
Planning Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Thursday, 20 March 2025 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm**

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Harry Davies, Steve Drury, Andrea Fraser, Philip Hearn, Chris Lloyd, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell and Debbie Morris

Also in Attendance:

Councillors Oliver Cooper, Ciarán Reed and Narinder Sian

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Planning Solicitor
Lauren Edwards, Senior Planning Officer
Alex Laurie, Principal Trees and Woodlands Officer
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services

External in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Jon Bishop (Chorleywood Parish Council), County Councillor Paula Hiscocks (Rickmansworth West), Parish Councillor Guy Parks (Croxley Green Parish Council) and Parish Councillor Diana Barber (Batchworth Community Council)

PC119/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor King.

PC120/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20 February 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC121/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mitchell declared an interest in agenda item 10 (25/0092/RSP: 90 Valley Walk, Croxley Green) as he did not feel that he could consider the application with an open mind. Councillor Mitchell left the meeting whilst the application was discussed and did not participate in determining it.

PC122/25 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC123/25 CONFIRMATION OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 932 (THE COURT, RICKMANSWORTH ROAD, CHORLEYWOOD) 2024

The Committee was invited to consider confirmation of Tree Preservation Order 932 (The Court, Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood).

The Principal Trees and Woodlands Officer reported that following the serving of the Order on 11 December 2024, one objection had been received. This was based on the following four points: (i) that the TPO duplicated tree protection already in place, as the site was in the Chorleywood Common Conservation Area; (ii) that it would make future tree works more difficult as the removal of the smallest tree, which was not protected by conservation area status, would now require permission; (iii) that the owners of The Court ceased work on the site after being advised to by Council Officers; and (iv) that the incorrect form of TPO – an area order – was served, rather than using individual group or woodland categories.

The officer response to these points was that: (i) due to the works taking place to trees at The Court, officers considered it expedient to serve a TPO to formally recognise the public amenity value of the trees and strengthen the conservation area protection by ensuring that all trees, of whatever size or species, were protected; (ii) extending the protection to all trees should not make future tree works significantly more difficult, as the process of submitting a conservation area notification was essentially the same as a TPO tree works application; (iii) as outlined in the report, tree works at The Court had continued between November 2024 until around February 2025. Officers had repeatedly advised the owner and workers on site, both verbally and in writing, to stop work and submit a conservation area notification; and (iv) government guidance advised that area TPOs could be used to rapidly protect all trees present on a site, although the guidance did advise that this form of TPO should be a temporary measure and should be replaced with a more specific TPO for long term protection.

The officer recommendation was that the order should be confirmed and TPO 932 made permanent.

A speaker on behalf of the site owner spoke against confirmation of the order.

Councillor Ciarán Reed and Parish Councillor Jon Bishop of Chorleywood Parish Council spoke in favour of confirmation of the order.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the order, the current status of the site, and actions which could be taken in the event that any trees were found to have been removed unlawfully. These were responded to by officers.

Councillor Lloyd moved, and Councillor Gazzard seconded, confirmation of the order and on being put to the vote this was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: that Tree Preservation Order 932 (The Court, Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood) be confirmed.

PC124/25 24/1155/RSP - PART RETROSPECTIVE: WORKS TO REAR GARDENS OF PLOTS 1 AND 2 INCLUDING LAND LEVELLING, EXTERNAL PATIO, RETAINING WALLS, EXTERNAL SEATING AREAS AND FENCING AT VIVIKT, CHORLEYWOOD ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH WD3 4EP

The application was part retrospective for works to rear gardens of Plots 1 and 2 including land levelling, external patio, retaining walls, external seating areas and fencing at Vivikt, Chorleywood Road, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that following deferral of the application at the 7 November 2024 Planning Committee meeting, new topographic information had been obtained from the

applicant following a survey which had taken place in February. This showed the current land levels at the site. The application before the Committee sought to alter the land levels further to allow for the backfill of topsoil and turf, and this would mean that parts of the garden would remain higher than the pre-existing levels. It was accepted that the land levels had altered since the planning breach had been identified: the applicant was not proposing to revert to the original levels.

Following the November Planning Committee a re-consultation had taken place following a number of revisions to the original plans. This had included fencing adjacent to the patio in Plot 1 adjacent to Raydons; the proposed movement of earth away from the Raydons boundary approximately 3.2m wide; and fencing to the rear of Plot 2.

The Planning Officer provided a presentation on the history of the changes to the land levels and the proposed levels which would result from the development. The presentation included photographs in and around the site. The Planning Officer commented that the land originally sloped down towards the rear of the site, and as topographical surveys had only been carried out once works had begun, it meant that it was not possible to be able to accurately specify the original land levels. In summary, officers were of the opinion that whilst the land levels arising from the proposal would be higher than those pre-existing, subject to moving the spoil back it was not considered that it would result in demonstrable harm.

