

**DORSET COUNCIL - EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chairman), Shane Bartlett (Vice-Chairman), Alex Brenton, Robin Cook, Mike Dyer, Barry Goringe, Brian Heatley, David Morgan, David Tooke and John Worth

**Apologies:** Cllrs Julie Robinson and Bill Trite

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):** Kim Cowell, Lara Altree, Elizabeth Adams, Katie Lomax, Colin Graham and David Northover

**147. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julie Robinson and Bill Trite.

**148. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

**149. Public Participation**

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

**150. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 was confirmed and would be signed as soon as was practicable.

**151. Planning Applications**

Members considered written reports submitted on planning applications as set out below.

**152. Application No: 6/2020/0334 - 73 West Street, Bere Regis**

The Committee considered an application - 6/2020/0334 – which proposed to demolish a workshop, sever a plot and erect a dwelling at 73 West Street, Bere Regis.

In severing the plot of 73 West Street, a new plot would be created on the northern half of the site that would front, and be accessed by, Tower Hill to the north of, and running parallel with, West Street. The development would remove the existing workshop outbuilding and replace it with a part ground floor and part underground (lower ground) one bedroom dwelling. At ground floor level, the new dwelling would be a basic structure of similar size, design and external appearance to the existing outbuilding.

The planning history of the site was drawn to the Committee's attention in that a previous planning application - 6/2020/0103 - was refused permission in May 2020 on the basis that it would appear cramped in its appearance on a narrow and constrained plot, with limited private amenity space and loss of rear access to 73 West Street, to the detriment of the prevailing rural lane character of the area and the amenity of future occupiers of the proposed property and the parent property of 73 West Street. The size, height and mass of the dwelling was considered to have resulted in significant dominance and enclosure to the street scene and the dwelling did not integrate well in relation to neighbouring properties and the character of Bere Regis.

However, this new application had largely addressed those considerations and, in particular, issues about highway management and parking needs, drainage and ground stability had all been assessed and met, or would meet, the necessary building controls and regulations and relevant planning requirements, as appropriate.

With the aid of a visual presentation, officers provided context of what the main proposals, principles and planning issues of the development were; how these were to be progressed; how the construction would be undertaken and by what means and the phasing of how this would be done; how the development would contribute towards housing need in the village; and what this entailed. The presentation focused on not only what the development entailed and its detailed design and construction, but what effect it would have on residential amenity and the character the area. There was provision in the NPPF for a windfall side such as this to be developed in accordance with the local plans and policies which governed such.

Plans and photographs provided an illustration of the location, orientation, dimensions – form, bulk, size and mass - and appearance of the development and how , in particular, it would be constructed and by what innovative means this would be done, along with its ground floor plans; how it would look; proposed street scenes; the materials to be used; access, parking and highway considerations; the characteristics and topography of the site and its setting within that part of Bere Regis, it's Conservation Area and the wider landscape – particularly within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Officers showed the development's relationship with other adjacent residential development and how this innovative design made best use of the available land and could contribute towards the appearance of the area. Given that the building was to be of basic design, with little external intrusion, and was to be sited where a building already sat, it was considered to provide no adverse

effect on the characteristics of the established local environment. The development's relationship with the highway network and to neighbouring properties were drawn to Committee's attention. Views into the site and around it were shown, which provided a satisfactory understanding of all that was necessary.

In summary, officers planning assessment adjudged that the overall design of the development was considered to be largely acceptable and there were no material considerations which would warrant refusal, with all, significant, planning and building control matters having been appropriately, or adequately, addressed.

The proposed development accorded with local and national planning policy and was considered to be acceptable in principle and also acceptable in terms of impacts on the Bere Regis Conservation Area. The impact on neighbouring amenity, highway safety and drainage area were also considered to be acceptable. Ground stability had been considered and an appropriate pre-commencement condition recommended, with the means of achieving the development being well-established and a successful engineering solution used elsewhere in such confined areas - the proposed dwelling being seen to make a positive contribution to the local housing supply. All of this formed the basis of the officer's recommendation in seeking approval of the application.

Formal consultation had seen an objection from Bere Regis Parish Council on the basis of increased traffic congestion, access arrangements, overdevelopment of back land and concerns of overlooking.

The Committee were notified of a written submission received and officers read this direct to the Committee – it being appended to these minutes. Having heard what was said, officers responded to some of the pertinent issues raised, being confident that each one could be addressed by the provisions of the application.

The opportunity was given for Members to ask questions of the presentation and what they had heard, in seeking clarification of aspects so as to have a better understanding in coming to a decision.

