

**Minutes of a meeting of District Planning Committee
held on Thursday, 31st October, 2019
from 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm**

Present: R Salisbury (Chair)
R Whittaker (Vice-Chair)

R Bates
P Chapman
E Coe-
Gunnell White

R Jackson
C Laband
N Walker

R Webb

Absent: Councillors S Hatton and A Peacock

Also Present: Councillors A MacNaughton and D Sweatman

The Chairman noted that Cllr Sweatman would not sit on the Committee as he is speaking as a Ward Member. He asked the Committee to approve Councillor Rex Whittaker as Vice-Chairman for the meeting, this was unanimously agreed. The Chairman confirmed all Committee Members had received the Agenda Update Sheet.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Hatton and Peacock.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Whittaker declared a non- prejudicial interest as a member of East Grinstead Town Council's Planning Committee.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER AND 3 OCTOBER 2019.

The Minutes of the Committee meetings held on held on 19th September and 3rd October 2019 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

4. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

5. DM/19/1067 - LAND AT HILL PLACE FARM, TURNERS HILL ROAD, EAST GRINSTEAD, WEST SUSSEX, RH19 4LX

Steve Ashdown, Team Leader for Major Developments introduced the report for reserved matters and drew Member's attention to the Agenda Update Sheet. He noted that three further letters of representation had been received and highlighted

the additional officer comments regarding the car park for Block B, the parameter plan and amendments to conditions 8 and 9. The Team Leader highlighted that East Grinstead Viaduct and Hill Place Farm House are grade two listed structures and the Bluebell Railway is a non-designated heritage asset. He advised the Committee that the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) had been allowed as part of the appeal decision by the Secretary of State (SoS) in March 2018.

The Team Leader confirmed that the development would provide 200 dwellings, with 30% affordable units in several clusters across the site. The dwellings would be a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey buildings, the main spine road would run through the site and the provision of car parking for 461 vehicles with electric charging points in the garages. He advised that representations had been received to question whether the application does comply with the parameter plan. He drew attention to the update sheet on this matter and confirmed that he was content that the proposals comply with the parameter plan approved as part of the outline permission.

He highlighted the relationships of various plots with existing houses and trees, noting changes to the design of some plots compared to the initial submission (building height and position). He confirmed the removal of permitted development rights for a number of plots. The Committee was informed that the principle of development has been agreed on appeal. He advised that the harm this development could cause was not considered that significant to refuse the application. He noted the less than substantial harm identified to heritage assets must be given great weight and having regard to paragraph 196 of the NPPF the public benefits outweigh the less than substantial harm in this instance. The landscaping scheme is appropriate and conditions are suggested to minimise any impact on trees to be retained, including the Austrian Pine. He advised that the design was considered acceptable and closed by noting that he considers the application complies with Development Plans policies and the NPPF.

Frank Spooner, Arboricultural Consultant for the owner of Barredale Court spoke in objection to the application citing the proposals significant impact on the Root Protection Area of the Austrian Pine. He considered that there was insufficient information relating to the proposed no-dog solution to make a decision at this time. He requested that a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is placed upon the Austrian Pine.

Paul Gates, resident of The Lodge (Barredale Court) spoke in objection to the application on the grounds of security, particularly in relation to the footpath adjacent to the boundary, loss of privacy as a result of plot 31 and the intrusion of development within areas designated as open space on the approved parameter plan.

Carol Bagshaw, resident of The Coach House (Barredale Court) spoke in objection to the application, and raised issues relating to the relationship with flat block B, that would result in the loss of privacy. She questioned how a decision could be made on this issue when requested drawings to enable a proper assessment of the relationship had not been provided. Raised concern about the impact of the adjacent parking area that would be unnecessary harmful. She considered that the proposals would have significant harm on residential amenities contrary to Policy DP26.

John Longhorn of Linden Homes spoke in support of the application and noted that there have been many pre application consultations with an ongoing dialogue with the residents of Barredale Court residents. He suggested the engagement of an independent consultant, to ensure the protection of the Austrian Pine and that

relocating plot 90 would compromise the design. He confirmed an in principle agreement with the Bluebell Railway to access SANG land.

Sam Sykes, a planning agent for Linden Homes spoke in support of the application. He noted the significant benefits to the Council and local area by providing 200 homes which form part of the Council's 5 year housing supply. He confirmed that 15 hectares of SANG land would be provided as part of the development. He confirmed that the spine road would be built to adopted standards and that it is for Southern Water to provide the necessary infrastructure to serve the development in light of the charging regime that is now in place that requires a contribution per dwelling from the developer.