A public speaker spoke against the application.

Councillor Oliver Cooper, Hertfordshire County Councillor Paula Hiscocks and Parish Councillor Jon Bishop spoke against the application.

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

- The alterations to land levels and the deposition of the topsoil did result in an adverse impact of the amenity of neighbouring properties which was not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal;
- The local County Councillor, Ward Councillor and Parish Councillor were all in attendance at the meeting and had all spoken against the application, including citing the impact on adjacent properties;
- The proposal was considered to result in an adverse impact on neighbouring properties arising from lack of privacy and changes to land levels. Concern was also expressed about the impact of spoil around a tree;
- Committee Members discussed a further deferral of the application in order to undertake a site visit. After debate, it was considered that the alterations to the land levels which had been made so far were already detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring properties and could not be mitigated, such that this warranted refusal of the application. Sufficient information to reach this judgement had already been provided.

Councillor Lloyd proposed, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, refusal of the application due to the impact on neighbouring amenity arising from loss of privacy. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 8 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that the application be refused.

PC125/25 24/1837/FUL – SUB-DIVISION OF SITE; CONSTRUCTION OF TWO STOREY DETACHED DWELLING, INCLUDING BASEMENT LEVEL, SOLAR PANELS, ACCESS, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT MELDON, CHENIES ROAD, CHORLEYWOOD, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 5LY

The application was for sub-division of site; construction of two storey detached dwelling, including basement level, solar panels, access, parking and landscaping works at Meldon, Chenies Road, Chorleywood. The application had been deferred at the previous meeting on 20 February in order to allow for a site visit.

Councillor Drury stated that he had not been present at the previous meeting, nor had he attended the site visit. Councillor Merali stated that he had attended the previous meeting but not the site visit. Councillors Fraser and Hearn stated that they had not attended the last meeting but had attended the site visit. All of the councillors had read the officer report and the minutes of the February meeting and considered themselves able to determine the application.

The Planning Officer reported that in addition to the site visit, the Conservation Officer's comments in relation to the new plans had also been circulated since the February meeting. The Conservation Officer had concluded that the development would result in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale.

Councillor Cooper spoke against the application.

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

- A Committee Member expressed the view that the development would represent over-massing of the site; that it would not result in a type of housing which was needed within the district, and that weight should be given to the Conservation Officer's comments in relation to harm caused;
- A Committee Member drew attention to the proximity of the proposed flank wall of the new building to neighbouring properties. The copper beech tree which was proposed to provide screening was not in leaf all year round, resulting in an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity;
- Other comments included that it would be overbearing in relation to the boundary and very visually prominent, and that the neighbouring gardens would be surrounded by 'a wall' of cypress trees which would result in an impression of enclosure. Overall, the proposal was an un-neighbourly form of development which would adversely affect neighbouring amenity;
- In view of the Conservation Officer's comments, there was concern that the proposal did not meet the test of conserving or enhancing the conservation area. It was considered that it would result in harm to the Conservation Area arising from the sub-division of the site, the scale of the development and the use of inappropriate materials.

Councillor Morris proposed, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, refusal on the grounds that the development by virtue of its scale, siting and proximity to the boundary to the south would result in a visually overbearing form of development and this would be to the detriment of the residential amenities of the properties at Heritage Walk and Clockhouse Mews, affecting their enjoyment of their amenity spaces contrary to Policies CP1, CP12, the Core Strategy and Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies LDD. The development would also harm the conservation area, resulting in less than substantial harm. The adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. On being put to the vote this was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the application be refused, with the reasons for refusal to be circulated to Committee Members for agreement before the decision is issued.

PC126/25 24/1843/FUL – CONSTRUCTION OF A GOLF POD PRACTICE FACILITY, INCLUDING 10NO. COVERED PRACTICE BAYS WITH AN OUTFIELD FULLY ENCLOSED WITH BALL STOP NETTING SUSPENDED FROM PURPOSE-BUILT SUPPORTS; AND ASSOCIATED REGRADING OF LAND AT RICKMANSWORTH MUNICIPAL GOLF CLUB, MOOR LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1QL

The application was for construction of a golf pod practice facility, including 10no. covered practice bays with an outfield fully enclosed with ball stop netting suspended from purpose-built supports; and associated regrading of land at Rickmansworth Municipal Golf Club, Moor Lane, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that the recommendation to approve the application was subject to a S106 agreement to secure a Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee. The proposal comprised the creation of a new hole at the far end of the course and would involve minor landscaping works; these works would require the temporary closure of the par 3 course.

The proposal was before the Committee as the application site was on council-owned land.

