

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Planning Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 15 August 2024 from 7.30 - 9.12 pm.

Present: Councillors

Chris Whately-Smith, Chair
Philip Hearn
Chris Lloyd
Andrea Fraser
Sara Bedford
Elinor Gazzard
Chris Mitchell
Harry Davies
Stephen King

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Scott Volker, Principal Planning Officer
Suzanne O'Brien, Principal Planning Officer
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

External attendance:

Diana Barber – Batchworth Community Council
Jon Bishop – Chorleywood Residents' Association
Michael Lowry – Sarratt Parish Council

PC42/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Debbie Morris, the substitute being Councillor Andrea Fraser.

PC43/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 18 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

PC44/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9, as the architect is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group. He is not present.

PC45/23 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PC46/23 23/1795/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND ERECTION OF 6 NO. TWO STOREY DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED BIN STORE, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT 35 HIGH STREET, ABBOTS LANGLEY, WD5 0AA.

Scott Volker, Principal Planning Officer provided the following update:

Comments received from Environmental Health Officer who raised no objection subject to three conditions requiring submission of a remediation strategy prior to commencement of the development; verification report prior to occupation and condition relating to the discovery of unexpected contamination during construction works.

Informative 6 is to be deleted as the application is not subject to s.106 agreement.

Members expressed concerns regarding the location of the refuse bin that has been planned for the site. Members highlighted issues related to the accessibility of the bin store for refuse lorries, emphasising that the current location could block traffic on the mini roundabout and cause parking issues. Additionally, there are concerns that the visibility of the bin store may encourage fly tipping, and that residents may struggle to access the bins if they are not positioned correctly.

Members of the Committee requested clarification on these issues, particularly, the refuse lorry's ability to access the bins safely.

The case officer responded, explaining that officers had been engaging with the developer with regards to provision of a turning space for lorries, which had been required by Hertfordshire County Council as one of the conditions.

The area to the front of plots 4-6 would be sufficiently sized for a box lorry, such as a supermarket delivery truck to maneuver and exit safely in forward gear, and for refuse and larger vehicles. There was a discussion with the agent regarding the removal of the two most southern parking spaces to facilitate the turning space. The agent had been working with their team and had worked on a tracking system for larger vehicles that could adequately maneuver and turn around within the space. Therefore, officers can request a further plan from the agent to clearly define the area as a turning space, mark it, and condition it to be a turning space, which would enable refuse vehicles to enter and exit in forward gear, and then it would enable the refuse collection team to collect the bins individually from the front of the properties.

The case officer further clarified that bin storage for plots 1-3 will be within their rear gardens, while plots 4-6 will have designated bin storage areas on the left side of plot 4. If the bins for plots 1-3 are stored in the rear gardens and only brought out on collection day, it would eliminate the need for the bin stand area, and plots 4-6 would benefit from their bin stand to the front of plot 4.

Members argued that the current design is inadequate, and bins could potentially block the pavement on collection day. A dedicated bin store is needed that could accommodate three wheelie bins, as storing the bins in rear gardens and trying to navigate them from the rear, through parked cars is impractical.

There were further issues raised by Members with the accessibility of the bin store for plots 4-6, as the plans currently show steps down to the bin storage area which would not be acceptable.

Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader noted the concerns and summarised the key points; regarding the need for a discussion with the agent, including, the bin storage, the potential removal of two parking spaces, and the requirement for clear demarcation of parking areas. The officer emphasised the need for a management plan for the communal areas, and clarification on whether a management company will oversee these areas or, if responsibilities will be shared among future property owners. Ultimately, the aim is to ensure that waste vehicles can access the site effectively and safely, while accommodating the needs of the residents.

The agent, Mr. Sturgess spoke in support of the application.

