THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Planning Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday, 28 October 2026 from 7.30 – 8.49pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Oliver Cooper, Raj Khiroya, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger OBE, Tom Smith, Louise Price and Narinder Sian

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard (Abbots Langley Parish Council)

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Principal Lawyer - Planning
Adam Ralton, Development Management Team Leader
Lucy Smith, Committee and Electoral Services Manager
Scott Volker, Development Management Team Leader

PC198/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elinor Gazzard, Chris Mitchell and Stephen Cox.

Councillor Louise Price replaced Councillor Elinor Gazzard and Councillor Narinder Sian replaced Councillor Chris Mitchell.

PC199/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (26/1253/FUL – 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Chair informed that Committee that Councillor Jon Tankard had a pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (26/1253/FUL – 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley) as the agent for the application. Councillor Tankard intended to speak on agenda items 4 and 5 but would not join the meeting until item 3 had been concluded.

PC200/26 26/1253/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION; REMOVAL OF CHIMNEY STACKS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; CONSTRUCTION OF PATIO AT 42 MARLIN SQUARE, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0EG

The application was for construction of single storey side and rear extension; removal of chimney stacks; alterations to the fenestration; and construction of patio at 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley.

The Planning Officer provided an update that following publication of the officer report with the agenda for the meeting of 22 October, a letter had been circulated to all Committee Members which detailed the applicant's circumstances and the reasons why permission for the development was being sought. The Planning Officer confirmed that the letter did not contain any material planning conditions to change the officer's recommendation, which remained that the application should be refused.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application.

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

- Committee Members acknowledged the personal circumstances affecting the applicants, as expressed in their address and representation. However, in response to a question the Planning Officer clarified that any grant of planning permission would relate to the land only and not to any individual. Therefore, personal circumstances were not a material planning consideration. Instead, the Committee was obliged to be satisfied that local planning policies were being adhered to. Comments made by the applicant relating to the lack of space and relative size compared to other properties on the street could be given consideration but needed to be weighed against the statutory requirement to comply with the development plan, which would be given greater weight.

- In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified that a potential fallback position had been indicated of a smaller extension with a detached outbuilding in the garden. The outbuilding would have a height of no more than 2.5m due to its proximity to the boundaries, and due to its lower height and position would have a different impact. However, it did not form part of the application before the Committee, and the Planning Officer advised that it was not possible to pre-determine or pre-judge whether or not any fallback scheme would be recommended for approval. Further clarification was given that there was scope, should Members consider it necessary, to withdraw permitted development rights for outbuildings as part of any approval for this application. However, should this application be rejected then permitted development rights did exist at the site which would allow construction of outbuildings, subject to such outbuildings not exceeding plot coverage of greater than 50% or exceeding 2.5m in height when located within 2m of the boundary.

- In response to a question the Planning Officer confirmed that officers' concerns about the proposal included overshadowing and loss of light to the neighbouring properties at nos. 40 and 46 arising not only from the impact on rooms within these properties, but also the wall of the extension which extended all the way to the boundaries at a 2.7 metre height, and the depth of the extension, which would result in an overbearing structure with a harmful impact.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Morris seconded, that the application be refused for the reasons set out at section 8 of the officer report. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused for the reasons set out at section 8 of the officer report.

PC201/26 26/1263/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION AND ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY AT 17 EDSON CLOSE, LEAVESDEN, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE WD25 7BX

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard joined the meeting.

The application was part retrospective for conversion of garage into habitable accommodation; alterations to the fenestration and alterations to driveway at 17 Edson Close, Leavesden.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the application included: the proposal would provide two dedicated off-street parking spaces matching the pre-existing parking provision and resulting in no net loss of assigned parking spaces; the design was of high quality, would integrate with the street scene and respected local design precedents; the proposal was compliant with core policies and the policies of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan; and concerns about future use and intensification were speculative.

Points raised by the speaker against the application included: the application lacked a third parking space which was required for a six-bedroom HMO; access and exit from the site by car would involve crossing neighbouring land; the road was already heavily parked and could not accommodate further parking pressure; and the amount of parking required for an HMO meant that the proposal was inappropriate at this site.

In response to the points made by the speaker against the application, it was clarified that whilst the dwelling was being used as a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) there was no evidence that it housed more than six occupants. An HMO licence application had been submitted and was under consideration by the Council's Environmental Health department; however, the planning application before the Committee did not seek permission for the change of use and accordingly officers had not assessed the suitability of the dwelling for use as an HMO.

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

- A Committee Member expressed concern about the parking shortfall, noting that this amounted to a half-a-space shortfall when assessed against the current local plan and a two-space shortfall when assessed against the emerging local plan. Whilst only limited weight could be given to the policies in the emerging Local Plan, the Committee Member expressed the view that the weight given to the parking shortfall should be proportionate the pre-existing difficulty of the on-road parking situation in Edson Close which caused difficulties for residents in turning in and out of their driveways and impacted on neighbouring amenity. Given the road safety aspect, significant weight should therefore be given to even the half a space shortfall against the current Local Plan. Furthermore, whilst it was noted that Condition C1 required the driveway to be extended, this was not considered to be sufficient to make the proposed parking arrangements safe. This viewpoint was endorsed by other Committee Members.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused for the reason that the resultant shortfall in parking would exacerbate existing on-street parking pressures and lead to concerns in respect of highway safety and neighbouring amenity. Final wording of the full reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

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

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused for the reason that the resultant shortfall in parking would exacerbate existing on-street parking pressures and lead to concerns in respect of highway

safety and neighbouring amenity. Final wording of the full reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

PC202/26 26/1321/RSP - PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF A PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION; LOFT CONVERSION INCLUDING WITH A REAR DORMER AND FRONT ROOF LIGHT; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; ALTERATIONS TO EXTERNAL MATERIALS; CONVERSION OF GARAGE TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION AT 10 HYDE LANE, NASH MILLS, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE HP3 8RY

The application was part retrospective for construction of a part single, part two storey side extension; loft conversion including with a rear dormer and front roof light; internal alterations; alterations to the fenestration; alterations to external materials; and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation at 10 Hyde Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead.

