

Planning Committee

Wednesday the 13th July 2022 at 7.00pm



Update Report for the Committee

The following notes and attached papers will be referred to at the meeting and will provide updated information to the Committee to reflect changes in circumstances and officer advice since the reports on the agenda were prepared

3. Requests for Deferral/Withdrawal

None

4. Schedule of Applications

- (a) 20/00947/AS** – 1 to 11 New Rents, Ashford, TN23 1LE – Full planning permission for a 92-bedroom hotel with associated servicing, car parking and bar/restaurant (for public access) together with the provision of 10 apartments within a four-storey building following the demolition of existing buildings.

The description of development has been amended as below:

“Full planning permission for a 92-bedroom hotel with associated servicing, car parking and bar/restaurant (for public access) together with the provision of 10 apartments following the demolition of existing buildings.”

The reason for the amended description is to remove any ambiguity regarding the height of the development. No further amendments are required to the officer report or Recommendation.

- (b) 21/01250/AS** – Oakleigh House, Watercress Lane, Ashford, Kent – The demolition of Oakleigh House Sheltered Housing and the residential block on the corner of Beaver Lane and Watercress Lane to provide 54 apartments for Independent Living for Older People and 13 apartments for Adults with Learning Disabilities, with the associated communal facilities, landscaping and parking.

One further objection has been received from a local resident who had previously objected to the application raising the following matters:

- Loss of open space and replacement with car parking and buildings would destroy view from front of house.

These objections are addressed in paragraphs 63-73 of the officer report. No further amendments are required to the officer report or Recommendation.

- (c) 21/01406/AS** – Land between Tyle House Farm and Mount Pleasant, Stocks Road, Wittersham – Erection of 28 no. dwellings and 2 self-build plots with associated parking, access and landscaping.

A rebuttal statement has been received from the applicant's agent refuting the reasons for refusal. There are 6 reasons for refusal. The letter makes reference to the amended Flood risk assessment document which contains a drawing showing a 15m buffer from the ancient woodland. In light of this information, it is considered reasonable to withdraw the reason for refusal no.4 which states,

“The proposal fails to demonstrate that a-n appropriate buffer of at least 15m would be afforded with the Ancient Woodland adjoining the area allocated for the attenuation basin. In the absence of evidence to the contrary which ensures that an adequate buffer is provided and would be retained as such, the proposal has the potential to negatively impact upon the irreplaceable habitat and as such would be contrary to paragraph 180(c) of the NPPF.”

The officer report contains a reference to 5-8m landscape buffer whilst it should state 8-10m buffer. There are no other amendments to the officer report in response to the rebuttal statement received. All other reasons for refusal still stand.

Two further letters of objection have been received from the local residents raising the following matters:

- The reason for refusal within the officer report does not make reference to paragraph 177 of the NPPF.
- An inclusion of reference (within reasons for refusal) to High Weald Housing Design Guide and the High Weald AONB Management Plan has been suggested.
- There is no reason for refusal in respect of the site's unsustainable location.

In light of the above information, it is considered reasonable to amend the wording of the reason for refusal 1 to include the reference to paragraph 177 of the NPPF, High Weald Housing Design Guide and High Weald AONB Management Plan.

The amended reason for refusal shall read as follows:

1. The proposed development would introduce an overtly planned layout, at a density which would fail to relate to the density of the existing development at the edge of the countryside. The proposal would fail to create an inclusive and cohesive environment and would be at odds with the prevailing character of the area and would not represent principles of good design as described within the National Design Guide 2021. By virtue of the location of the site, topography, siting, density and scale of the proposed development, the proposal would be prominent and highly visible in wider views, introducing a hard-built development along the edge of the countryside that would detract from the character of the area. The proposal would significantly and demonstrably harm the character and appearance of the countryside and the wider landscape (AONB), contrary to policies HOU5 and ENV3b of the Ashford Local Plan (2030), High Weald AONB Management Plan and High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide and paragraphs 130, 174, 176 and 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

For the avoidance of doubt, I would clarify that by virtue of the site falling within the AONB (which is afforded the highest status of protection by the Framework), the tilted balance is disengaged.

Consultation codes- (a) 57R (b) S (c) HW AONB Unit - R, WT- R, EA- X, ABC Housing- X, KHS- X, KCC Arch- +, KCC Drainage- X, KCC Ecology- X, NHS- X, KCC

Developer Contributions- X, KCC PROW- X, NE- X, ABC PP- X, ABC LO- R, ABC EH- X, ABC Heritage- R, ABC S106- X

(d) 21/02216/AS – The Old Flour Mills, East Hill, Ashford, Kent - Redevelopment comprising the conversion of the existing Flour Mill, demolition of existing structures, and the erection of four ancillary blocks to provide a total of no. 53 apartments (Use Class C3), ancillary residential facilities (including residents' gym and 'super lounge'), 1 x office (Use Class E(g)(i)), retained access from East Hill, parking, and associated landscaping and infrastructure.

No updates.

(e) 22/00540/AS – The Stour Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL - New acoustic enclosure to existing air source heat pump

- Policies SP5 Ashford Town Centre and TRA2 Strategic Public Parking Facilities of the Ashford Local Plan apply to this scheme and the report can be read in conjunction with the aforementioned policies.
- The scale and design of the proposed structure are appropriate within this location and its proximity to the Stour Centre would reduce its visual impact therefore the proposal is in accordance with policy SP5.
- There would be a loss of 3 car spaces to facilitate the development, out of the 483 currently available. The loss in spaces is relatively small and the overall impact on car parking in the area will not be significantly affected. It has been agreed by the Ashford Borough Council Parking Services that the small reduction in parking proposed is acceptable in this case. As such, it is considered the proposal is policy compliant.

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