

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00 pm on 24 NOVEMBER 2003**

Present:- Councillor R J Copping – Chairman  
Councillors E C Abrahams, P Boland, C A Cant, J F Cheetham,  
C M Dean, C D Down, R F Freeman, E J Godwin, J I Loughlin,  
J E Menell and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance:- M Cox, J Harrison, H Lock, J R Mitchell and  
M Ovenden

**DC32 SITE VISITS**

Prior to the meeting, Members inspected the sites of the following applications

**(1) 1257/03/FUL and (2) 1258/03/CA Arkesden** – Three dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling, garage and vehicular access – Merrydowns for trustees of Harding Cole.

**(1) 1245/03/FUL and (2) 1246/03/FUL Great Easton** – (1) Change of use of dwelling and stable store to B1(a) office use and access drive. (2) Change of use of rural buildings to B1(a) offices and access drive – Wolseys Farm Duton Hill for Wolseys (Duton Hill) Ltd.

**1399/03/FUL High Easter** – Change of use of land from agricultural to seasonal ice rink – Easter Hall for Ambershire Ltd.

**DC33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W F Bowker and K J Clarke.

Councillors P Boland, C A Cant, J F Cheetham, C M Dean, C D Down, E J Godwin, J I Loughlin, J E Menell and A R Thawley declared personal interests as members of SSE.

Councillor E C Abrahams declared a personal interest in application 0785/03 Langley as he was the neighbouring farmer to the applicant.

Councillor C D Down declared a personal interest in applications 1245/03/FUL and 1246/03/FUL as she knew the applicant. Councillor J F Cheetham declared a personal interest in the same application as she knew the applicant and the agent had recently done work for her.

**DC34 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2003 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the first line of Minute DC25 (i) reading “Arkesden” Parish Council and not “Littlebury” as stated in the Minute.

DC35

**SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS****(a) Approvals**

RESOLVED that planning permission and listed building consent, where applicable, be granted for the following developments subject to the conditions, if any, recorded in the Town Planning Register.

**(1) 1245/03/FUL and (2) 1246/03/FUL Great Easton** – (1) Change of use of dwelling and stable/store to B1(a) office use and access drive. (2) Change of use of rural buildings to B1(a) offices and access drive – Wolseys Farm Duton Hill for Wolseys (Duton Hill) Ltd.

*Mr Rayner spoke in support of the application.*

**0785/03/FUL Langley** – Change of use of agricultural land to rally driving school for eighty days per year – Langley Lawn, Langley Lower Green for Langley Park Rally School.

*Mr Stubbins spoke in support of the application*

**(1) 1519/03/FUL and (2) 1520/03/LB Great Dunmow** – Conversion of outbuildings to seven bedroom units – the Saracens Head Hotel, High Street for Mr Pierce Campion.

**1596/03/FUL Thaxted** – Free range poultry house – Field No. 0841 Sibleys Green for Mr A J Saville.

**(b) Refusals**

RESOLVED that the following applications be not granted for the reasons stated in the Town Planning Register.

**(1) 1257/03/FUL and (2) 1258/03/CA Arkesden** – Three dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling, new garage and access – Merrydowns for Trustees of Harding Cole.

Reason: Over development and detrimental to the setting of the conservation area.

*Mr Anderson and Mr Higgins spoke against the application. Mr Stubbins spoke in support of the application.*

**1399/03/FUL High Easter** – Change of use of land from agricultural to seasonal ice rink – Easter Hall for Ambershire Ltd.

**1604/03/FUL Newport** – Change of use from residential to children's nursery – Wonderville, London Road for Mr N Luscombe.

**1718/03/FUL Thaxted** – Retention of wind tower in lieu of chimney – Mill Gates next to Mill Cottage, Fishmarket Street for Mr & Mrs J Hobbs.

It was also RESOLVED that enforcement action and if necessary legal action be taken to remove the unauthorised wind tower.

*Mr Hobbs spoke in support of the application, Miss Walsh, Thaxted Parish Council, spoke against the application.*

**(c) Deferments**

RESOLVED that the following applications be deferred

**1569/03/FUL Felsted** – 3 x three storey and 1 x two storey blocks – land to the north of Ingrams for Felsted School.

Reason: to receive the views of English Heritage

**1414/03/DFO Stansted** – Residential accommodation with basement car parking – land rear of 10-20 Silver Street for H J Hagon.

Reason: To consider revised plans.

**(d) Site Visits**

The Committee agreed to visit the sites of the following applications on Monday 15 December 2003.

**0814/03/FUL Elsenham** – Health facility, swimming pool, reception, cafe extension, car parking and ancillary works – Elsenham Golf Centre, Glebefield Road for Elsenham Golf Centre.

Reason: To assess the traffic implications and the impact of the development on the countryside protection zone.

