

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 13th
September, 2023

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Peter Fleming (Chair), Councillor Imran Altaf (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juma Begum, Andrew Fry, Bill Hartnett, Chris Holz, Sid Khan, Anthony Lovell and Timothy Pearman

Officers:

Helena Plant, Max Howarth (Of Anthony Collins Solicitors), Steve Edden, Paul Lester, Sarah Hazlewood and Sukvinder Agimal (of Worcester County Council Highways)

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

31. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committees held on 12th July 2023 and 26th July 2023 were presented to Members.

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the Planning Committees held on 12th July 2023 and 26th July 2023 were approved as true and accurate records and signed by the Chair.

34. UPDATE REPORTS

The Chair drew Members attention to the update report which was circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Members indicated that they had sufficient time to read the report and were happy to proceed with the meeting.

Chair

**35. 22/01316/OUT - LAND REAR OF SAMBOURNE LANE,
ASTWOOD BANK, WORCESTERSHIRE**

This application was being reported to the Planning Committee as eleven or more representations in objection to the application had been received, the application was subject to a planning obligation and the recommendation was for approval.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 5 to 15 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack.

The application was for the Land rear of Sambourne Lane, Astwood Bank, B96 6EP and sought outline approval with the matter of appearance reserved for 9 self-build / custom build detached dwellings with access.

The application was considered at Planning Committee on 26th July 2023, where the application was deferred to allow Members to visit the site. The site visit, accompanied by the Case Officer took place on Friday 8th September 2023.

Officers confirmed to Members that the application was for 9 self-build dwellings and that matters of appearance had not been considered as they would be covered under separate planning applications for the individual plots. Officers further clarified that the plot boundaries detailed on page 9 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack would be the maximum footprint of the buildings and any dwellings needed to be situated entirely within those build zones.

Officers informed Members that the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placed an obligation on Councils to supply plots for self-build units and that there was a 10-plot shortfall within Redditch Borough Council, therefore, significant weight should be afforded to this matter.

The additional and current tree screening was identified by Officers on page 9 of the Site Plans and Presentation pack, indicated in a Light and dark green colour respectively. Officers further detailed to Members that the development was considered well screened and would not be very visible from the main highways.

At the invitation of the Chair, the following speakers addressed the Committee under the Council's Public Speaking Rules

- Karen Baggott (3 Minutes) - Local Resident (in objection)
- Fraser Baggott (3 Minutes) - Local Resident (in objection)
- Simon Walker (3 Minutes) - Local Resident (in objection)

- Brandon Clayton (3 Minutes) - Ward Councillor (in objection)
- John Jowitt (9 minutes) – Agent for the applicant (in support)

Officers clarified the following points after questions from Members.

- That there were no Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) on any of the trees on the site, therefore, any of the Landowners could remove the trees on their property at any time.
- That in response to representations claiming the presence of great crested newts. Officers informed Members that there was no evidence found by an eDNA report to support the claim. Should any activity be identified, work would be halted whilst the applicant applied for a Natural England licence and whilst appropriate measures were put in place.
- There was no special designation on the site in the Local Plan. The site was formed from the rear gardens of properties and is not a wildlife site.
- The site would have an independent septic tank and would not be connected to the mains system. Any specifics as to the further arrangements would be covered under building regulations and was not a consideration for the Committee.

Members expressed the opinion that it was a difficult application, but that Officers had adequately answered the objections raised by the residents and any further questions Members had with regard to Material Planning Considerations, therefore, on being put to a vote, it was.

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to GRANT outline planning permission subject to: -

- a) The satisfactory completion of a Section 106 planning obligation ensuring that the dwellings be provided as custom / self-build only.**
- b) Conditions and Informatives as detailed on pages 33 to 39 of the Public Reports pack.**

36. 22/00976/FUL - LOWANS HILL FARM, BROCKHILL LANE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE, B97 6QX

The application was being reported to the Planning Committee as a Section 106 Agreement was required. As such the application fell outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 17 to 42 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack.

The application was for Lowans Hill Farm, Brockhill Lane, Redditch, B97 6QX and sought the demolition of existing buildings and construction of 17 dwellings, with new access, public open space, landscaping and planting, associated infrastructure and enabling works.

Officers clarified that the application was a Full application and that it was unrelated to any developments in the local area.

The topography of the site was identified as being substantially higher than the surrounding area, this presented a technical difficulty for the development, specifically with regard to access.

The buildings had stood derelict for a number of years, applications were sought and approved in 2011 and 2015 to convert the buildings into residential units, however, the applications were not implemented and had since expired.

Officers identified the current condition of the buildings to Members using the images on pages 24-27 of the Main Reports pack. A structural survey had been carried out and found the buildings to be in a dangerous and unsafe condition, it was also identified that to convert the buildings to residential units it would likely take a significant investment and would not be economically viable.

The proposed layout of the site was presented to Members, detailed on page 31 of the Public Reports pack. 17 dwellings would be constructed around a central courtyard with a mix of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom dwellings in detached and semi-detached design. There would also be a "dog leg" turn to address the difference in levels experienced on the site.

The current buildings were identified as non-designated heritage assets, and their removal required a balanced judgement by Officers. Due to the state of disrepair of the derelict site and other matters listed in the report, Officers deemed that their loss was outweighed by the development of this strategic site and the wider economic benefits to the area.

