

Meeting of the Planning Committee
Monday 28th September 2020

TO ADVISE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE USUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS.

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The report provides the Town Council's comments and observations on the applications listed that were not placed on an agenda as their date for response falls outside the usual cycle of Plans Committee meetings.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At a meeting of Full Council on the 8th April 2013 a resolution was made on the procedure for the Town Council's comments and observations on applications for which Wealden District Council need a response that would fall outside the usual cycle of planning meetings. FC.77.04.13.

3.0 Procedure

- 3.1 The following applications were emailed to plans committee members for consideration.
Public notices were put up on the 14th September 2020

WD/2020/1244/MAJ LAND SOUTH OF COPWOOD FARM AND TO THE WEST OF THE A22 UCKFIELD BYPASS, UCKFIELD TN22 3PT

Proposed development of a solar electric forecourt®, comprising 24 core electric vehicle charging points, a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm of up to 5.5mw and energy storage. the hub building will contain a mix of ancillary dwell facilities including WCS, coffee shop, retail, seating area, meeting rooms/workspace and a display area. provision of car parking, hard and soft landscaping and access arrangements off the Copwood roundabout. Diversion of public footpath.

WD/2020/1658/F 16 PILTDOWN RISE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1UH

Double storey side extension, single storey rear extension, erection of porch. part-demolition of garage.

WD/2020/1630/F 1 THE NIGHTINGALES, UCKFIELD, TN22 5ND

Proposed single storey rear extension.

WD/2020/1631/F 2 BIRLING WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 1LP

Single storey side addition.

WD/2020/1706/F 20 MANOR END, UCKFIELD, TN22 1DN

Proposed single storey rear extension with pitched roof, garage conversion and re-roofing of garage with mono pitch roof.

WD/2020/1677/F 16 KELD DRIVE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5BS

Construction of single storey front extension.

4.0 Declaration of Interests

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Comments

- 5.1 The Chairman gave the definitive response of the committee as follows: -

WD/2020/1244/MAJ LAND SOUTH OF COPWOOD FARM AND TO THE WEST OF THE A22 UCKFIELD BYPASS, UCKFIELD TN22 3PT

Proposed development of a solar electric forecourt®, comprising 24 core electric vehicle charging points, a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm of up to 5.5mw and energy storage. the hub building will contain a mix of ancillary dwell facilities including WCS, coffee shop, retail, seating area, meeting rooms/ workspace and a display area. provision of car parking, hard and soft landscaping and access arrangements off the Copwood roundabout. Diversion of public footpath.

*It was **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** to this application.*

Uckfield Town Council supports the promotion of green energy and renewable options, but the application to build a Solar Electric Forecourt adjacent to the A22, is not supported in this location (Land south of Copwood Farm, Rocks Road).

Outside development boundary - the site is outside of Uckfield's development boundary (the A22 Uckfield by-pass being the natural boundary line) and sets a dangerous precedent for the future outward creep of development. It is also considered overdevelopment of the site and detrimental to the rural area. This matter was previously raised previously in regards to Horsted Green Park, and noted in letters by Little Horsted Parish Council which should be re-reviewed and taken into account with this application.

Application boundary - the application boundary as shown on drawings 8307-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-P003 (Proposed site layout 1:250) and 8307-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-P002 (Proposed site layout 1:750) appears to include an area of Copwood roundabout and the top section of Bell Farm Road (B2102). Copwood roundabout and Bell Farm Road along with adjoining verges would be within the ownership of East Sussex Highways not the developer. This therefore needs amending to avoid confusion.

Agricultural land - as far as we understand, this land is still being used for agricultural purposes. The area where the current footpath crosses the site went under improvement three years ago, the fields sprayed off to kill dock weeds (Rumex) and re-seeded to provide top grazing land and should be kept this way.

The feedback provided by the Woodlands Trust should have also been addressed at the point of screening and not during the application process.

Highway safety and access onto Copwood roundabout - the access link to the existing roundabout is totally unsuitable, with particular concerns regarding safety and congestion. Every evening there is already congestion at Copwood roundabout from vehicles leaving the Bellbrook business park (industrial estate). The increase of traffic from the new development at Ridgewood Place and the new business units (industrial area) north of the Ridgewood Place site will increase the volume of traffic at this point further. There will be an increased number of HGV vehicles utilising this roundabout and Little Horsted roundabout due to access restrictions into the industrial parks. As a result, the road network is likely to reach full standstill both mornings and evenings in this area.

