
Planning Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 16 February 2026 from 7.30 - 9.16 pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Philip Hearn, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris and Tom Smith

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Diana Barber (Batchworth Community Council), Jon Bishop (Chorleywood Parish Council), Councillor Andrea Fraser, County Councillor Paula Hiscocks (Rickmansworth West) and Councillor Narinder Sian

Officers in Attendance:

Lauren Edwards, Senior Planning Officer
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Claire Wilson, Principal Planning Officer

PC89/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harry Davies, who was substituted by Councillor Tom Smith, and from Councillor Abbas Merali.

PC90/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 22 January 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC91/25 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC92/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 9 (18 Greenways, Abbots Langley), 10 (39-41 High Street, Abbots Langley) and 12 (10 Oak Green, Abbots Langley) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Councillor Cooper stated, in relation to agenda item 8 (Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth), that the application was brought to the committee as a result of an enforcement complaint which he had made. However, planning matters were separate to enforcement matters, and Councillor Cooper declared that he was considering the planning application with an open mind.

PC93/25 25/0195/FUL: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND CONSTRUCTION OF DETACHED BUILDING CONTAINING 5 RESIDENTIAL FLATS, WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, PROVISION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS, CAR PARKING, CYCLE AND REFUSE STORAGE AT 80 THE DRIVE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS WD3 4DU

The application was for demolition of existing dwelling and construction of detached building containing 5 residential flats, with associated landscaping, provision of new vehicular access, car parking, cycle and refuse storage at 80 The Drive, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that one further objection had been received since the publication of the officer report. This did not raise any further matters other than those which were already addressed in the report.

Those present in the public gallery were reminded by the Chair that as an appeal against non-determination had been made, the committee was not able to determine the application. Instead, it would consider how it would have determined the application had the appeal against non-determination not been made.

A member of the public spoke against the application.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

County Councillor Paula Hiscocks spoke on the application.

Parish Councillor Jon Bishop of Chorleywood Parish Council spoke on the application.

Comments made by speakers against the proposal included: the likely increase in traffic during and after the construction phase, and the impact of congestion and on-street parking on the nearby narrow residential roads which may in particular pose a safety risk to pupils of the adjacent primary school; insufficient parking provision and the likelihood of parking obstructions which may also prevent access by the emergency services; difficulty of access for construction vehicles due to the steep slope of the road leading to the application site; lack of robustness of the parking survey due to the timings of when it was carried out; the proposal to build a block of flats in a road which comprised all single, detached dwellings would be out of character with the surrounding area contrary to the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan; the increase in the density would be dis-proportionate to the size of the site and would impact on its rural character; the distance of the site from public transport, open spaces, play areas and other services was contrary to Policy 5 of the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan; due to the variable gradients and the distance involved access on foot to bus stops and local shops would be challenging; the proposal involved the loss of eleven trees and two hedgerows which would impact biodiversity; concern about the ability of drainage and sewerage systems to cope with the increased density on the site; flooding issues and the risk of future flooding arising from the loss of vegetation; privacy and overlooking concerns; health risks to existing residents arising from noise and pollution; safeguarding concerns arising from the overlooking of the adjacent primary school playground affecting privacy and welfare; and the environmental impact of the demolition of an existing serviceable building.

Points made by speakers in favour of the application included: the British standard of a 20% maximum of hard surfacing was based on guidance. The proposal would retain the functional integrity of the rooting environment of the protected trees due to the structural nature of the proposed hardstanding. There would be no excavation within the Root Profile Area and the existing soil profile would remain intact. The proposal did not constrain the trees' ability to grow to maturity and there was no evidence that the specified 'no dig' system would lead to a decline in the trees' condition. The matters specified in the reasons for refusal could be addressed by a pre-commencement condition. The proposal offered significant benefit

through the provision of much needed housing, and this would outweigh any perceived harm to the trees.

Officers' responses included the following:

- Hertfordshire Highways had been consulted on a number of occasions with regard to the safety of the site access and had not raised any objections. The movements associated with five units were not considered to intensify the use of the site sufficiently to justify refusal on the grounds of highways access.
- The shortfall in off-street car parking was acknowledged; however, the ability to access the station via a lit, level-surface route in c20 minutes had been given weight and the shortfall in assigned spaces was minimal.
- The parking survey had been conducted at night, which was considered to be the time at which most residents would be inside their residences and parked. Given the proximity of the school it was recognised that there may be periods of on-street parking intensity during the day, but this would be limited and officers did not feel that it substantiated a reason for refusal.
- The council's Landscape Officer had raised an objection on the basis of the impact on both protected trees and the wider sylvan character of the locality and lack of compliance with Policy DM6 of the Three Rivers Local Plan. Refusal had been recommended on that basis.
- The primary school was located in a residential area next to an existing property where there was already some overlooking. It was not unusual for schools to be located next to, or close to, residential properties and so officers did not consider there were grounds to justify refusal on that basis. Additionally, the applicant had sought to mitigate concerns by the addition of a privacy screen to the terrace serving Flat 3, fencing along the boundary, and a landscaping scheme.

