

**Minutes of a meeting of Planning Committee
held on Thursday, 13th August, 2020
from 4.00 - 5.34 pm**

Present: G Marsh (Chairman)

G Allen	R Eggleston	M Pulfer
R Cartwright	A MacNaughton	D Sweatman
J Dabell	C Phillips	

Absent: Councillors P Coote, E Coe-Gunnell White and N Walker

1 ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS EXPLANATION.

The Chairman introduced the meeting and took a roll call of Members in attendance. The Legal Representative explained the virtual meeting procedure.

2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillor Coote and Councillor Walker.

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

No declarations were received.

4 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JUNE 2020

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed electronically by the Chairman.

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

The Chairman had no urgent business.

6 DM/19/0260 - TAVISTOCK AND SUMMERHILL SCHOOL, SUMMERHILL LANE, LINDFIELD, RH16 1RP.

Steve King, Planning Applications Team Leader highlighted the agenda update sheet which had been circulated to the Committee members and noted that it detailed the receipt of a further 8 letters of objection. The Officer introduced the application which sought planning permission for the erection of 38 residential dwellings comprising of 4 houses and 34 flats with associated internal access, surface-level car parking, landscaping with other infrastructure on land formally occupied by Tavistock and Summerhill School, Summer Hill Lane, Lindfield. Amended plans reduced the proposed car parking spaces to 77 and showed revisions to Block A and B.

He noted the Electric Vehicle Charging points (ECVs) and provision for installing more charging points in the future, protected trees with the removal of 13 trees and landscaping to provide an additional 74 trees. He highlighted the design of the balconies which prevents them directly overlooking adjoining properties. The committee were advised that as the site is within the built-up area of Lindfield the application accords with the District Plan and national policy. He advised that a key issue is the design of the scheme. Due to the various site constraints, including the levels of the site, the shape of the site and the protected trees within the site, officers consider that a flatted development is suitable. The Officer is supportive of the application but noted that the scheme would be very different to the surrounding houses. The design optimises the potential of the site and the Team Leader advised Members that they must decide on whether this design was acceptable for this location. He confirmed that no objections had been received from the Ecology Officer, Drainage Officer or the Highway Authority. It was considered that the scheme would not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby neighbours. It was noted that issues have been raised relating to private covenants which the Officer explained were private legal matters and not a relevant planning consideration. He confirmed Planning Condition 8 for the access to be constructed prior to development of the site. The scheme is policy compliant on affordable housing, providing 10 units of affordable housing in Block C and a contribution for off-site provision.

The Chairman outlined the public speaking procedure and invited the public speakers to the meeting.

Jonathan Allen, local resident spoke against the application through an audio submission.

Louise King, local resident spoke against the application through an audio submission.

David Quickfall, local resident spoke against the application through a video submission.

James Waterhouse, agent spoke in favour of the application through a video submission.

Matthew Richardson, architect spoke against the application through a video submission.

Kate Inglis, agent spoke in favour of the application.

Councillor Andrew Lea, Ward Member spoke against the application. He highlighted the scale and strength of objections to the application which included Lindfield Parish and Haywards Heath Town Councils. He commented that the scheme was against District Planning Policy DP26, in that the design should create a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. He expressed concern that the application demonstrated no regard for the character of the village, was an overdevelopment in relation to the scale and density, would be widely visible and would dominate the surrounding area. The design was more appropriate to an urban area, as the flats' design was not the same as the local Sussex style. He requested that the committee refuse the application.

Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Ward Member spoke against the application. He agreed with the comments of Councillor Lea and noted the opposition of the local residents, Lindfield Preservation Society, Lindfield Parish and Haywards Heath Town Councils. He commented that District Plan policy DP26 notes that the design should reflect the distinct character of Mid Sussex, be a high-quality design, address character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscaping. The surrounding buildings are low density Turner style houses and this scheme is a higher density city centre style design. He highlighted that the report states some elements are poor in design and conflicts with DP26. If a development for the site is accepted, it should be possible to have a design and scale that fits in with the character and buildings in the surrounding area. He urged the committee to refuse the application on the grounds of the bulk, scale and design which is contrary to the character of Lindfield under policy DP 26.

The Chairman noted that this is a brown field site and needs a higher density than the surrounding area. He asked the officer to comment on density, different types of flatted schemes and what number of flats would be acceptable for the site.

The Officer confirmed that the proposed density is higher than the surrounding area, 33 per hectare with the surrounding area likely to be in the low 20s. He advised that the density is not the issue in itself, the issue is how the scheme fits on the site. The Officer stated that a flatted scheme could be designed differently to the scheme before Members, for example, with the blocks being designed so the external elevations that look like more traditional semi-detached and terraced houses. The Officer stated that a scheme with detached houses would not provide the same number of dwellings as proposed in this application. The Officer advised that it is important how the dwellings fit on the site due to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), awkward shape and topography of the site and that it would be difficult to design a scheme of detached houses to do this. The Officer stated that the modern design approach would create a sense of place within the site.

Members expressed concern with sustainable transport links, car parking provision, stated the design conflicts with DP26, the design is out of character for the local area, and the design was more appropriate for an urban area and they objected to the application. One Member suggested that the developers produce a design more in keeping with the character of the local area.

