

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
UPLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE
held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon
at 2.00pm on Monday 2 December 2019.

PRESENT

Councillors: Jeff Haine (Chairman), Geoff Saul (Vice-Chairman), Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Mike Cahill, Nathalie Chapple, Derek Cotterill, Ted Fenton#, Dave Jackson Neil Owen, Elizabeth Poskitt and Alex Postan.

(# Ex-officio, Non-voting)

Officers in attendance: Phil Shaw, Abby Fettes and Amy Barnes.

38. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 4 November 2019, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Merilyn Davies and Councillor Poskitt attended for Councillor Cooper.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers relating to matters to be considered at the meeting.

41. APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Business Manager – Development Management, giving details of an application for development, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the decision on the following application be as indicated, the reasons for refusal to be as recommended in the report of the Business Manager – Development Management, subject to any amendments as detailed below:-

3 18/01474/FUL Land North Of Gas Lane and Ascott Road, Shipton Under Wychwood

Principal Planner, Mrs Fettes, introduced the application.

Mr Alan Vickers addressed the meeting in objection to the application. A summary of his submission is attached as Appendix A to the original copy of these minutes.

Mr Mike Gilbert, the applicant's agent, then addressed the meeting in support of the application. A summary of his submission is attached as Appendix B to the original copy of these minutes.

The Principal Planner then presented her report containing a recommendation of refusal. Mrs Fettes gave an outline of the planning history of the site and explained that the character of the area had always been of low lying dwellings. However, the proposed building at plot one was fairly prominent due to its height, length and the number of roof lights. An ecological survey had been undertaken in 2014 but this was now out of date.

Councillor Postan advised that he had been on the committee when the previous application was considered. He reiterated that the area was characterised by low lying dwellings and this application broke up that pattern. He felt that this was overdevelopment of the site and therefore proposed that the application be refused.

This was seconded by Councillor Beaney who felt that the officers were correct with their recommendation, especially in light of the newly adopted Local Plan which provided more protection.

Councillor Owen supported approval of the application because he had lived in the area for 35 years and had recently been to visit the site. He felt it was in a state of wilderness at present and had been lying dormant for a number of years, so redevelopment should be encouraged.

Mrs Fettes reminded Members that a number of policies had been strengthened since the adoption of the Local Plan.

Councillor Jackson queried if the proposal would be considered more favourably if the ecological survey had been undertaken. He was advised that it would be prudent to wait until this had been completed.

Councillor Poskitt accepted that the design of the front of the dwelling was similar to the original, with smaller roof lights but felt that it was too tall, too close to the road and had no ecological report.

Councillor Cotterill highlighted that the pictures presented the dwelling as sitting on flat land whereas, in reality, there was a downwards slope towards the house. He did not feel that the rear of the house was compatible with the vernacular and did not sit well in the landscape.

Councillor Bishop remembered the previous site visit and recognised that this was an abandoned site. He felt that the two dwellings applied for in 2017 would have improved the area but he had concerns regarding the site of Plot 1. He queried whether the application should be deferred until receipt of the ecological report. In response, Mr Shaw felt the Council should be fair to the applicant and avoid putting them to unnecessary cost.

Councillor Owen expressed his disappointment that the applicant had received an unfavourable recommendation due to a changed in member of staff.

Mr Shaw reminded Members that this was their decision to take and the officer's position was to advise the Committee. However, there had been change in policy since the application was originally submitted.

The Officer recommendation of refusal was then put to the vote and was carried.

Refused

42. APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS AND APPEAL DECISIONS

The report giving details of applications determined under delegated powers and an appeal decisions was received and noted.

The meeting closed at 2.32pm

CHAIRMAN

Appendix A

Mr Alan Vickers addressed Members as an objector to the applicant and stated that he had one point and one observation to make.

He felt that with even a cursory look from the western side of the site, any structures would be against Local Plan Policies, looking either into or out of the Conservation Area.

He hoped that the Committee would follow the officer's recommendation. In his opinion, Members had made a previously ill-advised decision to agree to the erection of two structures with a 'workshop' design. He felt this would destroy a protected site. Although he recognised that it was beyond the remit of the Committee, he would have preferred to see a quality stone house in the local style, fronting the road, as this would also provide a better return for any developer.

Appendix B

Mr Mike Gilbert addressed Members as the agent for the applicant. He referred to the briefing notes that he had circulated electronically to Members which advised that the dwelling would be erected using natural stone and the applicant had made detailed amendments as requested.

He referred to the fact that the Parish Council had withdrawn their objection and the previous case officer had left WODC's employment. He highlighted that the dwelling would be 1 ½ storeys high and an updated ecological survey would be undertaken.