



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 14th August 2023 at 7.00pm

Cllr. K. Bedwell (Chair)
Cllr. D. Bennett

Cllr. C. Macve (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. J. Love

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr. P. Selby attending as a member of the public
Linda Lewis – Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Linda Lewis

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to any item on the agenda. Under item 5.0 Planning applications, Cllr. Love declared a personal interest in application WD/2023/1864/F Molesey Cottage, Hempstead Rise, Uckfield, TN22 1QX as she knows the applicant.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

None.

3.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. S. Mayhew and P. Ullmann

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2023

P28.08.23 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 24th July 2023, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action List

No change to the Action list was noted.

5.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2023/1771/O LAND TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF EASTBOURNE ROAD, UCKFIELD

Erection of 9 dwellings and creation of new internal access road.

The Chair stated that this site was subject to a restocking instruction further to trees being felled with no licence. An Officer of the Forestry Commission needed to seek advice from his regulations and enforcement teams in order to reply more fully, however they advised that 'normally' a restocking and enforcement notice (covered under the Forestry Act) for illegal felling, still needed to be completed even if planning was granted. Therefore, whilst planning permission could be granted in theory, it may not be possible to develop a site if there was a restocking notice requiring the site to be restocked with trees. As this was a legal matter Wealden District Council might need to seek legal advice. The Chair advised members that a Senior Planning Officer felt that if the Forestry Commission had said this, then it is likely to be a fact that the site would need to be restocked before commencing any site works.

A member asked if the trees had continued to be felled on the day and the chair advised that the notice was served on the same day and it was only after the notice was served that they stopped felling the trees. After going to court the 'restocking notice' was later served.

*Members were unclear whether the replanting of trees had to be planted in the same place as before or whether they had to merely replant the same number of trees on the site. This was of concern as this could allow them to build anyway.

*A member referred to a letter from the Forestry Commission which referenced policies NPPF180C; NPPF131 and NPPF174, although we did not know if the piece of land complied to any of those.

*An arboricultural survey and also an ecological appraisal had been undertaken, which did not relate to the site as it was originally, but as it was now.

*Members disagreed with the description given within the 'Design and Access statement' and the application form which described the land as baron, which it was certainly not before trees were felled. This should be challenged by the District Council. The woodland had possibly supported priority species, important habitats and a biodiversity. This development would not provide a biodiversity net gain.

*Members would question whether the newt report took into account the destruction of the woodland and the required ecological habitats of newts.

*If the developer had made the application in the proper order, then this site may have been considered suitable as it would be enclosed by the 90 new houses. However, the way the way the developer has set about the application was improper, immoral and bordering on the criminal.

The trees were cut done illegally in March 2022 and the restocking injunction, although in place, has not been carried out. However, it was noted that there was some regeneration in the area.

*The site was in effect in the back garden of adjacent properties and contained a range of trees species and tree ages, which were and still were of visual prominence located along the boundary; visible from the properties on the site and along the main road. There was a TPO on all the trees felled and there were TPO's on the remaining trees.

*The saved policy Local Plan 1998 CR2 was clear that proposed development should not result after the result of loss of trees, shrubs and any young trees and saplings which would appear to be self-seeding in the area, would now be destroyed again.

*Proposal conflicts with WCS12 2013 which is to promote the maintenance of habitats, biodiversity features and ecological networks – these were destroyed once and should not be destroyed again.

*This application was not in the SHELAA and was outside of the development boundary.

*With regards to ES Highways the Chair gave reference to the application for Cysleys Farm which was rejected by ES Highways and stated that the same applied to this application; which said that Uckfield was now at maximum capacity down into the High Street.

*Members were told that the development of 90 houses along the Eastbourne Road would increase traffic on New Road by 38% and this development would increase this still further. New Road was not suitable for the increased volume of traffic.

*Concerns that the entrance to the site which was right next to the Fernley Park roundabout was also very close to the entrance for the 90 houses; all in a very close distance to each other.

*Members agreed to the objection of the Countryside Officer who had concerns that details of surface water drainage were inadequate, in particular the need to obtain the permission of Southern Water to connect to their adopted surface water sewer.

*There was also a question about the footpath from the 90 houses raised by the Countryside Officer and Rights of Way that still needed to be addressed.

Given the circumstances of the application, members were jointly very disappointed that Framfield Parish Council had supported the application when the impact of another nine houses on Eastbourne Road to Mallard roundabout would have no bearing on Framfield Parish.