Particular issues were raised about the construction methods to be used; what effect ground stability would/could have on the integrity of neighbouring property; drainage issues; the habitability of the property – particularly how the subterranean element was an attractive proposition for any prospective residents; effect on neighbouring amenity and their parking arrangements – including those for what could happen in the future to the curtilage; the disruption caused in such a confined site; drainage and the effect on the Conservation Area and how this development accorded with the Neighbourhood Plan and the Purbeck Local Plan - particularly the relationship between this individual development and land identified for development in those plans.

Having heard what was said, officers responded to some of the pertinent issues raised, being confident that each one could be addressed by

the provisions of the application.

Officers confirmed that the impacts on the amenity of future occupiers of the proposed dwelling in terms of the size of the dwelling and the levels of daylight available to serve the 'subterranean' element of the property and its courtyard had all been assessed to be acceptable in terms of habitability.

There was every reason to believe that the innovative engineering means proposed in constructing the development could be satisfactorily achieved. Any piling necessary would be achieved by the least obtrusive and disruptive methods available and was not considered to give rise to concern over ground stability. Similarly, drainage issues were manageable as were the parking, access and construction arrangements being proposed. It was confirmed that there was no provision for any future sale of the curtilage.

The proposed development, by virtue of its limited above ground level structure, was considered to integrate within the informal character of the Tower Hill and its rural lane townscape quality. Whilst the Parish Council and neighbours had raised objections on the basis of overdevelopment of the plot, officers consider that there was sufficient space to do this and it was considered unreasonable to refuse the proposal on that basis, as the innovative design would achieve a development that would not appear out of keeping with the existing character and appearance of the area.

Moreover, whilst there was the formal allocation for development within the local plans elsewhere in the village, this did not preclude other individual, sustainable development as proposed – with each being considered on their merit - provided planning considerations could be satisfactorily met.

Whilst some members - the Vice-Chairman included - maintained their concern over the habitability of the development and the well-being of its occupants – particularly as significant adjustments had to be made to satisfy this; the land constraints and the excavation methods necessary and that, in their opinion, this did not add up to good quality or standard of housing, others were more agreeable to what was being proposed being of the view that the development was making the best use of available land and being achieved in an acceptably innovative and ingenious way. Nevertheless, the Vice-Chairman proposed refusal of the application on grounds that it was a significantly contrived application to be able to achieve all that was necessary, and which could, subsequently, adversely affect the health and well-being of any future residents. However, this proposal was not seconded.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application, having understood what was being proposed and the reasoning for this; having taken into account the officer's report and presentation, the written representations; and what they had heard at the meeting, and having received satisfactory answers to questions raised, the Committee were satisfied in its understanding of what the proposal entailed and the reasoning for this and, on that basis - and being proposed by Councillor Mike Dyer and seconded by Councillor John Worth - on being put to the vote, the Committee agreed - by 7:2 - that the application should be approved, subject to the conditions set out

in the paragraph 18 of the report.

### **Resolved**

That planning permission be granted for application 6/2020/0334, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 18 to the report.

### **Reasons for decision**

- Para 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that permission should be granted for sustainable development unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise.
- The location was considered to be sustainable and the proposal was acceptable in its design, general visual impact and impact on the Bere Regis Conservation Area.
- There was not considered to be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity.
- There were no objections on highway safety, traffic or parking grounds.
- There were no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

**153. Application No: 3/19/0862/FUL - Change/ Added of use of family centre into residential care facility and office space at Hayeswood County First School, Colehill**

The Committee considered application 3/19/0862/FUL for a change of and an added of use of a family centre (D1) into a residential care facility and office space (mixed C3/D1) at Hayeswood County First School, Colehill to provide permanent care for looked after children. The application was being considered by the Committee as it was a Dorset Council application, being obliged to do so rather than it being determined under delegated authority.

With the aid of a visual presentation, officers provided context of what the main proposals, principles and planning issues of the development were; how these were to be progressed; how the proposal would meet the need of providing such a facility for the accommodation of children in residential care; and what this entailed.

Plans and photographs provided an illustration of the location and appearance of the development – with its external appearance would be remaining the same – but with interior modification to meet the needs of that facility; access, parking and highway considerations; its relationship with local amenity and neighbouring residencies and its setting within Colehill and the wider

landscape. The arrangements for the habitation of the facility and how the office area would be managed was described.

