

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee (South)

Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 20 September 2023 in the Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Doddington Road, Wellingborough

Present:-

Members

Councillor Jennie Bone (Chair)	Councillor Lee Wilkes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Scott Brown	Councillor Barbara Jenney
Councillor Melanie Coleman	Councillor Andy Mercer
Councillor Kirk Harrison	Councillor Gill Mercer
Councillor Philip Irwin	Councillor Steven North
Councillor Bert Jackson	Councillor Malcolm Ward

Officers

Jasbir Sandhu (Interim Planning Management and Enforcement Lead Manager)
 Pete Baish (Principal Development Management Officer)
 John Wilbraham (Development Management Officer)
 Nigel Bell (Legal Adviser)
 Louise Tyers (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
 Emma Robinson (Democratic Services Support Officer)

21 Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Lora Lawman.

22 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

Councillors	Application	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Jennie Bone and Bert Jackson	NE/23/00088/FUL – Land South East of The Ferrers School	Are members of Higham Ferrers Town Council.		Yes

The following informal site visits were declared:

- 36-40 High Street, Irthlingborough (NE/23/00350/FUL) – Councillors Jennie Bone, Kirk Harrison, Bert Jackson, Andy Mercer and Gill Mercer. Councillor Kirk Harrison also declared that he had exchanged a number of emails about the application with local residents.
- Land South East of The Ferrers School, A6 Higham Ferrers Bypass, Higham Ferrers (NE/23/00088/FUL) – Councillor Jennie Bone.

23 Minutes of the meeting of the Area Planning Committee Thrapston held on 16 August 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee (South) held on 16 August 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

24 Planning Application NE/23/00350/FUL – 36-40 High Street , Irthlingborough

The Committee considered an application to alter an existing building, adding a roof extension that would create a second floor, to create a total of four residential units (one bed). The ground floor would remain in retail use and would not involve a change of use. The first floor is to be converted under prior approved grant NE/22/01552/PDU.

The Principal Development Management Officer presented the report which detailed the proposal, description of the site, the planning history, relevant planning policies, outcome of consultations and an assessment of the proposal, providing full and comprehensive details.

It was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out in the Committee report.

Requests to address the meeting had been received from Revd. John Westwood, an objector; Councillor Dorothy Maxwell, a Ward Member and Christian Akrill, the agent and the Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

Revd. Westwood addressed the Committee and stated that he spoke on behalf of the residents of Warrens Close. The residents had a number of objections to the application including that the proposed additional flats would lead to an overdevelopment of the site, access to the flats would be from Warrens Close, the five parking spaces had already been allocated to the earlier application so there were no parking spaces allocated to this development and there would be unacceptable congestion in Warrens Close. Existing residents would not be able to access the Close and emergency and utility vehicles would find it difficult to access. Garden waste had recently not been able to be collected due to access. Parked cars also caused an issue. There would be an unacceptable increase in traffic movements in the conservation area.

Councillor Maxwell addressed the Committee and stated that the application did not meet the agreed Highways standards for parking. Where would the parking which was lost be displaced to? Turning facilities could not be achieved so how would emergency vehicles access the Close. There was no area for children to play. The developer had suggested parking in the nearby Council car park but what about the needs of local shoppers. The application would severely affect the residents of Warrens Close and should be refused.

Christian Akrill addressed the Committee and stated that the additional level had been designed in a traditional style and matched other approved residential developments. It was accepted that the application did not meet the parking

standards, which required 12 spaces, with only five spaces. It was a town centre location and the parking survey found that 36% of spaces on-street were free and 77% in car parks were free. No highway safety concerns had been raised by Highways, there would be no unacceptable traffic impacts and no waste issues had been raised. Commercial traffic had been removed and the Heron Foods store would service their premises from the front. It was in the Heron Foods lease that they could not park at the rear of the development. The route from the car park to the site was believed to be safe. There was a wide choice of parking available. The development would appeal to those people who did not have a car.

The Chair invited the Committee to determine the application.

