the site visit and explained that he felt the revised plan improved the appearance of the property. Councillor Crumly stated that he could not see a planning reason to refuse the application.

Councillor Graham Pask apologised for not being able to attend the site visit and stated that the application in front of the Committee should be considered on its own merit. Councillor Pask explained that based on the position of the building and minimal impact upon neighbouring amenity, he could not see a planning reason to refuse the application and therefore he proposed acceptance of Officer's recommendation.

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Councillor Brian Bedwell conveyed his disappointment that the Committee was unable to hear from the applicant and stated that building inspectors would need to be careful during construction with regard to the concerns of the neighbour.

Councillor Irene Neil explained that number 55 was set lower than number 53 and further back, therefore, the front extension would have minimal impact on neighbouring amenity.

Councillor Alan Law echoed comments from the Committee and seconded Councillor Pask's proposal to accept Officer's recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the receipt of a suitable block plan by November 16th 2013 and subject to the conditions set out in the agenda with condition 2 to be updated to include the receipt of a satisfactory block plan.

Conditions

1. The development shall be started within three years from the date of this permission and implemented strictly in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the desirability of the development against Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 - 2026) should it not be started within a reasonable time.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing title numbers; Ground Floor Plan, 1961.G.2. (PART) A, 1961.G.4 A, 1961.G.5 A, 1961.G.6 A, 1961.G.7 A, and 1961.G. 8 A; received on 11th October 2013 and Block Plan; received on 23rd October 2013.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details assessed against Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 - 2026).

3. The materials to be used in the development shall match those on the existing development to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity in accordance with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 - 2026).

4. Irrespective of the provisions of the current Town and Country Planning (General Development) Order 1995 (or any subsequent revision), no additional openings shall be inserted in the north elevation of the roof hereby approved without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent overlooking of adjoining properties and in the interests of the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 - 2026).

5. Irrespective of the provisions of the current Town and Country Planning (General Development) Order 1995 (or any subsequent revision) The existing garage and the extension to it hereby approved shall be retained for vehicle parking.

Reason: To ensure that the garage is kept available for vehicle parking in the interest of road safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

45. Application No. & Parish: 13/01936/HOUSE - 2 Church View, Beenham, Reading

(Prior to the item being considered Councillor Quentin Webb advised Members that the Planning Service received a letter from Mr Tony Newcombe from 3 Church View. The letter invited Members to visit the neighbouring property, during the site visit, in order that they could consider the impact upon neighbouring amenity. David Pearson was unaware of the request as a result the group had not visited neighbouring properties. The Committee heard that David Pearson and Councillor Webb visited 3 Church View and k supplementary photographs had subsequently been taken of the property from the position of the neighbouring garden. The Committee agreed that they had sufficient information in order to consider the application in full and determined that they would proceed with the item).

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 13/01936/HOUSE in respect of a proposed roof space conversion and associated internal alterations, including a dormer window, roof light and sun pipe.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Mr Tony Newcombe, objector and Mr Neil and Mrs Liz Wilkinson, applicant, addressed the Committee on this application.

Mr Tony Newcombe in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He occupied number 3 Church View.
- The proposed extension was very large in comparison it's current size. The overall size of the development would be overbearing and impact negatively on neighbouring amenities. It would be very close to the boundary and the two properties were only 5m apart.
- West Berkshire Planning Guidance stated that dormers should be seen as a means of providing light and ventilation to an existing roof space and not as a means of increasing floor space for a dwelling.
- The increased height of the neighbouring roof line would affect the access to evening sunlight which entered the neighbouring garden from the west.
- Development works would be intrusive and obstruct his privacy.
- He was deprived of a fair hearing due to the oversight of the Planning Team, and requested that the item be deferred until such time when Members could visit his property and observe the impact of the proposal.

In response to questions asked, Mr Newcombe confirmed that he occupied the property to the east of number 2 Church View and that the increased height of the roof line would impact the natural light available in his study, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and living room.

Mr and Mrs Wilkinson in addressing the Committee raised the following points

- They had worked with officers to address the reasons for refusal of their previous application. The amended plans reduced the width of the dormer which addressed concerns that the development was excessive.
- The size of the dormer on the east side of the property had to provide sufficient space for wheelchair access.
- Planning permission had been granted for other dormers of similar design on neighbouring properties..
- Windows would be used for ventilation purposes only and glazed glass inserted in order that neighbours privacy was not compromised

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In answer to questions raised, Mr Wilkinson confirmed that the plan included the use of windows to the front and rear of the dormer as shown on the original plans.

It was noted that Mr Newcombe felt he had been deprived of a fair hearing. Sarah Clarke advised Members that from a legal perspective the Committee was entitled to make a decision, with the use of the supplementary photographs if required, as they had sufficient information on which to base a judgement, notwithstanding that the alleged oversight by the Planning team.

In response to questions raised, David Pearson advised that applicants were encouraged not to seek additional living space through the use of extending the roof as it could result in large and unattractive structures. David Pearson reminded the Committee that the application was finely balanced and Members would need to assess the impact on neighbouring properties as a key issue.

Councillor Royce Longton raised the concern that the Committee was unable to sufficiently assess the neighbouring impact without a visit to the site and therefore requested that the item be deferred.

Councillor Pask highlighted that similar developments existed in the immediate area; however, due to the position of the neighbouring garden, he was uncomfortable with the proposed developed at number 3 Church View.

Councillor Law explained that the dormer appeared unattractive to some people, but other properties in the area had them in place. He was concerned that the proposed windows on the dormer would result in overlooking but acknowledged that the application included obscure glazed windows. Councillor Law concluded that if the item was refused then it was likely that the decision would be challenged at appeal.

Councillor Bedwell echoed the concern highlighted by Members that he too had not assessed the potential impact from the neighbouring garden. Councillor Crumly felt the proposal was unattractive and overbearing, resulting in a loss of neighbouring amenity and therefore he proposed refusal of Officers' recommendation.

Councillor Pask felt similar development to neighbouring properties had set a precedent in the area, but that if the application was considered in isolation then the impact upon neighbouring amenity was evident. Councillor Pask seconded the proposal to refuse Officers' recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to REFUSE planning permission subject for the following reason:

1. The proposed dormer is poorly designed and will result in an unattractive, long and bulky addition to the roof of No. 2 Church View, Beenham. No. 2 Church View lies only 4 - 5.5M from the rear elevation of No. 3 and the proposed dormer will have a significant and unacceptable visual and overbearing impact on the amenity of that property. Accordingly due to its poor design and unacceptable impact the proposal is contrary to the requirement for high quality design, which should seek to protect and enhance the amenity of neighbouring properties, contained in Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), West Berkshire Council's Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design - West Berkshire Part 1 Achieving Design Quality (June 2006), West Berkshire Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - House Extensions (July 2004) and the Beenham Parish Design Statement - July 2004.

INFORMATIVE (13/01936/HOUSE):

- 1 In attempting to determine the application in a way that can foster the delivery of sustainable development, the local planning authority has approached this decision in a

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positive way having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to try to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has also been unable to find an acceptable solution to the problems with the development so that the development can be said to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

46. Appeal Decisions relating to Eastern Area Planning

Members noted the outcome of appeal decisions relating to the Eastern Area.

47. Site visits

A date of 30 October 2013 at 9.00am was agreed for site visits if necessary. This was in advance of the next Eastern Area Planning Committee scheduled for 6 November 2013.