In response to a question raised by Members of the Committee on the affordable housing contribution; the case officer reported that the build costs were independently scrutinised by a quantity surveyor and that was a differing topic as part of the application process. The original application was supported by a viability assessment, and that was reviewed initially by the Council's independent viability assessor, who came to a different total cost. The applicant challenged their recommendations and their approach taken, and in doing so, they requested an independent review by a quantity surveyor who agreed with the applicant, that their method and approach to build costs were correct and adequate in this situation, and therefore agreed with the applicant that their build costs should be attached. The viability was recalculated, and the independent quantity surveyor subsequently came to a different conclusion to their original assumptions, resulting in this scheme not being viable to contribute towards affordable housing.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved for deferral of the application, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford, on the basis that officers will seek tracking details for refuse vehicles, introduction of turning circle, bin storage details to rear for plots 1-3 and alterations to bin storage access arrangements for plots 4-6.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That the application is deferred, on the basis that officers will seek tracking details for refuse vehicles, introduction of turning circle, bin storage details to rear for plots 1-3 and alterations to bin storage access arrangements for plots 4-6.

PC47/23 23/1797/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF TWO STOREY DETACHED BUILDING TO CREATE 17 NO. FLATS, INCLUDING LOWER GROUND FLOOR LEVEL, FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR BALCONIES AND ACCOMMODATION IN THE ROOFSpace WITH DORMERS, ROOFLIGHTS, SOLAR PANELS WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT CEDAR HOUSE, SANDY LANE, NORTHWOOD, HA6 3EZ

Scott Volker, Principal Planning Officer provided the following summary to the Committee:

- Members considered this application at committee in May.
- Members resolved to refuse the application on grounds relating to overdevelopment demonstrated by insufficient parking and the lack of useable and quality of amenity space; and the absence of a S106 to secure affordable housing review mechanism and private refuse collection.
- Prior to Officers issuing the decision the agent contacted the council and supplied Officers with revised plans and additional information seeking to overcome the concerns expressed at the Committee meeting. These included drawings proposing a material change to the scheme to provide an additional parking space and supplementary supporting information relating to amenity space provision and useability (375sqm useable; 104sqm private balconies Total 479sqm plus 586sqm of visual amenity space - Total 1,065sqm (Requirement 427sqm)
- This additional information is considered material to the determination of the application and therefore the application is now being returned to Committee for further consideration.
- Officers could have refused to accept the revisions and additional information; however, this potentially would have been presented as part of any future appeal and considered in any costs application.
- The site is a brownfield site in a secondary centre served by local bus routes and given the recent publication of Written Ministerial Statement setting out the aims new Government's regarding proposed changes to the NPPF and introduction of new

mandatory housing targets this application is a good opportunity to provide new housing.

A Batchworth Community Councillor spoke against the application.

A Ward Councillor also spoke against the application.

The agent, Mr. Bateman spoke in support of the application.

In response to a request for clarification on the additional parking space, the case officer advised that the additional parking space was provided as a result of the loss of the turning space in that area. It was originally designated to be a turning space, however, the agent had created a parking space and then updated the transport statement, which showed that suitable tracking and movement of the vehicles in that area were sufficient for users to maneuver without a turning space.

Councillor Chris Whately-Smith moved, seconded by Councillor Stephen King that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement securing an affordable housing review mechanism and private refuse collection.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement securing an affordable housing review mechanism and private refuse collection.

PC48/23 24/0804/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION; FRONT PORCH, PARTIAL GARAGE CONVERSION LINKING TO MAIN DWELLING, ADDITION OF SIDE DORMER AND REAR TERRACE BALCONY; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION AT HOLLY TREES, TROUT RISE, LOUDWATER, RICKMANSWORTH, WD3 4JR.

Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader provided the following update:

Following the publication of the report the Case Officer has received 2 emails from neighbouring properties expressing their disappointment with the 'refusal'. Officers clarified that at this stage only an Officer recommendation has been made. The application has not been determined confirming that it would be for members of the committee to determine the application. The neighbours further reiterated their support for the proposal. It is not considered that the receipt of these comments necessitates any revisions to the report as published.

A Parish Councillor spoke in support of the application.

A Ward Councillor also spoke in support of the application.

The applicant, Mrs Wright-Brown also spoke in support of the application.