A Member noted that the application conflicts with the Lindfield Village Design Statement.

A Member commented that the scheme is not over development of the site, it provides open space around the flats and will be clear of the boundaries. The design does protect the neighbours and should be on its merits. He advised that it would be difficult to find a reason for refusal that would stand up at public examination.

The Officer addressed the committee and commented that the car parking provision does comply with the County Council car parking calculation, which is an evidence-based tool, based on the wards across the district; condition 2 requires a construction management plan before works commence on the site. The Officer stated that local opposition to the scheme, is not in itself grounds to refuse and that a refusal must be for sound planning reasons. He reiterated that the site is in the built-up area and whilst not in the town centre of Haywards Heath it adjoins Haywards Heath with built developments on all 4 sides. A flatted development is preferred due to difficulties of the site in relation to the awkward shape of the site, its topography and TPOs. The Officer highlighted a quote from the Lindfield Village Design Statement that its

objective is to manage change and it should not be a barrier to modern design, and the officers view is that the design is acceptable for the site.

The Chairman confirmed that a higher density could not be achieved from just construction of houses, and that other developments of flats in the vicinity look like semi-detached houses.

The Chairman moved to the officer recommendation to approve the application in accordance with Recommendation A and B, which was proposed by Councillor MacNaughton and seconded by the Chairman. A recorded vote was carried out by the Legal Officer and the Committee voted with two in favour and seven against. The motion failed.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
G. Allen		✓	
R Cartwright		✓	
J. Dabell		✓	
R. Eggleston		✓	
MacNaughton	✓		
G. Marsh	✓		
C. Phillips		✓	
M. Pulfer			
D. Sweatman		✓	

Councillor Pulfer proposed that the Committee refuse the application on the basis that the application is contrary to District Plan policy DP26 on the grounds of design and this was seconded by Councillor Dabell. A recorded vote was carried out by the Legal Officer and the Committee voted with seven in favour and two against and the application was refused.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
G. Allen	✓		
R. Cartwright	✓		
J. Dabell	✓		
R. Eggleston	✓		
MacNaughton		✓	
G. Marsh		✓	
C. Phillips	✓		
M. Pulfer	✓		
D. Sweatman	✓		

Resolved:

That planning permission be refused, contrary to the officer recommendation, for the following reasons (following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman):

1. The design of the proposed development would not be in keeping with the surrounding properties and would result in a development that was obtrusive and would have a harmful impact on the character of the area. Part of the site is within an area which has been designated as an Area of Townscape Character in the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan and part of the site adjoins the Area of Townscape Character. The modern design of the proposed development, including the use of flat roofs on all the buildings and the proposed external materials, would not have regard to the character of the

surrounding area. As a result the development would not protect this valued townscape and would be unsympathetic to the prevailing character of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore conflicts with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 and policy 7 of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan and paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework’

2. The application fails to comply with policies DP20 and DP31 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in respect of the infrastructure required to serve the development and the required affordable housing.

7 DM/20/1760 - OAK TREE FARM, BURGESS HILL ROAD, ANSTY, RH17 5AH.

Steve Ashdown, Major Development & Investigations Team Leader introduced the application which follows an application under DM/16/1515 for a prior approval for the change of use of the existing agricultural buildings on the site to form two new residential dwellings, and a subsequent application under DM/18/5130 for Outline approval for the demolition of the existing dwelling and barn and replacement with three new dwellings. The current application seeks full permission for the redevelopment of the site, with all the agricultural buildings and an existing bungalow being demolished to allow for the construction of three new barn style dwellings with a reconfigured site access road and parking/turning provision. The proposed dwellings would be sited in part over the footprint of the disused barns on the site, over the footprint of the existing bungalow and within the garden curtilage at Oaktree Farm, off Burgess Hill Road to the south of Ansty, in Ansty and Staplefield Parish. The scheme is similar in detail to the submission under the outline application, which was granted approval by the MSDC Planning Committee on 30th May 2020.

The Officer highlighted the Grade 2 Listed Building which was noted in the report, and great weight should be attached to the need to protect its setting. The Officer noted the scheme is in the countryside an area of restraint. He noted the differences to previous schemes in terms of layout and scale, the access is by the approved extant permission, the traditional design of the buildings which were similar to previous approved applications. He advised that the public benefits of the scheme out-weigh the less than substantial harm to the Listed Building.

Peter Rainer, agent spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Bradbury, Ward Member advised he had received emails supporting the scheme and the local councils were also in favour of the development.

The Vice-chairman commented that the scheme complies with policies and was similar to the previously approved outline scheme. The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Sweatman and seconded Councillor Eggleston. A recorded vote was carried out by the Legal Officer and the application was approved unanimously.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
G. Allen	✓		
R. Cartwright	✓		
J. Dabell	✓		
R. Eggleston	✓		
MacNaughton	✓		

G. Marsh	✓		
C. Phillips	✓		
M. Pulfer	✓		
D. Sweatman	✓		

Resolved:

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed at Appendix A.

8 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 5.34 pm

Chairman