**(1) 1579/03/FUL and (2) 1580/03/LB Manuden** – Conversion of restaurant to bedrooms, extension to toilets, patio and decking area, entrance ramp to building, brick wall and posts – The Yew Tree Inn, 36 The Street for Green King Pub Partners Ltd.

Reason: To assess the impact of the development on the listed building and the conservation area.

**(e) County Council Consultation**

*The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item on the grounds of urgency as the application was due to be considered by the County Council's Committee before the next meeting of this Committee.*

**1818/03/CC Great Dunmow** – 450 pupil primary school Stortford Road for Essex County Council.

The Committee had been consulted on the application at its meeting on 28 July 2003, and at that time had asked Essex County Council to take into account the following matters.

- 1 The layby on Stortford Road should be lengthened to accommodate more cars
- 2 Measures should be taken to stop parking rather than waiting in the layby.
- 3 Kerbs should be provided in the right turn lane.
- 4 An 30mph speed limit should be introduced outside the school
- 5 The County Council's policy not to provide parking spaces for parents collecting their children was not appropriate or workable in a rural area.

Members were disappointed that none of these matters appeared to have been taken into account in the reserved matters application. They considered it was essential for a lay-by to be provided to avoid traffic problems and the potential for serious accidents. The existing A120 was still likely to be a busy main road even when the new A120 was open. In a rural area the County should be realistic about the number of children that were likely to be driven to school, and Members were disappointed that the County Council had not taken into account local knowledge about this site. The Committee would still like the possibility of parent parking in the Tesco car park to be investigated.

There was also a suggestion that "Plot B" shown on the application might not form part of the application site. The Committee felt that this area should be preserved for school use.

RESOLVED that

- 1 further representations be made to the County Council reiterating the points made at the last meeting
- 2 letters be sent to all members of the County's Development Control Committee, and a Member of this Committee be authorised to speak at the relevant County Committee.

DC36

### **PROPOSED WORKS TO TREES AT BRIDGE END GARDENS SAFFRON WALDEN**

The Council's Bridge End Gardens Restoration Project Manager had notified intention to fell 14 trees within the gardens. None of the trees were of a visual amenity value worthy of being made subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The removal of the trees was in accordance with the Bridge End Gardens restoration plan and planting proposals.

RESOLVED that no objection be raised to the proposed felling.

DC37

### **FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS**

The Committee considered a report that had been prepared at the request of the Chairman following correspondence between Members about the timing and frequency of meetings that had arisen during discussions at the Member Workshops on Best Value Review of Planning Services. The suggestion was that meetings should be held fortnightly, starting at 4pm and finishing at

7 p.m. with Member site visits being held on a different day. The Committee received a detailed report, which analysed the proposal and listed its advantages and disadvantages.

The majority of Members considered that the current system worked very well and there was no compelling reason to change it at this time. It was considered useful to have the Committee meetings following the site visits when the details were still in the mind. The timing of the meetings meant that Members were fresh and ready to deal with applications and there was sufficient time available if it was necessary to deal with a very heavy agenda. It appeared that the public were able to attend the meetings to hear their application, and this had been borne out by a recent survey of people that had attended and spoken at Committee meetings.

Councillor Freeman said that the most important consideration for this Committee was the quality of its decision making. He considered this would be improved with more frequent and shorter meetings. He also said that the change of time might be more convenient for working people and might disqualify fewer members from sitting on this Committee. He did not agree with the arguments put forward about the possible administrative difficulties with more frequent meetings. The Chairman, however, questioned the ability of officers to produce reports on a fortnightly basis. He was also not convinced that the Committee would get through more business this way. He was advised that the timing and frequency of meetings did not form part of the Best Value Review and it would not be premature for the Committee to make a decision on this issue at this time.

The Head of Planning and Building Surveying said that the timing of meetings should be for the benefit of the public. In other authorities he had experienced meetings held at various times, but considered that for this authority the site visit and meeting on the same day worked well. Holding meetings any more frequently would raise a number of organisational issues. He also hoped that the recent changes in delegation arrangements would lead to a smaller schedule of planning applications.

RESOLVED that the Committee does not change the timing or frequency of its meetings.

#### DC38 **APPEAL DECISIONS**

The Committee noted the appeal decisions that had been received since the last meeting. Members commented on some inconsistency in the Inspectors' decisions. It was agreed that it would be useful for a representative from the Planning Inspectorate to be invited to a future lunchtime workshop.

#### DC39 **PLANNING AGREEMENTS**

The Committee received a report setting out the current position regarding outstanding Section 106 agreements.

DC40

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICE IN ESSEX – DRAFT LSA**

*The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as Members required the information before the next meeting of the Committee.*

Councillor Thawley, Chairman of the Environment and Transport Committee, reminded Members that he would be available in the Council Chamber between 5pm and 7pm on 26 November 2003 for Members to put forward comments on the proposed Local Service Agreement for the Highways and Transportation Service in Essex.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.