

Minutes of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** meeting held at
The Parish Office, Station Road, Groombridge on **Monday 30th May** at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Andrew Fane, Alan Gaukroger, Diana Kelly, Jill Pardey, Jennie Paulson-Ellis and Marcus Tarling

In attendance: Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Planning Committee. There was one member of the public present to speak on a previous application that had already been considered by the Committee.

It was advised that the member of the public was welcome to speak however the Planning Committee having already reviewed the application and submitted its comments it would be unable to discuss the matter. It was also not listed as an agenda item.

Prior to the meeting the following comments had been circulated to the committee at the request of the member of the public. They gave a brief synopsis at the meeting of the comments below:

The Gables was my Aunt's house which I love and am very much attached to having spent many school holidays there whilst my parents were working abroad. My Aunt passed the house on to me, and whilst it is not currently practicable to relocate my family back here, it is quite possible we may retire to it. In the meantime, we have let it out to tenants. It is a uniquely large plot for the size of 1 The Gables (a two-bed semi) and I think it is inevitable that someone at some stage is going to develop it. I am concerned that if this is done as a purely commercial venture, eg if it is sold on when we die, they will be motivated to build the most profitable development regardless of the character of the plot and surrounding area. I am passionate about protecting the property and this application is fundamentally my attempt to ensure a development that is in keeping with the character of The Gables and is sensitive to its environment.

I have worked with different architects on this, considering alternative concepts of size and numbers of houses. After exploring a plan for three houses with one architect, I didn't think that was right and eventually concluded that the better alternative, which would be sympathetic to the surroundings without imposing undue burden on the road and services, is to have a single dwelling. To that end, we chose to work with Stephen Langer, an architect known for his Norman Shaw style designs (of the same era as The Gables) to develop this concept which we thought would be sympathetic to the character of the plot and the village.

We have tried to do this properly, and our ecology and arboricultural experts have carried out detailed investigations to ensure that the plans will have the least impact on the natural environment. The architects and arboriculturist are of the view that the layout of the plot and the format of the trees and plants happen naturally to lend themselves ideally to the run of the access drive and the siting of the new house. They create a natural path, and whilst earlier design concepts included a separate double garage for the new house we rejected this in favour of an integral garage design to reduce the impact on the plot. We honestly believe it will be beautiful and

amazing, and will be an exceptional enhancement especially given the large and beautiful trees which will still be there surrounding it.

The planner has shown us other examples of infills and backland development on Corseley Road in which context I gained the impression that this is an equally sensitive and thoughtful planning application.

Before submitting the application we arranged to meet our tenants to tell them what we were doing and why, and show them the plans. They love the The Gables and will still love the garden as we plan to leave it and have said that, other than agreeing rental terms to reflect the disturbance they will experience during the build, they will be very happy to stay. They also expressed an interest in possibly purchasing the property in due course, which is not something we were thinking of, but it was encouraging to know that the plans were not a deterrent to them. We had agreed to meet with Mr Hitchell of 2 The Gables on the same evening, but, on the day, it transpired that he could not make the time for anything beyond a brief and amicable doorstep conversation during which he wished us luck. It is unfortunate that we were not able to show them the plans in advance and discuss the proposed implications for them, which would include reduced traffic across the front of their house and increased parking space.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

002289 **RESOLVED** Cllr Marcus Tarling was elected as Chairman of the Committee

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

This item was deferred to the next meeting

3. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING - None

4. APOLOGIES – Cllrs Robert Gordon-James, Chris Pope

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – In the interest of transparency Cllr Tarling advise the committee that he resides on road of application 8.2 however he had no other connection to the applicant. It was advised by the Assistant Clerk that this was not a declarable interest and Cllr Tarling was able to participate in the discussions and decision.

6. MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3rd MAY 2022

002290 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2022 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

6.2 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM THESE MINUTES. - None

7. ENFORCEMENT - None

8. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

COMMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 8.1 WD/2022/0731/MAO LAND AT COOKS CORNER FARM TO THE REAR OF AMBLESTONE, LONDON ROAD, CROWBOROUGH TN6 1TA Description: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DWELLING, ERECTION OF 25 NO. DWELLINGS AND CREATION OF NEW ACCESS. Expiry date for comments: 31 May 2022.

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157368>

The committee agreed that the objections raised for the previous application, noted below, were still valid and should be given again for this application. The reduction in the number of buildings on the application did not alter the comments. The application would still cause significant damage to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and hold no public benefit.

The comments regarding the financial contribution to SANGS were questioned as there is no current evidence that shows this has a beneficial effect in Wealden.

The lack of detail within the application regarding how the dwellings would look was also a concern in such a protected area.

Previous comment made regarding WD/2021/1699/MAO, taken from the minutes of the Withyham Parish Council Planning Meeting of 09/08/2021 to be allocated to this application:

“The traffic survey which was taken on a Sunday during lock down was believed severely flawed, furthermore it was noted that there was no mention of the affects of vehicle movements on the Ashdown Forest. It was also noted that the Parish Council had sited a Speed Indicator Device (SID) along London Road, close to this application. The SID aids traffic calming, speed reduction and safety following agreement for its need in this location by East Sussex Highways. It was agreed that the issues of queuing traffic that is already at unacceptable levels at the Crowborough Cross would be significantly increased.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated to protect valuable landscapes (taken from Countryside and Rights of Way act 2000) and it places a statutory duty on any public body to protect and enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and habitats within (Habitat's regulations). This application which sits within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would bring about a notable change to the character of the site which is surrounded by open countryside, hedgerows, and mature trees. The committee agreed that this would in no way “Enhance” this area and would in fact have a significantly detrimental effect. Para 172 pf the NFPP 2019 attaches great weight to conserving.