Officers detailed to Members that a viability assessment had been submitted by the applicant, this assessment had been examined by experts at the Council and it was accepted that, due to development difficulties, a number of concessions had been accepted, these concessions included no affordable housing on site and reduced Section 106 contributions.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Stuart Wells, Agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Officers clarified the following points after questions from Members.

- That the developers profit margin was 17.5% which was less than the maximum allowed margin of 20%.
- That of the 64K residual profit (which it was identified was after developers' profit). 53.5K would go towards offsite affordable housing provision, to mitigate the loss of 30% affordable housing on site.
- Due to the viability assessment, there was no Section 106 contribution for education which had initially requested £251k.
- Both the 2011 and 2015 applications had lapsed. Officers clarified to Members that there was no obligation for developers to act upon granted planning permission. Officers further clarified that the previous owners sold the site to the current developers who had submitted the application before Members.
- Surveys had been undertaken by licenced ecologists and no evidence of the presence of protected species was found (which included bats). Additional surveys would be conducted by the applicant during the demolition and should evidence be found; an appropriate licence would be sought. An Informative was agreed by Officers to detail this.

Members then debated the application.

Members stated that it was a shame to lose Lowans Hill Farm as it had been part of the landscape, however, due to the current state of disrepair and in the context of the site, the loss of the non-designated heritage asset alone was not deemed as a sufficient reason for refusal. Members were also pleased with the development style which sought to distinguish itself from other local developments and was in a style which was in the style of a farmstead.

Members also expressed a serious concern as to the viability assessment and the Section 106 contributions and Affordable housing provision that had not been sought due to this. Members stated that the housing density, style and size had contributed to the lack of profitability of the site which could potentially have been achieved with a different design. Officers assured Members that the Council's experts had examined the applicant's viability assessment and found it to be sound. It was further identified that some of the major development costs were attributed to the topography of the

land, specifically the height difference and road access, these costs would be recurring factors in any development on the site.

On being put to a vote, it was

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration and Leisure Services to GRANT planning permission subject to:

- a) **The satisfactory completion of a Section 106 planning obligation ensuring that contributions (up to the value of £64,679) were sought for the following matters:
 - i. **Waste and Recycling**
 - ii. **Redditch TC Contribution**
 - iii. **Offsite Affordable Housing Contribution**
 - iv. **LPA Monitoring fee****
- b) **Conditions as detailed on pages 58 to 63.**
- c) **An additional Informative with regard to ecological surveys as detailed in the Pre-ambule above.**
- d) **Imposition of 7 additional conditions as listed in the published updates .**

37. 23/00202/FUL - THE ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL, WOODROW DRIVE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE, B98 7UB

The application was being reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the application was for major development and as such the application fell outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 43 to 55 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack.

The application was for The Alexandra Hospital, Woodrow Drive, Redditch and sought a new two-storey extension (including plant space and vertical circulation) at rear of the existing two-storey hospital to provide 2 new surgical theatres and support accommodation.

Officers detailed that the development was to take place on the existing rear carpark, Officers further detailed that due this application and a number of other developments taking place on the Alexandra site, Condition 5 was proposed to safeguard the parking provision at the Hospital.

Officers detailed the boundary treatment that would be required to mitigate the visual impact of the development, this was to be enforced by Condition 6 detailed on page 73 of the Public Reports pack.

At the invitation of the Chair, Dr Julian Berlet, of the NHS Trust Addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Officers clarified the following points after questions from Members.

- The development was part retrospective and had already begun.
- That Condition 6 had not stated the maturity/size of the proposed screening.
- No new access points were proposed. WCC highways were satisfied and had no objection to the application.
- That the development only needed to address its own shortfalls, therefore, the 11 additional Parking spaces provided by the development were deemed adequate.

Members then debated the application.

Members expressed concern regarding the lack of details regarding the maturity of the screening, therefore, Members requested that some more detail be provided within the condition. Officers agreed to amend the Condition in that the screening would be of at least Standard level (which was a Arboricultural term denoting a medium standard of tree girth).

Members were pleased to see development/enhancements within the Alexandra Hospital and on being put to a vote, it was.

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to:

- a) Conditions as detailed on pages 72 to 73 of the Public Reports pack.**
- b) Delegated powers be given to the head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure to amend Condition 6 as detailed in the Pre-ambble above.**
- c) Imposition of 3 additional conditions as listed in the published updates.**

38. 23/00854/FUL - 157 EASEMORE ROAD, RIVERSIDE, REDDITCH, B98 8HU

The application was being reported to the Planning Committee as the applicant was Redditch Borough Council, as such the application fell outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 57 to 63 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack.

The application was for 157 Easemore Road, Redditch, B98 8HU and sought Internal layout alterations with the erection of a two-storey side extension.

Officers drew Members attention to the existing and proposed floor plans detailed on pages 60 and 61 of the Public Reports pack, the plans showed the proposed works to be undertaken on the property. Officers further detailed that there was a specific family who had been identified with an urgent need for a 5-bedroom property.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Andrew Rainbow, RBC Project Manager, Addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Members then debated the application.

Members were aware of the property which had been vacant for a number of years and were pleased to see the property coming back into the Council's housing stock.

On being put to a vote, it was.

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions outlined on page 77 of the Public Reports pack.