Committee Members asked questions about the proposal which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- The reasons for refusal as set out in the report were supported. However, Members considered that there was an additional reason for refusal on the grounds of the parking shortfall, which was considered to be significant and particularly important given the distance of the site from the town and station. Whilst a 20 minute walk was possible one way, it was challenging to do there and back, especially in harsh weather conditions. It was also not a level route and so would not be possible for some community members. A Committee Member endorsed the view that the route was unpleasant to use, as it involved walking along the A414 and also the use of an underpass. For these reasons it was considered that residents of the development would be highly likely to use a private vehicle rather than walk, and that great weight should therefore be given to the parking shortfall which would cause harm to local residential amenity and to users of the school. For these reasons it was considered that the proposal was not compliant with Policy 5 of the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan.
- A Committee Member noted that as most of the neighbouring properties had off-street parking, it was the parking arising from daytime activities (e.g residents' visitors, delivery drivers, school activities etc) which was of more relevance in relation to the parking shortfall. For this reason, a Committee Member questioned the reliance which should be placed on the parking survey.
- A Committee Member commented that whilst it was acknowledged that there was already a residence close to Charlotte House school and that the school was located in a residential area, officers had noted in the report that the rear windows would have some outlook to the

school. Given that the proposal would involve an increase of five households rather than the existing one which overlooked the school, it was not accepted that this would result in the situation being 'not significantly different from the existing' as stated in the officer report.

- A Committee Member supported comments which had been made by speakers that the proposal represented over-development of the site and would adversely impact the sylvan character of the area. It was suggested that these reasons should be included in the reasons for refusal. Another Committee Member agreed that the loss of the hedgerow at the front of the property was a significant harm to the sylvan nature of the site and that a rural nature was one of the key characteristics of Chorleywood.
- Another Committee Member expressed concern that the development of flats in the location may set a precedent for future developments having similar parking shortfalls and causing similar on-street parking issues. Additionally, the robustness of the Viability Assessment and appraisal, which found that no affordable housing contribution was required, was questioned.
- A Committee Member highlighted for clarity that in considering the reasons for refusal no reliance was being placed on the emerging Local Plan in light of the recent ministerial direction.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Hearn seconded, that the decision be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to write to the Planning Inspectorate to confirm that in the absence of an appeal against non-determination, planning permission would have been refused for the reason set out at section 8 of the committee report and for additional reasons which included the adverse impact on trees, loss of greenery impacting the sylvan character of the area, shortfall of parking and overdevelopment of the site. Final wording of the reasons for refusal would be circulated to Committee Members separately.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that the decision be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to write to the Planning Inspectorate to confirm that in the absence of an appeal against non-determination, planning permission would have been refused for the reason set out at section 8 of the committee report and for additional reasons which included the adverse impact on trees, loss of greenery impacting the sylvan character of the area, shortfall of parking and overdevelopment of the site. Final wording of the reasons for refusal would be circulated to Committee Members separately.

PC94/25 25/1671/FUL – VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 (PLANS) AND 25 (OBSCURE WINDOWS) PURSUANT TO PLANNING PERMISSION 22/1148/FUL TO ALLOW ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION DETAILING, OMISSION OF TERRACE BALCONIES, ADDITION OF AOV ROOFLIGHTS AND SUBMISSION OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING DETAILS INCLUDING LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AT BEESONS YARD, BURY LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS.

The application was for variation of Condition 2 (Plans) and 25 (Obscure Windows) pursuant to planning permission 22/1148/FUL to allow alterations to fenestration detailing, omission of terrace balconies, addition of AOV rooflights and submission of hard and soft landscaping details including landscape management at Beesons Yard, Bury Lane, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates but informed the Committee that the purpose-made obscure glazing to the Automatic Opening Vent (AOV) windows on the northern elevation facing Ebury Road had been fitted.

A local resident spoke against the application.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

Parish Councillor Diana Barber of Batchworth Community Council spoke on the application.