In summary, officers planning assessment adjudged that the merits of the application were that it was an acceptable use within an urban area; would not harm the amenity of occupants of adjacent dwellings or school nor have an adverse impact on road safety; access and on-site parking provision was acceptable and there were no other material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application and this formed the basis of the officer's recommendation in seeking approval of the application.

Formal consultation had seen Colehill Parish Council support the application and no objections had been received to it.

The opportunity was given for members to ask questions of the presentation and what they had heard, in seeking clarification of aspects so as to have a better understanding in coming to a decision. Officers addressed what questions were raised, providing what they considered to be satisfactory answers.

The Committee wholly endorsed the principle of the proposal and what it was designed to achieve - in providing a much needed facility and accommodation for those children who were in need of that service.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application, having understood what was being proposed and the reasoning for this; having taken into account the officer's report and presentation, what they had heard at the meeting, and having received satisfactory answers to questions raised, the Committee were satisfied in their understanding of what the proposal entailed and the reasoning for this and, on that basis - in being proposed by Councillor Robin Cook and seconded by Councillor David Tooke - on being put to the vote, the Committee agreed unanimously that the application should be approved, subject to the conditions set out in the paragraph of the report relating to this.

### **Resolved**

That planning permission for application 3/19/0862/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions set out in the paragraph of the officer's report relating to this.

### **Reasons for Decision**

- The principle of this use is acceptable within an urban area.
- The proposal is not considered to harm the amenity of occupants of adjacent dwellings or school.
- The proposal would not have an adverse impact on road safety
- Access and on-site parking provision was acceptable
- There were no other material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

154. **Application No: 3/19/2378/FUL - Change of Use and Conversion of Four Existing Agricultural Buildings to form 9 dwelling houses, works and alterations to other outbuildings and associated landscaping and demolition of redundant buildings at Grange Farm, Colehill, Wimborne**

The Committee were informed that application 3/19/2378/FUL for the change of use and conversion of four existing agricultural buildings to form 9 dwelling houses, works and alterations to other outbuildings and associated landscaping and demolition of redundant buildings at Grange Farm, Grange, Colehill, Wimborne was being recommended by officers to be deferred on the grounds that third party representations received since the Chairman's briefing – on Monday 30 November - had presented information about the alignment of the access track which could have implications for the lawfulness of the access on which the proposal relies. This information required further investigation so that the officer report might be amended to fully inform Members and give the opportunity for any relevant representations to be made.

In understanding and acknowledging the reason given, the Chairman – on behalf of the Committee - agreed that application 3/19/2378/FUL should be deferred, to be considered at the earliest opportunity.

155. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items of business for consideration at the meeting.

156. **Public Participation - Submission**

APPLICATION NUMBER 6/2020/0334 73 WEST STREET, BERE REGIS – DEMOLISH WORKSHOP. SEVER PLOT AND ERECT DWELLING

Jackie Ahern

We would like to OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

1) It is not included in the Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan. The Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan was extensively consulted on in 2019 and a village referendum was held. The Plan was approved and we believe that in June 2019 Dorset County Council released a Press release congratulating Bere Regis on its Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan allows for 105 new houses to be built in Bere Regis, the location for these being set out in the Plan. The Neighbourhood plan allows for 2/3 houses to be built a little bit further up Tower Hill, so if they go ahead, and this application is granted, there could be a significant increase in traffic in this conservation area.

2) The revised plans for 73 West Street, now put the bulk of the proposed development underground, but there is no reference to any structural/engineering survey to indicate that this is safe. Is there any chance of causing subsidence to adjacent properties and gardens? Is there a risk to local water supplies and drainage? Is there a risk of land slippage? We do however note that any grant of planning permission will be subject to ground surveys etc.

3) The application makes no reference to the impact on our property, Woodbury Cottage, 74 West Street, Bere Regis. Woodbury Cottage has access to Tower Hill via the back of the property, where it has two off road parking spaces, one of them directly adjacent to the proposed new dwelling. Meadow View Barn has one off road parking space. It is difficult to imagine how the proposed dwelling can be constructed without intrusion onto land belonging to Woodbury Cottage. Note, one of our off road parking spaces is directly adjacent to the existing black workshop.

4) The proposed new dwelling has one double bedroom and an office/study (second bedroom?) However, it only allows for one parking space. It is not unreasonable to assume that any tenants/owners will have more than one vehicle. Where will they park? Bere Regis already has a known traffic and parking problem. Vehicles already park on the corner of Tower Hill and Butt Lane, causing larger vehicles to mount the curb and damage the bank.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.40 am

**Chairman**

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