The site sits outside of the Development Boundary which is there to protect greenfield and agricultural sites from being developed.

The proposal is within the Ashdown Forest Zone of Influence. This is an SSSI and SAC. Increased traffic generated by this development would negatively contribute to carbon and nitrogen emissions, which must be given weight.

The recent SHELAA carried out by Wealden District Council does not support development of this site. It is also not supported by the 1998 Wealden local plan.

It was felt that the reports provided contained significant holes and appeared cavalier.

The comment within the applicants planning statement which supported further breaches of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which stated "it does not matter, another breach as there has already been other infringements", however given that this application will not enhance in any way the surrounding countryside, those comments should be rejected. We also noted there was no reference from Natural England, given the location, this should have been referred. It should further be noted that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Habitat Regulations are protected by law and that the lack of a 5-year land supply does not, override those protections."

Withyham Parish Council Objects to this Application

- 8.2 WD/2022/0682/F THE GRANARY, GILLRIDGE LANE, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1UP Description: PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION WITH BALCONY, ADDITIONAL BALCONY, NEW AND REPLACEMENT DECKING AND EXTERNAL CHANGES TO CLADDING AND WINDOWS. Expiry date for comments: 16 May extended to 31 May 2022.

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157308>

It was felt this was a sizable plot and a reasonable application that would not be visible. Consideration should be given to any neighbour comments in regards to being overlooked.

Withyham Parish Council Supports this application subject to materials being in keeping.

- 8.3 WD/2022/0615/F 1 TANYARD COTTAGES, CORSELEY ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9PP Description: RETENTION OF EXISTING GARAGE PROPOSED TO BE DEMOLISHED UNDER PLANNING PERMISSION WD/2020/0431/F (DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SINGLE GARAGE (SITUATED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DRIVEWAY) AND OUTBUILDING (SITUATED AT THE TOP OF THE DRIVEWAY), AND ERECTION OF A NEW TIMBER FRAMED DOUBLE GARAGE/CARPORT AND STORE AT THE TOP OF THE DRIVEWAY. REGRADING OF DRIVEWAY (PERMEABLE SURFACE) IN FRONT OF PROPOSED GARAGE/CARPORT TO ENABLE TURNING OF VEHICLES). Expiry date for comments: 16 May extended to 31 May 2022.

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157220>

It was felt the plans and description provided were very poor and did not give enough details for the committee to take a view. The committee felt unable to support the application in its current form but would welcome a resubmission with detailed plans.

Withyham Parish Council is unable to support this application in its current form.

- 8.4 WD/2022/0790/F 1 MOUNT PLEASANT COTTAGES, SUSSEX LANE, BLACKHAM, WITHYHAM, TN3 9UH Description: TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION, NEW FRONT PORCH. Expiry date for comments: 3 June 2022

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157440>

The application showed no elevations which left the committee unable to ascertain how this would sit within the site. The Wealden District Council website was unavailable due to an outage so Councillors were unable to see if there had been any recent neighbour comments. The committee felt unable to support the application in its current form but would welcome a resubmission with detailed plans which included the elevations.

Withyham Parish Council is unable to support this application in its current form.

Applications 8.5 and 8.6 were considered together

- 8.5 WD/2022/0836/F HIGHFIELDS, BEECH GREEN LANE, WITHYHAM, TN7 4DB Description: COVERED PARKING AREA TO NORTH COURTYARD AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING. REINSTATEMENT OF TWO CHIMNEYS SERVING THE ENTRANCE HALL AND RECEPTION ROOM. Expiry date for comments: 8 June 2022

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157490>

See 8.6 for comments and decision.

- 8.6 WD/2022/0837/LB HIGHFIELDS, BEECH GREEN LANE, WITHYHAM, TN7 4DB Description: COVERED PARKING AREA TO NORTH COURTYARD AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING. REINSTATEMENT OF TWO CHIMNEYS SERVING THE ENTRANCE HALL AND RECEPTION ROOM. Expiry date for comments: 8 June 2022

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=157491>

The importance of custodians of houses such as this who were willing to restore and invest such houses was noted. The committee noted with appreciation that the Listed Buildings application was very detailed.

The committee would request that the listed buildings officer's attention is given to the garage/covered parking area in front of the attractive elevation to assess the impact on this heritage asset.

Withyham Parish Council defers to the Listed Buildings Officer but would request materials are in keeping with the grandeur of this heritage asset.

9. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE AGENDA BY THE CLERK - None

002291 RESOLVED that the observations on the planning issues detailed in these minutes be submitted to the Planning Authority.

10. DECISIONS FOR NOTING – None

11. HIGH WEALD AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN SURVEY (Deadline 30th June 2022)

It was agreed that Cllrs Tarling and Gaukroger would review this together and a draft response would be submitted for agreement at the next planning meeting.

12. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

The Assistant Clerk was asked to provide the committee with information regarding the legality of planning in siting a caravan on private land.

13. DATE OF MEETING - noted that the date of the next meeting is on **Monday 13th June 2022 at 7.00pm** to be held at The Parish Office unless otherwise notified by the agenda.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm