

Planning Committee (South)
20 MARCH 2018

Present: Councillors: Brian O'Connell (Chairman), Paul Clarke (Vice-Chairman), John Blackall, Jonathan Chowen, Philip Circus, David Coldwell, Ray Dawe, Brian Donnelly, David Jenkins, Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Tim Lloyd, Paul Marshall, Mike Morgan, Kate Rowbottom, Ben Staines and Claire Vickers

Apologies: Councillors: Gordon Lindsay, Jim Sanson and Michael Willett

PCS/69 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 20 February were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PCS/70 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

DC/17/2074 – Councillor Nigel Jupp declared a personal interest because knows one of the public speakers.

DC/17/2887 – it was noted that a number of Councillors present were acquainted with one of the speakers.

PCS/71 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

PCS/72 **APPEALS**

The list of appeals lodged, appeals in progress and appeal decisions, as circulated, was noted.

PCS/73 **DC/17/2074 - LAND ADJOINING THE ORCHARD, COWFOLD ROAD, WEST GRINSTEAD**

The Head of Development reported that this application sought permission for the change of use of woodland to a holiday lodge caravan park with 23 caravan pitches on concrete bases arranged centrally surrounded by managed woodland. The caravans would include grey, green or brown timber effect panels and be intended for holiday use only. The removal of some low or medium quality trees was proposed, though trees along the boundaries would be retained and replacement planting was included in landscaping proposals.

The proposed access was from the A272 Cowfold Road, through the Orchard Restaurant carpark. Each caravan would have two car parking spaces, with four additional visitor parking spaces near the site entrance.

The application site was located in the countryside on the northern side of the A272 Cowfold Road and west of the Downs Link footpath. It was close to the small hamlet of West Grinstead. The Orchard Restaurant lay to the southeast. The site was overgrown with trees and shrubs and included some dilapidated outbuildings.

Details of relevant government and council policies and relevant planning history, as contained within the report, were noted by the Committee. The responses from statutory internal and external consultees, in particular that of the Ecology Consultant who objected to the proposal, were considered by the Committee.

Since publication of the report the applicant had agreed with West Sussex County Council to contribute £4,000 towards resurfacing improvements and developing facilities at the former West Grinstead Station along the South Downs Link. This would be secured through a legal agreement.

The Parish Council objected to the application. Twenty-one letters of objection had been received, including one since publication of the report which raised concerns regarding foul and surface water drainage serving the development. Three members of the public spoke in objection to the application. A representative of the Parish Council also spoke in objection. The applicant's agent addressed the Committee in support of the proposal.

Members considered the officer's planning assessment which indicated that the key issues for consideration in determining the proposal were: the principle of development and the legal definition of caravan and caravan site; landscape and visual effects; trees; highway impacts and parking; ecology; and impacts on nearby and future residents. It was noted that the legal agreement would restrict the caravans to holiday accommodation use only.

Members discussed ecological impacts that the loss of woodland would have, in particular on protected species supported by the site (dormice and great crested newts), and whether the proposed mitigation measures were adequate. Members were also concerned whether the restrictions limiting use of the units to holiday purposes only would be effective.

Members weighed any potential benefits to tourism and the local economy against the harm to the woodland habitat and protected species and after careful consideration concluded that the proposal was unacceptable.

RESOLVED

That planning application DC/17/2074 be refused for the following reasons:

- 01 The proposal would result in a detrimental impact on the biodiversity of the site through loss of habitat, significantly affecting protected species such as dormice and great crested newts. This harm would not be outweighed by the economic benefits of the proposal. The development is therefore contrary to Policy 31 of the HPDF (2015).
- 02 The scheme is considered unsustainable and unsuitable development in the countryside resulting in a significant loss of woodland. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area and is an inappropriate departure from the Local Plan, contrary to the objectives to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 & 26 of the HDPF (2015).

PCS/74 **DC/17/2887 - FIRSIDE, LOWER FAIRCOX, HENFIELD**

The Head of Development reported that this application sought permission for the demolition of a bungalow and erection of four three-storey residential units in the form of two semi-detached buildings. The design included gable ends, pitched roof, brick and timber cladding. Amenity space and two parking spaces were proposed for each unit, with one additional parking space to the front.

The application site was located within the built-up area of Henfield, set back from Lower Faircox via an access driveway. The site was well screened by mature trees and hedging and was surrounded by rear gardens of neighbouring properties, which varied in size and appearance.

Details of relevant government and council policies as contained within the report, were noted by the Committee. Relevant planning history was noted, in particular application DC/17/0411 which was refused by the Committee in April 2017 (Minute No. PCS/118 (25.04.17) refers) and dismissed on appeal.

The responses from statutory consultees, as contained within the report, were considered by the Committee.

The Parish Council objected to the application. Twenty letters of objection, from 16 households, had been received. Three members of the public spoke in objection to the application and a representative of the Parish Council also spoke in objection to the proposal. The applicant's chartered surveyor addressed the Committee in support of the proposal.

Members considered the officer's planning assessment which indicated that the key issues for consideration in determining the proposal were: the principle of

development and the reasons for the DC/17/0411 appeal decision; the character of the dwellings and visual amenities of the street scene; the amenity of adjacent neighbours; and parking and traffic.

Members considered the design and scale of the dwellings in relation to that of the dismissed scheme. Members acknowledged that in the light of the appeal decision the application could not be refused on grounds of over development or loss of amenity. Members considered that the trees which screened the site should be protected and agreed that the required landscaping plan be agreed in consultation with Local Members.

RESOLVED

That planning application DC/17/2887 be determined by the Head of Development with a view to approval, subject to approval of a suitable landscaping and boundary treatment plan and a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained on the site, in consultation with Local Members.

PCS/75 **DC/17/2625 - LLOYDS BANK TSB LTD, 37 HIGH STREET, STEYNING**

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

PCS/76 **DC/17/2626 - LLOYDS BANK TSB LTD, 37 HIGH STREET, STEYNING**

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

PCS/77 **DC/17/2620 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 37 HIGH STREET, STEYNING**

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

PCS/78 **DC/17/2621 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 37 HIGH STREET, STEYNING**

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm having commenced at 2.30 pm

CHAIRMAN