* Information was requested regarding whether there would be capacity to connect the surface water drainage to the same one as the 90 houses, as it was known that the SUDS on Fernley Park overflowed in 2022.

*The Chair advised that the Senior Planning Officer at Wealden District Council was aware of the comments of the Forestry Commission regarding the restocking notice, and asked the clerk write to them to request that the legal definition of building on an area that had been issued a restocking notice be supplied to Planning Committee North.

A member believed that the granting of planning permission and executing the development would be a separate matter, which again the clerk should question.

A member informed the committee that Wealden DC were now looking at a one-year, rather than a three-year start date for the commencement of works from the approval date for any application.

P29.08.23

It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to strongly object to the application on the above comments and grounds* and that the clerk write separately for clarifications on the queries raised.

WD/2023/1864/F MOLESEY COTTAGE, HEMPSTEAD RISE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1QX

Extension and conversion of existing out building to home office gym & studio.

Cllr. Love reiterated that she was unable to comment or vote on the following application.

P30.08.23

Members acknowledged that although the design had altered considerably from the previous application, with the reduction in height and the removal of the glass, it was in effect the same. It was still very large and out of place and there was no mention of change of use. For this reason and that none of the Town Council's previous concerns had been addressed, it was **RESOLVED** to object on the following grounds and as previously submitted:

- The application lacked information:
 - Appendix A pre-planning advice was missing;
 - The intended use was questioned in terms of personal or commercial, and if commercial then:-why had the applicant not gone through a change of use application?
- Concerns were raised regarding parking issues.
- The front elevation was to be a very large glazed area and would be out of keeping with the street scene.
- The height of the structure would be sure to cause loss of light to the window of number 13.

WD/2023/1894/FA 66 STREATFIELD ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2BQ

Variation of condition 3 of WD/2022/2110/F (erection of a single and two storey rear extension) foundation to move outside of 500m exclusion zone of a foul sewer.

Members were unable to make a comment on the application at this time as there was insufficient information to determine what was being proposed and we would request a detailed drawing to show the changes to the foul sewer be added to the application. Members requested clarification in order that members could give a resolution, possibly through the Town Council's process for giving comments for applications outside of the cycle of meetings.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Withdrawn:

WD/2023/1233/F

REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING BOUNDARY WALL WITH TIMBER GATES, NEW PERMEABLE DRIVEWAY SURFACE AND NEW BRICK BOUNDARY WALL TO THE NORTH. RELOCATION OF EXISTING STREET LIGHT. Re siting of a lamppost and new access for Monks Walk, Pudding Cake Lane.

MONKS WALK, PUDDING CAKE LANE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1BU

WD/2018/0137/F

TWO BED DETACHED HOUSE

23 MONTACUTE WAY, UCKFIELD, TN22 1TR

Members noted the decision notices.

7.0 TO ADVISE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE USUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS – attached. **WD/2023/1591/F TELS MAURE, NEW PLACE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5DP**

First floor rear extension, landscaping to rear garden, garden room and greenhouse.

Uckfield Town Council support the application as:

- *There would be no effect to the street scene;*
- *The size of the site was adequate;*
- *There were no neighbour objections.*

The reason for the Velux windows in the roof space was questioned since there was no accommodation in the roof. If accommodation was to extend in the roof to the back of the property there would be a concern regarding overlooking onto the neighbouring property.

WD/2023/1803/F AND WD/2023/1804/LB HEMPSTEAD OAST, HEMPSTEAD LANE, UCKFIELD, TN22 3DL

Conversion of attached garaging into residential annex to main dwelling with associated works.

Uckfield Town Council support both applications as long as the Conservation Officer is happy with the design and opening up of the old door way, and that the Arboriculture and Landscape Officer is happy with root tree protection.

We would request that a caveat be applied which should remain in perpetuity to state that the house and annex must not be divided into two separate dwellings.

WD/2023/1782/F PRIORY COTTAGE, EASTBOURNE ROAD, RIDGEWOOD, UCKFIELD, TN22 5ST

Proposed garage conversion and extension plus raised terrace to the rear amended description. Amended description of works.

The amended description of works did not alter the Town Council's previous response (UTC Plans Minutes 24.07.23 P26.07.23) where we supported the application as there were no adverse effects to the adjoining owners.

WD/2023/1355/F ROCKS PARK SCOUT HQ, ROCKS PARK ROAD, TN22 2AY

Erection of illuminating bollards along access drive and car park.

Additional documents.

Uckfield Town Council support the application and were happy that earlier concerns had been addressed, and that bollard lighting would provide security and safety for the use of the site.

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.32pm.