



MINUTES of a Meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held at the Village Council Meeting Room, Ashurst Wood on Tuesday, 23rd April 2019 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Samways (Vice-Chair) Judge, Lindsay, Loveday and Phillips
In attendance: Assistant Clerk, Rebecca Roberts, Cllr Belsey and 5 members of the public

- 1. Public questions:** A resident of Ashbourne Park made representation on behalf of the Ashbourne Park Owners Association, regarding application DM/19/1025. In principle, they have no objection to the development of the site, but this application should be refused. It is not dissimilar to the first application DM/18/1548 and like this application it is severely deficient in design terms and clearly, the developers have not taken into account any of the objections raised last time and they have even removed the affordable housing element. There is not enough parking allocation and there is no respect for the character of the neighbouring properties. There was no public consultation. The design looks like a town centre development dropped into a rural location. There is very little green communal space and the design is alien to the local environment and fails to comply with a number of conditions laid down in the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan. Approval of this application would set a precedent for the site next door. There is an opportunity here to make a very nice development and therefore, the proposal in its current form should be rejected.
- 2. Apologies for absence –** Cllrs Bright, Bussell and Wailes; apologies were received and resolved; the reasons were accepted.
- 3. To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda –** Cllr Lindsay declared a disclosable and pecuniary interest in DM/19/1130 as an immediate neighbour of the applicant and also declared a personal interest in application DM/19/1276 as a friend of the applicant
- 4. The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on the 2nd April 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meetings.**

5. Recorded Meetings: none

7:36pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting

6. Planning applications:

DM/19/1130

Location: Mole Cottage 2, Forest View Hammerwood Road Ashurst Wood RH19
Desc: Demolition of outbuilding. Front and side extension.

Recommend: Refusal – the extension is large, resulting in the loss of garden space and it would have insufficient parking spaces for a 5 bedroom property. This extension would result in over-development of the site.

7:40pm – Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting

DM/19/1276

Location: 43 School Lane Ashurst Wood West Sussex RH19 3QW
Desc: Addition of dormer window to rear of property to allow for conversion of loft space.

Recommend: **Refusal** – the proposal is too large and it does not comply with the Mid Sussex District Council guidance on Dormer windows

DM/19/1025

Location: Wealden House Lewes Road Ashurst Wood West Sussex
Desc: Proposed new build residential development consisting of 54 units following the demolition of all existing site buildings.

Recommend: **Refusal**

This is the second application to develop this site, which was allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan for residential development.

The Village Council supports the principle of development, however the proposal once again fails to comply with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Village Council cannot support it for the reasons set out below.

Community Consultation

As with the previous proposal (DM/18/1548) the application was prepared and submitted without any prior engagement with the Village Council or members of the community.

A Statement of Community Involvement has belatedly been prepared.

This repeats the contents of the previous SCI and goes on to state that the consultation responses made during the previous application have now been addressed by the new application. This is not true: most of the Village Council's objections to the previous application have been ignored, as have those of Brambletye School and other local residents.

Number of dwellings

The Design and Access Statement (page 39) refers to "the allocated requirement" of 50+ dwellings. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any number of dwellings for the site. Policy 5 states that the NP will provide for 62+ dwellings over the Plan period, to be delivered on allocated and windfall sites. This site is obviously the largest of the allocated sites and has been identified as having an **approximate** capacity of 50+.

There is no specific housing number in policy 9 itself (which covers this site). The application must be assessed against the relevant Plan policies.

It is also noted that the Design and Access Statement states that the size of the site is 1.473 hectares. During the Neighbourhood Plan site assessment, the size of the site was measured (using online tools) at approximately 1.2 hectares with the ancient woodland included, or 0.8 hectares excluding the woodland. The correct size of the developable area of the site should be clarified.

Design and Character

Policy ASW9 is the Neighbourhood Plan policy which specifically covers this site. ASW9 (a) requires the scheme to **reflect and respect the predominant character of the area with particular regard to unit type, scale and massing**

while ASW9(b) requires a layout **which reflects and respects the spacious character of the locality to help integrate the development into the vicinity.**

In addition ASW14(a) requires **design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings with reference to the Character Assessment** and ASW14(b) requires the design of a proposed development to have **addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area.**

The Ashurst Wood Character Assessment has not been referred to in the application. Members consider that the urban design is unattractive and out of keeping with the character of the Lewes Road area.