The Committee considered the application and raised questions around where the harm would be and pointed out the efforts made by the applicant to align the new design with the existing style.

The case officer explained that although officers recognise the positive enhancements that have been made across the scheme, the conservation officer has expressed concerns predominantly on the combination of the different extensions eroding the original character of

the house. However, Members could potentially view the extensions differently, based on preserving certain elements.

The case officer further explained that the unique character of the house is the asymmetrical design, and the conservation officer's concern is that this unique character will become more symmetrical with the proposed extension design. Although, officers lean towards the conservation officer's comments in their judgement, Members could come to a different judgement.

Members highlighted the challenges faced when balancing the views of conservation officers with the need for development that may not be visible but still impacts the conservation area.

Concerns were raised about the implications of going against conservation officers' recommendations and the emphasis on the importance of considering their professional judgement in the decision-making process.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed that planning permission be granted with the appropriate conditions and stressed the need for the changes to match existing materials to accommodate modern living while respecting the area's history. He acknowledged the evolution of conservation areas and the importance of balancing objections with support from the community.

Responding to a request for clarification on the conservation officer's objections; the case officer reiterated that there are a number of factors that cumulatively result in harm according to the conservation officer. The first being the scale of the extensions when compared to the original dwelling, followed by the loss of the asymmetrical form due to the introduction of the cat slide roof, in addition to consolidating the built form by attaching the garage to the house, extending built form across the plot, rather than having a gap, which emphasizes the overall scale of the extensions. In the conservation officer's opinion, those factors combined would dilute the positive contribution the dwelling currently makes to the conservation area.

It was also clarified by the case officer that the garage would normally be conditioned that it remains as a garage, if there are potential problems with parking, however, this is not the case in this instance, and the conversion of that garage to habitable accommodation at a later date may not require planning permission. It would only become an issue if it was a separate planning unit that is used for independent residential purposes, which would need planning permission in its own right. Therefore, the condition wouldn't have much of a material impact and therefore is not required.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, seconded by Councillor Elinor Gazzard that planning permission be granted, contrary to officer recommendation for refusal, subject to the following conditions:

- time limit
- approved plans
- submission of materials
- works to accord with Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- rooflight to be flush with roof
- erection of 1.8m high solid/obscure privacy screens to flank of balcony
- obscure window to proposed side dormer
- no additional windows to flank windows / roofslopes
- details showing how walls to be retained during construction can be retained.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That PLANNING PERMISSION be APPROVED.

PC49/23 24/0814/FUL - ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY FRONT AND SIDE EXTENSION AT SARRATT VILLAGE HALL, THE GREEN, SARRATT, HERTFORDSHIRE

Suzanne O'Brien, Principal Planning Officer provided the following update:

Comments from Cadent Gas have been received that request an informative to be attached to any planning permission, advising that there may be legal interest in the land, that may restrict activity and proximity to Cadent assets.

A Parish Councillor spoke in support of the application.

A Ward Councillor also spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Mitchell that, subject to conditions PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That subject to conditions PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED.

PC50/23 24/1064/FUL – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING CONSERVATORY AND CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND FRONT PORCH EXTENSION, CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION; PROVISION OF WINDOW TO SIDE ELEVATION AT 26 POPES ROAD, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTS, WD5 0EY

Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader provided the following update:

At paragraph 8.1, the recommendation states that “retrospective” planning permission is granted, subject to conditions. However, as it is not a retrospective application, it should simply read “That planning permission is granted, subject to conditions”.

Abbots Langley Parish Council do not object.

Councillor Chris Whately-Smith moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd, that PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED subject to conditions.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED subject to conditions.

PC51/23 WITHDRAWN - 24/1093/PIP – PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE APPLICATION: ERECTION OF A BLOCK OF SIX APARTMENTS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, BIN AND BIKE STORE, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT LAND ADJACENT TO 62-84 AND 99-121, SYCAMORE ROAD, CROXLEY GREEN

The Chair notified the Committee that this application had been withdrawn.

PC52/23 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

There were no items of other business.

CHAIRMAN