During debate on the application, the following points were made:

- (i) Parking was the key issue. The proposed parking was not sufficient and did not meet the approved parking standards. It was noted that the Police had stated that parking should be provided in accordance with the approved parking standards, and if not, problems should be anticipated.
- (ii) From the proposed back entrance to the flats, it would be a walk of a considerable distance to the car park. It was not reasonable to expect residents to park their car 500m away. 24-hour parking was also not allowed in the Council's car park.
- (iii) In response, officers advised that they shared the concerns about parking, however, it was a town centre development and a parking survey had been submitted. There was a seven spaces shortfall and in an appeal opposite, where there was also a seven spaces shortfall, the Planning Inspector had not been concerned. The shortfall could be accommodated in the surrounding area.
- (iv) In response to comments that the parking survey was flawed, officers advised that the method of parking survey used was widely accepted. The survey should be undertaken at a time of day when the highest number of residents were at home, e.g. late at night, which had been done in this case. The submitted survey had been accepted by the Highways Authority and would likely be accepted by a Planning Inspector.
- (v) There were also concerns at the road in Warren Close where cars were often parked obstructing the highway.
- (vi) Whilst acknowledging that the building would be better, was the site now being overdeveloped? There were fundamental differences to the application which was allowed on appeal opposite, especially as its access was onto the High Street.

It was proposed by Councillor Philip Irwin and seconded by Councillor Scott Brown that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out in the report.

On being put to the vote, there were 2 votes for the motion and 9 votes against, therefore the motion for approval was lost.

It was then proposed by Councillor Gill Mercer and seconded by Councillor Kirk Harrison that planning permission be refused.

On being put to the vote, there were 9 votes for the motion and 2 against, therefore the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:-

That planning permission be refused, contrary to officer recommendation, due to the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment of a site in the conservation area.
- Intensification on Warrens Close.
- Failure to comply with NNC adopted parking standards.

The final wording of the refusal reasons is delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with officers.

25 Planning Application NE/23/00088/REM – Land South East of The Ferrers School A6 Higham Ferrers Bypass Higham Ferrers

The Committee considered an application for reserved matters: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale pursuant to 18/01648/OUT - Outline Planning Application on land to the west of the A6, Higham Ferrers, with means of vehicular access from the A6 roundabout known as the John Clarke Way Roundabout for consideration, all other matters (layout, appearance, scale and landscaping) reserved for subsequent approval, for the development of up to 300 no. new dwellings (Class C3), of which 30% will be affordable, landscaping, earthworks to facilitate surface water drainage and all other ancillary infrastructure and enabling works

The Development Management Officer presented the report which detailed the proposal, description of the site, the planning history, relevant planning policies, outcome of consultations and an assessment of the proposal, providing full and comprehensive details.

It was recommended that reserved matters permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out in the committee report.

Requests to address the meeting had been received from Kathryn Ventham, the agent and the Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

Ms Ventham addressed the Committee and stated that the site was allocated within the approved Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan and outline approval had been granted. There would be a good housing mix, including market affordable housing. There would also be a range of parking provision on the site. There would be a number of connections to the surrounding area, including to the school. There would be a range of benefits from the scheme including open space.

The Chair invited the Committee to determine the application.

During debate on the application, the following points were made:

- (i) At the consideration of the outline application, there had been concern that there would only be one entrance and exit to the site but members were now happy that there would now be a second entrance. Issues at the outline stage now appeared to be resolved.
- (ii) Condition 4 made reference to the access into the school grounds but who would maintain this access. In response, the officer advised that it would be a matter for the school and landowner, but maintenance of the access could be included within the condition.

It was proposed by Councillor Steven North and seconded by Councillor Andy Mercer that reserved matters permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in the report, Committee Update report and the modification of Condition 4 to include maintenance of the access to the school.

On being put to the vote, the motion for approval was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:-

That reserved matters permission be granted, subject to the conditions in the report, the Committee Update report and the modification of Condition 4.

26 Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked members, officers and the public for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Chair

Date