The applicant states several times in the application that 3 and 4 storey buildings are appropriate to this site. The Village Council disagrees. The majority of dwellings in the Lewes Road area are single or double storey, with some loft extensions. The 14 flats close to the site are 2.5 storeys with the top floor sitting in the roof space.

There are no circumstances in which a 4-storey block of flats is appropriate in the village of Ashurst Wood, while 3 storeys would only be acceptable if designed to appear as 2.5 storeys.

The removal of the existing building provides an opportunity to enhance the site, which this proposal does not achieve. The reference to developments in Cambridge and London as precedents for this scheme is inappropriate, as those developments are in cities which are obviously not comparable to a village located in the High Weald AONB. Despite numerous objections to the urban style of the previous proposal, the applicant has made no design changes, apart from the addition of balcony spaces. It is not acceptable (or correct) to argue that the buildings will be hidden from public view.

The Village Council agrees with the comments made by Brambletye School about the impact of the proposed buildings on the school's buildings and community.

Dwelling mix

ASW 9(h) requires the applicant to provide **a mix of dwelling types and sizes, both market and affordable, to include small homes and homes suitable for elderly residents. The appropriate mix to be informed by a Housing Needs Survey together with information from MSDC's common housing register.**

This is also a requirement of DP30.

It is accepted that there is a need for small units, but the application does not address this requirement adequately.

A Housing Needs Survey must be commissioned by the applicant with the appropriate questions agreed with the Village Council and MSDC.

Garden space

ASW14(h) requires **private garden amenity space proportionate to the size of the dwelling**. The Neighbourhood Plan stresses the importance of gardens in the village. The nearby flats have large communal gardens. The Village Council notes that balconies have now been added to the scheme. While accepting that there will be some residents who will not require gardens, the Village Council wishes to see the inclusion of some private garden spaces. This will help to provide the mix of dwelling types and sizes required.

Car parking

Car parking provision does not comply with ASW 21, which requires two spaces to be allocated for each flat. Ashurst Wood has higher than average car ownership, as demonstrated in the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner stated that this policy reflects the circumstances found in Ashurst Wood and is well-designed and locally distinctive. It is essential that all parking is contained within the site.

Although this point was made with regard to the previous application and indeed is one of the reasons for refusal of that application, the applicant has ignored it and instead relies on WSCC parking standards.

Moreover, ASW 14(i) states that parking should not be ***prominent in or dominate the street scene, and the visual impact of parking areas should be minimised wherever possible by the use of alternative surfaces and screening.***

It is therefore necessary for the applicant to design a scheme that has sufficient parking provision without being dominated by hardstanding.

Affordable Housing

This is required by ASW15 as updated by DP31. The applicant states that it is not viable to include any affordable housing in the scheme, having previously proposed a scheme of 71 dwellings including 21 affordable units. It is for the District Council to scrutinise the evidence put forward by the applicant to support its argument and the Village Council expects such scrutiny to be thorough as it would be extremely detrimental to the village if this site were to provide no affordable homes. The provision of affordable housing was an important factor in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Conclusion

The Village Council agrees that the potential of the site must be realised, but not at the expense of spoiling the character of the surrounding area and the village.

The applicant has ignored the Village Council's representations made about the previous application and has paid little regard to the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is clear that the proposal is not acceptable when judged against the Plan's policies. It is also clear that the proposal continues to represent an overdevelopment of the site and that the number of units will need to be reduced in order to provide a mix of dwelling types, suitable outdoor space, suitable building height, appropriate design and affordable dwellings.

7. To receive notification of planning decisions: DM/19/0538 – Proposed single storey pitched roof side extension – Grove Farm Barn, Cansiron Lane – Permission: Granted. DM/19/0613 – Proposed single storey pitched roof side extension – Grove Farm Barn, Cansiron Lane – Permission: Granted. DM/19/0734 – to erect a 1.8 metre lose-board fence on the boundary line of the back garden which faces the A22 – 26 Hammerwood Road – Permission: Granted.

8. Correspondence: None

9. Any items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda: None

Meeting Closed at: 8.03pm

Chairman..... Dated: