

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Salman Akbar (Chair), Councillor Gemma Monaco (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Brandon Clayton, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir, Gareth Prosser and Jennifer Wheeler

Also Present:

Officers:

Helena Plant, Emily Farmer, Amar Hussain, Clare Flanagan, Pauline Ross and Joanne Gresham

Democratic Services Officer:

Sarah Sellers

89. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair asked that it be noted that Members sitting on the Committee knew the fourth speaker, Councillor Craig Warhurst, who was exercising his right to speak as ward member for Astwood Bank and Feckenham ward.

91. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2020

RESOLVED that

The Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 4th March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

92. UPDATE REPORTS

There was no Update Report.

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Chair

**93. APPLICATION 20\00307\CUPRIO MEADOW FARM 33
DROITWICH ROAD FECKENHAM WORCESTERSHIRE B96 6RU
- MR AND MRS COLE**

Change of use of building from agriculture to dwelling house

Officers presented the report and outlined the application for an existing storage building located at Meadow Farm to be converted to a 2 bedroomed residential dwelling. The application fell under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ("the Order"). This was legislation that was introduced in 2015 to establish a process under which agricultural buildings could, subject to the relevant conditions, be converted into residential use.

It was noted that the procedure was different to that of a standard planning application with a lighter touch approach. Officers in considering the application had formed the view that the proposal complied with the criteria in paragraph Q.1 of the Order. That being the case it was for the Committee to assess the application under the six criteria in paragraph Q.2 (a) to (f) of the Order, namely transport and highways impact, noise impact, contamination risks, flooding risks, whether the location would be otherwise impractical or undesirable, and the design and external appearance of the building.

The application had been assessed on the basis that the access would be provided via a private road located to the west of the site. Officers were aware this was the subject of a dispute with another land owner but Members were advised that this was a private matter outside of the prior approval application. The alternative access directly from Droitwich Road had not been assessed and for that reason officers had included a condition on page 17 of the agenda (Condition 8) which would require that access to be blocked.

There had been no objections to the application from any of the statutory consultees. With regard to design and external appearance, the only external alteration would consist of the creation of six new openings to provide windows and an additional doorway.

Officers had assessed the application to be acceptable with regard to the six criteria in paragraph Q.2 and were recommending that prior approval be granted.

At the invitation of the Chair the following speakers addressed the committee under the Council's Public Speaking Rules:-

- Mr Andrew Fisher – local resident
- Dr Hugo Hammersley – local resident
- Councillor Alan Smith – Chair of Feckenham Parish Council
- Redditch Councillor Craig Warhurst - Astwood Bank and Feckenham ward
- Mr Stephen Holloway - Agent for the Applicants

The first four speakers who were opposed to the application raised various issues including that under paragraph Q.1(i) the proposal was a rebuild not a conversion, that under paragraph Q.2(e) the location of the building would make it impractical as there was no lawful access, and that under paragraph Q.2(f) the design and external appearance of the building would not satisfy the requirements of the planning authority. In addition reference was made to the lack of a structural survey and concerns that the existing foundations would not be suitable to support the conversion into habitable accommodation.

Officers responded to questions from Members relating to the issues raised in public speaking and in doing so clarified a number of points including that:-

- The definition of agriculture in the Town and Country Planning Act included horticulture, and as such an existing nursery would have the ability to seek prior approval under Class Q.
- That the applicants were not seeking to create foundations as part of the conversion works; that did not form part of the application and the information supplied to officers was that the structure as it currently existed was capable of conversion without the need to add foundations.
- There had been many other examples of agricultural buildings of various different types in the Borough and surrounding area being converted to dwellings under Class Q.
- The metal cladding on the exterior of the building would be retained under the conversion and the converted building could not exceed in area the size of the footprint of the existing building.
- The building was very modern in style and as such the proposed changes would not impact greatly on the existing character.

During the debate the recommendation to grant prior approval as set out on page 16 of the agenda was proposed and seconded. Following further discussion regarding design issues an alternative motion was proposed and seconded that prior approval be refused on the grounds of unacceptable design and external appearance.

Upon being put to the vote, the alternative motion was lost.

Following further discussion, the first recommendation that prior approval be granted was put to the vote.

RESOLVED that

Having regard to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and to all other material considerations, Prior Approval be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out on pages 16 to 18 of the agenda.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.25 pm