Renewable energy – the charging points provided would not benefit the residents of Uckfield due to it being so close to their homes, only vehicles travelling along the A22, so we are unable to see the benefit of these facilities for Uckfield.

Impact of retail on town centre – by providing a retail offer out of town (on the town's boundary) it could impact the town's existing retail and hospitality trade, and risk moving custom away from the High Street and Bellbrook Business park, which is particular concern in these current times.

Conclusion - the Town Council is fully aware that PV panels are being installed across the country on agricultural land and they still enable grazing/crops to continue through this diversification, but there is no reason why both the PV panels and forecourt facilities have to be on the same site. There are already concerns regarding traffic congestion and new junctions being added to the A22 between Copwood and Little Horsted roundabouts as a result of new development in Uckfield. The proposal to build a forecourt, service hub, retail and catering facilities would be better sited near hubs already in existence along the A22 with overnight accommodation and employment space, such as the Ashdown Business Park at Maresfield which has a number of new businesses and a new Premier Inn.

WD/2020/1658/F 16 PILTDOWN RISE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1UH

Double storey side extension, single storey rear extension, erection of porch. part-demolition of garage.

It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.

Just one note for clarification:

One member had a query in regards to the application – it is in close proximity to the neighbouring property, and there is no access to the existing garage, with the front door in the front. If the door is in the front because it is going to be used as a place of work, does this mean it has to be declared in the application? The Town Councillor recalled a previous case where a similar application came back as amended or retrospective as a result.

WD/2020/1630/F 1 THE NIGHTINGALES, UCKFIELD, TN22 5ND

Proposed single storey rear extension.

*It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.*

WD/2020/1631/F 2 BIRLING WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 1LP

Single storey side addition.

*It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.*

One member sought clarification that although the build is on the boundary line, that construction works (digging of the foundations) won't affect the structure of the roadway/pavement.

WD/2020/1706/F 20 MANOR END, UCKFIELD, TN22 1DN

Proposed single storey rear extension with pitched roof, garage conversion and re-roofing of garage with mono pitch roof.

*It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.*

WD/2020/1677/F 16 KELD DRIVE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5BS

Construction of single storey front extension.

*It was **RESOLVED** to **SUPPORT** this application.*

6.0 Responses from Wealden District Council in relation to previously considered applications:

**6.1 WD/2020/0277/F PROPOSED ONE TWO BEDROOM RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE A CYCLE STORE AND 1.8M HIGH FENCE
66 TOWER RIDE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1NU**

You recently commented on the above proposal and I now write to advise you that, after considering all the representations received, the Council has decided to **REFUSE** the above application on 28 August 2020.

**WD/2020/0327/FR PART RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED CAR PARK AND ALTERATIONS
33 FRAMFIELD ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 5AH**

You recently commented on the above proposal and I now write to advise you that, after considering all the representations received, the Council has decided to **APPROVE** the above application on 28 August 2020.

**WD/2020/0418/LB CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION FROM A4 (DRINKING ESTABLISHMENT) AND C3 (RESIDENTIAL) USE TO THREE DWELLINGS AND TWO COMMERCIAL UNITS WITH A FLEXIBLE A1 (SHOP), A2 (FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES) OR B1 (BUSINESS) USE. WORKS TO INCLUDE THE DEMOLITION OF A MODERN EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS.
91A HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1RJ**

You recently commented on the above proposal and I now write to advise you that, after considering all the representations received, the Council has decided to **APPROVE** the above application on 15 September 2020.

Response to Town Council

There is no loss of accommodation, with two new units being created. The frontage onto High Street is unaffected. The main external changes to the building is at the rear, where inappropriate modern extensions and features (stair case, smoking shelter), are being removed, to better reveal the historic significance of the building. Both this development, and the proposal for the conversion of the vacant hotel accommodation (WD/2019/0196/F) included parking acceptable to ESCC Highways. This new proposal also offers parking for the one bed ground floor unit. No parking is proposed for the two flats, however this is standard for residential flats above commercial units in High Streets not to have allocated parking. External cycle storage and refuse space is set aside for the ground floor cottage. The two flats above do not have space set aside, however again this is standard for flats above shops, by their very nature it is not always possible to provide storage space for refuse bins. The situation from the two flats will not be wholly different to the existing situation with the one larger flat in situ.

*The entrance from Church Street is to be widened, and is considered capable of accommodating a further vehicle in relation to Cottage A.
In any case, parking and highway issues are planning matters only, not for discussion with this listed building application.*

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that members note the report.

Contact Officer: Linda Lewis

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