Points raised by those speaking against the proposal included: the replacement of the glazing had not alleviated the detrimental impact on neighbouring outlook as the AOVs were highly reflective, significantly larger than had been approved, and the internal lighting represented a nuisance affecting neighbouring amenity; harm had been caused to biodiversity by the development through the loss of shrubs, hedging and vegetation and two further trees were likely to be lost due to a loss of trunk and branch protection and the impact of an excavation trench; residents had been subjected to significant disturbance due to a lack of enforcement, including of approved internal motion sensors, working times and light pollution; and the developer had shown disrespect to both local residents and the planning authority by failing to adhere to the terms of the planning permission previously granted.

Points raised by those speaking in favour of the proposal included: the proposed amendments were minor in nature and had largely arisen due to changes in other regulations, including building and health and safety regulations, which had been amended since the original planning application was submitted; in response to community concerns, a motion sensor had been installed to ensure that the internal corridors were not permanently lit; the glass in the AOV windows to the northern elevation corridor had been replaced with purpose made obscured glazing and would only mechanically tilt open in the event of a fire; and restrictors had been installed to the stairwell windows to limit the opening to 15mm.

In responding to the points raised by speakers, the Planning Officer acknowledged that the site was constrained and that there had been a number of planning breaches, including some which had led to the application which was now before the Committee. Further matters remained to be resolved separately, including the external lighting within the car park and landscaping. Officers were working with the applicant to resolve these.

The Planning Officer reported that the replacement of the obscure film previously used on the northern elevation windows with purpose-made obscured glass at the highest level of obscurity was considered to have addressed the issue of the temporary nature of the obscurity. Officers did not therefore consider that there was any reason to refuse the application on that basis. The internal lighting arrangements did not meet the test for enforcement, but the applicant had now installed motion sensors in addition to the obscure glazing.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- The issues referenced by speakers relating to the development were regrettable. The applicant were encouraged to ensure that the remaining matters were satisfactorily addressed. However, the Committee was only able to consider the specifics of the application which was before it.
- In response to a Committee Member's question, the Planning Officer confirmed that condition 19 required the purpose-made obscured glazing to be permanently retained.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Gazzard seconded, that planning permission be granted, subject to the completion of a Deed of Variation to a Section 106 Agreement pursuant to planning permission 22/1148/FUL dated 18 December 2023 securing an occupancy age restriction, affordable housing contribution, controls on parking permits, amendment to traffic regulation order and Waste Management Scheme, and planning conditions as set out at Section 7 of the report.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 8 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted, subject to the completion of a Deed of Variation to a Section 106 Agreement pursuant to planning permission 22/1148/FUL dated 18 December 2023 securing an occupancy age restriction, affordable housing contribution, controls on parking permits, amendment to traffic regulation order and Waste Management Scheme, and planning conditions as set out at Section 7 of the report.

PC95/25 25/1722/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF TWO OUTBUILDINGS AND ALTERATIONS TO REAR LAND LEVELS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT 38 MOOR LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1LG

The application was part retrospective, for construction of two outbuildings and alterations to rear land levels and landscaping works at 38 Moor Lane, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer issued a correction in that although Outbuilding A was referred to in the report as being 4.5m deep it was in fact only 2.5m deep. The retaining wall projected beyond the edge of the outbuilding and so measurement of this together with the depth of the outbuilding had resulted in the stated measurement of 4.5m.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application.

Parish Councillor Diana Barber of Batchworth Community Council spoke on the application.

In making their representation the applicant advised that the use of Outbuilding B as a games room was ancillary to the use of the dwelling, and it would not be used for any other purpose. The proposal was not pursuant to application 25/1495/CLPD but was instead a separate matter. The landscaping largely conformed to the previous design which had been in situ for in excess of 5 years with the same extent of retaining walls, although the land levels had been lowered and levelled in places as set out at paragraph 7.2.2 of the report. The proposal sought to introduce sympathetic buildings which would manage storm water run-off efficiently, and to enhance and improve drainage and surface water run-off.

In speaking against the proposal the Parish Councillor expressed concern about over-development of the plot, removal of trees and soft landscaping, and the fact that unauthorised development had taken place which had necessitated a retrospective planning application.

In responding to the points raised, the Planning Officer clarified that the Certificate of Lawfulness application referred to by the speakers was for an outbuilding sited on the patio level, adjacent to the rear of the dwelling. This had been considered under a lawful development certificate to be permitted development in its own right. On separate investigation, and prior to that application being made, the site had been investigated and it had been brought to officers' attention that the land levels had been altered. The application before the Committee therefore only pertained to the rear outbuildings and was separate to the Certificate of Lawfulness application. It sought to remedy the alterations to the land levels and regularise the outbuildings. Additional clarification was provided that whilst the outbuildings might in themselves have been permissible under permitted development, the fact they were reliant upon the altered land level (and the extent of the required landscaping changes had exceeded the limit of permitted development) meant that planning permission was required for the works in their totality, including the outbuildings.