Don Newling, arboricultural consultant for Linden Homes spoke in support of the application. He noted that the Austrian Pine was a Category A tree and showed no signs of current decline. He confirmed that no excavation is proposed with the RPA and a suitable no-dig solution is achievable.

Councillor Dick Sweatman spoke as Ward Member and was concerned with the impact the development would have on the Austrian Pine. He noted that the Design Review Panel (DRP) had discussed the tree and proposed a no dig condition to protect the tree and its roots system. He advised that the field by the Austrian Pine had not been ploughed since September 2014 and queried whether the no dig proposal was detailed enough. He also expressed concern with potential damage to the pine tree from parking on the soft landscaping, and requested a Tree Preservation Order on the Austrian Pine along with amendments to conditions six and eight. He supported condition seven.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee should direct their questions to the layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of the development as the SoS had given consent to the development. The Team Leader noted that the principle for the development was already established and included the access and had taken into account matters of highway safety and wider highway network impact.

Members discussed the sustainability of the development and the Team Leader noted that the developer was proposing an energy efficient fabric first approach to the build of the dwellings, sustainable drainage measures and electric charging points for vehicles. He confirmed the development complied with District Plan policy DP39.

The Committee was advised that water recovery issues are a matter for the building control department.

Several Members discussed the housing design and layout, impact of the development on the Austrian Pine, construction of the adjacent turning circle and the spine road. The Chairman noted that the Council was in the process of producing a 'Design Guide' however the design of this scheme had been carefully considered by both the Urban Designer and DRP over a period of time and that they were not raising an objection to the scheme as presented to Members. The Committee was advised that the Housing Team have made an assessment and one wheelchair accessible property has been agreed for the development. The Team leader confirmed that the highway including the turning head would have been designed to the current standards and that the applicants have confirmed that the spine road would be constructed to an adoptable standard and the adoption was a matter for WSCC to consider, should it be put forward by the developer.

Following a proposal of a TPO on the Austrian Pine by Councillor Walker which was seconded by Councillor Bates, the Chairman advised that officers have set out in the report that they have considered the issue of a TPO and do not consider at this point that it meets the relevant criteria. However, he noted his concern with the preservation of the future amenity of the tree and the Committees desire for this to be formally protected. He took time out to discuss the matters raised in association with the Austrian Pine tree with the officers present and then advised the Committee that the officers would place a TPO on the Austrian Pine. The Team Leader advised that, following the offer from Linden Homes, all necessary works around the pine could be overseen by an independent specialist appointed by MSDC and condition 6 could be amended to reflect this suggestion. Such wording would be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

A Member expressed concerns regarding the foul sewer, the discharge point and capacity of the local system. The Team Leader noted a condition in the outline permission relating to foul drainage and that details would need to be submitted and approved before works could start. He advised that the developer will need to make a contribution, in agreement with the undertaker, regarding any off-site the works and it would be the responsibility of the undertaker to do undertake the necessary works to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. He confirmed that this practice is not specific to this development but standard across the district/country.

The Vice-Chairman noted the provision of two and three bedroom dwellings in the development and was in line with the Neighbourhood Plan. He expressed confidence that the scheme would be delivered and the layout would protect the viaduct and railway. He advised the Committee that a S106 agreement has been signed for £2.6m which will deliver significant deliverable infrastructure benefits to the public. He stated it was a good scheme overall and supported the scheme.

The Chairman concluded that the principle of development had been approved by the by SoS. The Committee had no further concerns over the layout and scale; the impact on the residential amenity; the development provides an acceptable housing mix and the impact and assessment on heritage assets, as set out in the report, is accepted. With regard to highways and parking, there were concerns about the refuse sweep lines and the Team Leader confirmed that additional plans had been received to address these concerns.

As there were no further questions the Chairman took the Committee to the recommendations and he advised that the tree officer will seek to apply a TPO on the Austrian Pine and an independent person appointed by MSDC to approve all works around the tree. The Chairman noted the ongoing discussions between the officers and the applicant, and that any changes to the conditions would be approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Committee agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions contained in Appendix A and amendments contained in the Agenda Update Sheet and the serving a TPO on the Austrian Pine tree.

6. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 3.30 pm

Chairman