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

- The golf pods would be fully enclosed, with netting surrounding the facility and were of a type which was in common usage;
- The proposal would include shrub planting as part of the biodiversity net gain, and three new trees;
- Ongoing maintenance of the pods was not a planning matter; however, it would be in the applicant's interest to ensure that the facility was well-maintained, both in order to encourage its continued use and also for health and safety reasons;
- The proposal would have clear benefits in terms of promoting an active leisure opportunity which also inclusive, and this outweighed the identified harm. It would also help to ensure the continued financial viability of the facility from the applicant's perspective;
- Officers were asked to amend the wording of Condition 10 to require the applicant to apply for planning permission if any external lighting were needed, given the setting of the site location and concern for local wildlife.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Merali seconded, approval of the application subject to completion of the S106 agreement, planning conditions and amendment to Condition 10 as outlined above. On being put to the vote this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to the completion of a section 106 agreement securing Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring, planning conditions, and amendment to condition 10 as outlined above.

PC127/25 24/2089/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION; DRIVEWAY EXTENSION AND CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION AT 20 TOWNFIELD, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 7DD.

The application was for construction of a single storey rear extension; driveway extension and conversion of garage into habitable accommodation at 20 Townfield, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer provided an update that the wording in the summary of objections at section 4.2.3 of the report which referred to 'Party wall with neighbour left exposed' should be amended to read 'Boundary ownership disputes.'

A local resident spoke against the application.

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

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

- The application was subject to a boundary dispute; however, boundary disputes were not a material planning consideration. Planning permission would not negate the need for the applicant to comply with any other relevant legislation;
- With regard to the garage conversion and the window in the frontage, the Planning Officer was of the view that whilst there were not any other garage conversions within the same terraced row, there were some differences within the wider locality and variations within the other terraced rows. The Planning Officer did not therefore consider the development to be harmful, subject to the use of matching materials and other conditions;
- The extension was 3.6m in depth and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies generally allowed for 3.6 deep extensions to semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The proposal was therefore in line with guidance. An extension of 3m would likely be permissible under permitted development, without a requirement for planning permission;
- The proposal involved widening the driveway to allow for two cars to be parked side by side, and there was precedent for this elsewhere in Townfield. Condition 4 required the driveway to be of a permeable material. It was noted that the driveway extension in itself may be permissible under permitted development, without requiring planning permission. However, it was included in the application in order to demonstrate the additional parking provision within the context of the development as a whole. In response to a question the Planning Officer confirmed that the parking space for two cars was compliant in terms of size;
- Given the boundary dispute, Committee Members endorsed the addition of an informative highlighting that any planning permission would not override the necessity to comply with any other relevant legislation;
- Having visited the site, officers did not consider that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity, for the reasons set out in the report. Some Committee Members did not agree with this assessment.

Councillor Hearn moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, approval of the application subject to conditions and the addition of an informative reminding the applicant that the grant of planning permission did not negate the need to act in accordance with all other relevant legislation. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 6 in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED: that the application be approved subject to conditions and the addition of an informative reminding the applicant that the grant of planning permission did not negate the need to act in accordance with all other relevant legislation.

PC128/25 25/0092/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: DEMOLITION OF SEMI-DETACHED DWELLING AND ERECTION OF A SEMI-DETACHED TWO-STOREY REPLACEMENT DWELLING INCLUDING ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, HARDSTANDING AND INSTALLATION OF HEAT PUMP AT 90 VALLEY WALK, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 3TG.

Councillor Mitchell left the meeting whilst this application was considered and did not participate in the debate or vote.

The application was part retrospective for demolition of a semi-detached dwelling and erection of a semi-detached two-storey replacement dwelling including associated landscaping, hardstanding and installation of a heat pump at 90 Valley Walk, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Councillor Sian spoke on the application.

Parish Councillor Guy Parks of Croxley Green Parish Council spoke on the application.

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

- As set out in the report, the Planning Officer was of the view that three cars could not be accommodated on the frontage. The acceptability of the application was based on two parking spaces and the one parking space shortfall was considered to be acceptable;
- Committee Members acknowledged the impact which the scale of demolition of the pre-existing dwelling had had on neighbours and nearby residents;
- Officers were asked to review the recommended conditions against those which had been suggested by the speaker from the Parish Council, to consider adding any which were not already included if they were within the purview of the planning authority, with final wording for conditions to be circulated to the Committee for agreement;
- It was noted that the applicant was proposing to use external materials which were not considered to be in keeping with the surrounding properties. Committee Members recommended that only materials which matched the remainder of the terrace should be permitted. It was agreed that the applicant should be asked to provide a schedule of materials in order that officers could assess whether these would be acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the street scene. If not, and if the applicant declined to change materials where requested, the application would need to be brought back to the Committee.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, that the decision be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to make any minor amendments necessary to the planning conditions and grant part retrospective planning permission subject to agreement by the applicant of external materials to be used. On being put to the vote this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the decision be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to make any minor amendments necessary to the planning conditions and grant part retrospective planning permission subject to agreement by the applicant of external materials to be used.

CHAIR