The Planning Officer reported that there were two updates. Firstly, amended plans had been received following publication of the officer report which more accurately showed the fenestration within one of the elevations. Condition C1 therefore required updating to reference these amended plans. Secondly, the reason attached to Condition C1 required correction to refer to the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan and not the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

A representation was also read on behalf of Councillor Elinor Gazzard as ward councillor.

Points raised by speakers against the application included: the high level of objections arising from the public and neighbour consultation; a high number of planning applications in the area causing incremental harm; the application was over intensive and represented over-development in the Green Belt; there would be harm to the openness of the semi-rural location; parking shortfall and risk of on-street parking capacity causing danger to health and safety; concerns regarding potential use as a HMO and scale of occupation; use of the garage conversion should be incidental only, and not ancillary to, the use of the dwelling; impact on neighbouring properties; visual bulk of the outside extension; tree removal; elevated compound style fencing; dominant rear dormer; and detrimental impact on the elevated corner plot in the semi-rural character area.

Responding to the points raised by speakers, the Planning Officer highlighted that the impact of the bulk and scale of the proposal in relation to the Green Belt was addressed in the officer report at section 7.1, and in relation to character and appearance at section 7.2. Further clarification was provided that the two-storey side extension had already been approved under a separate application. However, the applicant had implemented both that planning permission and a Certificate of Lawfulness for a rear dormer / hip to gable extension simultaneously, therefore voiding both applications. Officers did not consider that the dormer, whilst visible, would add too much additional bulk.

In relation to concerns about intensification of use, the Planning Officer confirmed that it was open to Members to seek amendment to the wording of Condition C3 to remove the word ancillary and require the use of the garage conversion to be incidental to the enjoyment of the residential dwelling only, should this be considered necessary.

With regard to parking concerns, the Planning Officer clarified that there was potential for additional parking to be accommodated in future within the front curtilage of the property, although this would require extensive works to the garden which were not proposed as part of this application. The submitted parking plan had also shown two spaces to be accessed via a driveway at the rear. However, as this was not served by a dropped kerb it had not been

afforded weight in the assessment of the application as it was not a lawful route. Woodlands Road was a private road which was not maintained by the County Council. It would therefore be a civil matter for the owner of 10 Hyde Lane to seek permission from the management company or registered owner of that strip of land to install a dropped kerb privately.

With regard to any potential use of the dwelling as an HMO, the Planning Officer clarified that this was not under consideration as part of the application.

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

- A Committee Member supported a speaker's recommendation that in the event of any grant of permission, use of the garage conversion should be conditioned to only be incidental, and not ancillary, to the use of the dwelling.

- A Committee Member questioned why the area of hardstanding in front of the garage had been considered by officers to constitute a parking space given that there was no dropped kerb and it was only able to be accessed by crossing privately owned land. For applications which were accessed from the public highway, the lack of a dropped kerb generally meant that an area could not be considered as a parking space. Additionally, given the level of objection from residents in Woodlands Road, consent for a dropped kerb might be unlikely to be given. The Planning Officer clarified that the occupier of no.10 had historically used the hardstanding in front of the garage for parking. However, fomalising the arrangement, or enforcing against any unauthorised use of the private land, would be a civil matter. The applicant was aware that there was a need for a further planning application to regularise the works to the site as there had been changes to the land levels at the front, and that application would probably seek to include a driveway which would accommodate additional cars.

- In response to a question from a Committee Member regarding the status of the dormer window if the application were to be refused, the Planning Officer clarified that the applicant could apply for a lawful development certificate; however, until such an application were submitted it was not possible to determine whether or not it would be approved.

- Some Committee Members disagreed with the officer's view that the size of the dormer window was proportionate and considered that due to the plot's elevated position, the extension and dormer window would be overly prominent compared to the rest of the street scene and would have a harmful impact on Woodlands Road and Hyde Lane. Other reasons justifying refusal were cited as the parking shortfall, and highway safety due to lack of on-street parking.

- A Committee Member commented that paragraph 2 of policy DM8 of the new NPPF set out that in cases of unauthorised development where retrospective planning permission was being sought, substantial weight should be given where it was concluded, based on evidence, that the unauthorised development was intentional. The Committee Member expressed the view that this application would likely meet that test, as the application site had been subject to an extensive planning history and the applicant would have known that planning permission was required. It was therefore recommended that intentional unauthorised development should be added to the reasons for refusal.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused on the grounds that the extension and dormer window would cumulatively harm the character of the area and represent intentional unauthorised development, and on the basis of the car parking shortfall. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

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

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused on the grounds that the extension and dormer window would cumulatively harm the character of the area and represent intentional unauthorised development, and on the basis of the car parking shortfall. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

PC203/26 26/1359/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE-STOREY REAR EXTENSION, AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP; ALTERATIONS TO LANDSCAPING INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF OUTBUILDING; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT 36 GIRTON WAY, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD3 3QN

The application was for construction of single-storey rear extension, air source heat pump; alterations to landscaping including demolition of outbuilding; and internal alterations at 36 Girton Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

In response to a Committee Member's question the Planning Officer clarified the location of the air source heat pump within the site and confirmed that its operating noise level was not considered to have any impact on neighbours.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

CHAIR