

Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning Committee** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Wednesday, 10 January 2024** at **7.30 pm**.

Present: Councillors S. Parnall (Chair); M. S. Blacker (Vice-Chair), J. S. Bray, P. Chandler, Z. Cooper, P. Harp, K. Fairhurst, J. Hudson, S. A. Kulka, S. McKenna, C. Stevens, J. Thorne, M. Tary, J. Baker (Substitute) and V. Chester (Substitute)

Visiting Members present: R. Ritter (attended remotely) and S. T. Walsh

68 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

69 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sachdeva and Torra, Councillors Baker and Chester were their respective substitutes.

70 Declarations of interest

Councillor Blacker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6, Land to the rear of 141-147 Ruden Way, Epsom Down, as the developer was a client of his, however he had no involvement in this application.

Councillor Baker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7, New Pond Farmhouse, Woodhatch, Reigate, as he was an acquaintance of a leaseholder in one of the adjacent maisonettes.

71 Addendum to the agenda

RESOLVED that the addendum be noted.

72 23/01119/F - Former Gas Holders, Hooley Lane, Redhill

The Committee considered an application at the Former Gas Holders, Hooley Lane, Redhill for the erection of 70 dwellings with access from Hooley Lane, with associated landscaping and infrastructure. As amended on 06/07/2023 and on 25/07/2023. As amended on 14/08/2023, 10/10/2023, 11/10/2023, 23/10/2023, 08/11/2023, 22/11/2023 and 12/12/2023.

Some members of the Committee felt that development would significantly change the current street scene. There was concern this was an overdevelopment and very little green space. There was also concern regarding contamination.



Councillor Ritter, a visiting member, spoke on the application as the ward member, sharing some points that supported the application such as:

- Meeting parking standards;
- There were a number of affordable homes proposed;
- Electric vehicle charging points;
- Mature trees were to be maintained;
- Walking and cycling route;
- Air source heat pumps; and
- A car club.

However, there was concern regarding the density of the development and that it did not reflect the surrounding area. There was concern regarding the amount of amenity space for future residents to enjoy. People were now working from home and there was concern regarding the amount of light residents would enjoy to the rear of the flats. There was also concern regarding the local road as it was already at maximum capacity for parking and often became gridlocked; there was concern for children's safety going to the school. Buses also struggled to turn due to traffic and parked cars. A local speed watch group has monitored the level of traffic on St John's Road and noted an increase from 280 cars between the hours of 8am and 10am to 550 cars at that time. It was requested that there be a reduction in the number of homes on the site.

Councillor Walsh, a visiting member, stated that he was concerned regarding the scale of the development. The topology of the site was important and the solution that had been achieved was something the Committee needed to consider as well as the use of a brownfield site. Pages 54 and 55 of the report showed significant tree shielding and the design made the upper floors grey to decrease the visual impact. Councillor Walsh felt that this was a good application.

A reason for refusal was proposed by Councillor Chandler and seconded by Councillor Chester, whereupon the Committee voted and **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **REFUSED** on the grounds that:

The proposal, by reason of the quantum of flatted units the scale and bulk of the blocks and their height and proximity to the boundary would result in a scheme which is of a high density and out of keeping with the lower rise nature of the residential accommodation in the surrounding area and a scheme which does not provide sufficient larger market homes (3 and 4+ units). The proposed flatted blocks, which would be up to four storeys, would dominate the site, resulting in a scheme which is dominated by hardstanding (parking or footways) and which provides insufficient space for soft landscaping. Therefore the proposal would result in an overly dense, incongruous and cramped overdevelopment of the site, out of keeping with and harmful to the character and appearance of the locality and which provides an inadequate mix of larger market homes. This would be contrary to policies DES1, DES4 and DES5 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 and chapter 12 of the NPPF.

73 23/01937/F - Land to the rear of 141-147 Ruden Way, Epsom Downs

The Committee considered an application at Land to the rear of 141-147 Ruden Way, Epsom Downs for the erection of 3 dwellings with parking, landscaping and associated works.

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions as per the recommendation and addendum.

74 23/01085/F - New Pond Farmhouse, Woodhatch, Reigate

The Committee considered an application at New Pond Farmhouse, Woodhatch, Reigate for the proposed installation of 53no. solar panels in the rear garden of 2 new pond farmhouse and adjacent council depot building. As amended on 23/10/2023.

There was concern regarding the loss of amenity space for one of the maisonettes.

The following reason for refusal was proposed by Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Stevens:

The proposed development does not fall within the specific types of development that may be described as being appropriate development. The benefits of the proposed solar installation including renewable energy generation and CO2 reduction are not considered to amount to very special circumstances which would outweigh the substantial harm by reason of inappropriateness and harm to the openness of the Green Belt in this case. On this basis the proposal constitutes unacceptable development within the Green Belt and would be contrary to policy NHE5 of the Development Management Plan 2019, policy CS3 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Committee voted on the reason for refusal and the motion was **DEFEATED**.

RESOLVED that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions as per the recommendation and addendum, plus an additional condition to require the removal of the panels and land be restored to its former condition upon 35 years or when reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for the purposes of generating power, whichever is the sooner. To include the following informative:

That the applicant is asked to ensure that the boundary treatment is designed to maximise the amount of retained garden area for the ground floor tenants.

75 Any other urgent business

There was none.

The meeting finished at 9.36 pm