A Committee Member expressed the view that there was no identifiable harm arising from the change in land levels which would justify refusal.

Another Committee Member recommended that in the event of approval, a further condition should be added to remove permitted development rights for further outbuildings in order to prevent over-development of the plot.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Drury seconded, that part retrospective planning permission be approved subject to conditions and an additional condition to remove permitted development rights for further outbuildings in order to prevent over-development of the plot.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that part retrospective planning permission be approved subject to conditions and an additional condition to remove permitted development rights for further outbuildings in order to prevent over-development of the plot.

PC96/25 25/1754/ADV - ADVERTISING CONSENT: DISPLAY OF FLAGS AT THREE RIVERS HOUSE, NORTHWAY, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 QRL

The application was for advertising consent for display of flags at Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that since publication of the agenda one further objection had been received. This had referred to the impact on heritage assets through visual clutter, which it was considered would pose highway and pedestrian risks.

The Planning Officer also reported that condition 2 should be amended to reflect that other flags may be erected via deemed consent by the Advertisement Regulations.

A member of the public spoke against the application.

Councillor Andrea Fraser spoke on the application.

Points raised by the speakers against the application included: the impact on visual amenity and harm to a prominent civic building located in the Rickmansworth Conservation Area; the effect of rotating a variety of flags rather than a stable display of civic flags would be cumulatively harmful; core civic flags already had deemed consent under the Advertisement Regulations; the application sought to promote a political agenda; and the display of certain flags would be divisive to the community.

The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member commented that there did not appear to be reason for refusal on the grounds of visual amenity.
- Another Committee Member commented that there had been longstanding issues in the Rickmansworth Conservation Area with regard to visual clutter and appearance. If the application had related to shop front advertising rather than flags, then the colour schemes would likely have been deemed to be harmful to the Conservation Area. The officer's view that the flags would not be visually prominent was not accepted, and the Committee Member recommended that the application be refused on the grounds of harm to the Conservation Area and a lack of public benefit.
- A Committee Member commented that many of the flags which were already flown under deemed consent were multi-coloured. Refusal on the grounds of harm to visual amenity would appear inconsistent with the existing situation.
- Another Committee Member expressed the view that flags which did not have deemed consent should be considered in the same way as advertisements. If they did not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, then permission should not be granted.

Councillor Smith moved, and Councillor King seconded, that the application be approved subject to conditions and amendment to condition 2 to refer to signs granted deemed consent by Advertisement Regulations.

On being out to the vote this was carried, the voting being 6 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that the application be approved subject to conditions and amendment to condition 2 to refer to signs granted deemed consent by Advertisement Regulations.

PC97/25 25/1987/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF PART-SINGLE, PART-TWO STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSIONS AND SINGLE STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AT 18 GREENWAYS, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0EU

The application was for construction of part-single, part-two storey side and rear extensions and single storey side extension at 18 Greenways, Abbots Langley.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

The Committee noted that there had been no responses to the public consultation and no objections had been received.

Councillor Lloyd moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC98/25 25/2091/RSP – RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AT 39 - 41 HIGH STREET, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0AA

The application was retrospective, for construction of single storey rear extension at 39 - 41 High Street, Abbots Langley.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

Councillor Drury moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that retrospective planning permission be granted.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that retrospective planning permission be granted.

PC99/25 25/2102/FUL - ERECTION OF A TIMBER PERGOLA AT CROXLEY GUILD BOWLS CLUB, THE GREEN, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 3HT

The application was for erection of a timber pergola at Croxley Guild Bowls Club, The Green, Croxley Green.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

A speaker on behalf of the Croxley Guild Bowls Club spoke in favour of the application.

Councillor Narinder Sian spoke on the application.

Points raised by speakers in favour of the application included: the existing plastic marquee had reached the end of its life and had been inadequate in terms of size, longevity and safety; the proposed new structure would have a long lifespan, be of sustainable materials and

sympathetic to its surroundings; and the new pergola would be vital both for shade in summer and protection from the elements in winter.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers.

- A Committee Member expressed the view that the proposal represented a significant improvement on the previous temporary structure. This was supported by other Committee Members.
- It was noted that the applicant would need to separately obtain the approval of the council's Property Services team as landlord of the Guild of Sport site.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC100/25 25/2150/FUL - EXTENSION OF EXISTING CROSSOVER AND ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY AT 10 OAK GREEN, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 OPG.

The application was for extension of existing crossover and alterations to driveway at 10 Oak Green, Abbots Langley.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates, and clarified that the application pertained to the extension of a dropped kerb which would facilitate the provision of additional on-site parking.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Drury seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

On being put to the vote this carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

CHAIR