

**PLANNING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on WEDNESDAY, 3
APRIL 2024 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor R Freeman (Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, N Church, R Haynes, M Lemon and
M Sutton

Officers in attendance: N Brown (Head of Development Management and
Enforcement), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), I Hunt
(Planning Lawyer), J Pavey-Smith (Senior Planning Officer) and
M Sawyers (Planning Officer)

Public Speakers: N Champion, D Cox, A Gunne-Jones, V Lockie, C Loon, M
Ratcliff, Councillor N Reeve and Councillor N Robley (Hatfield
Heath PC).

PC157 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were given by Councillors Emanuel, Loughlin and Pavitt.

The following declarations were made:

- Councillor Lemon; non-pecuniary and would recuse himself from Items 7 and 10 as he knew the applicant.
- Councillor Haynes; Ward Councillor for Thaxted and the Eastons but would not be recusing himself from Items 8 and 11.
- Councillor N Reeve: in attending to speak as a private individual on Items 12 and 13, declared an interest in the application as a neighbour.

PC158 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

PC159 SPEED AND QUALITY REPORT

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Speed and Quality Report. He highlighted the information in red at the bottom of the table and said that the key UDC data figure stood above 10% at 11.1% and that the Council remained under designation.

The report was noted.

PC160 QUALITY OF MAJOR APPLICATIONS REPORT

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the standing Quality of Major Applications report.

He updated Members on the pending appeal and said that it had been dismissed.

The report was noted.

PC161 **S62A APPLICATIONS REPORT**

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the S62A Applications report.

The report was noted.

PC162 **UTT/24/0103/PINS - LAND TO THE WEST OF MILL LANE, HATFIELD HEATH**

The Planning Officer presented a report in relation to a major planning application submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for determination. The application related to the demolition of 12 existing structures, the conversion and restoration of 8 existing buildings to form 8 holiday cottages and conversion of the existing water tower into 1 dwelling, the construction of 3 single storey dwellings and the creation of a pedestrian and cycle link path. He referred to the Addendum List that had additional comments in respect of Conservation and Environmental Health. He said that no changes had been made to the application which had previously been refused by the Council.

He recommended that observations be submitted to PINS.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said that this application had to be considered separately to the application that followed.

Members discussed:

- The reason given previously for refusal as being to build on Green Belt.
- Heritage harm concerns.
- Highways concerns.
- The need for greater community engagement.

There was some support for the application amongst Members.

Councillor Haynes proposed that the Council's response to PINS should be in line with the previous reasons given for refusal, notably building on Green Belt. In addition concerns to be expressed in respect of heritage harm and highways.

This was seconded by Councillor Lemon.

RESOLVED that the above observations be communicated to the Planning Inspectorate.

Councillor Lemon recused himself from the meeting at 10.35 am.

PC163 UTT/23/1688/FUL - CAMP POULTRY FARM, MILL LANE, HATFIELD HEATH

The Planning Officer presented an application for the proposed demolition of buildings and the erection of 3 storage, packing, distribution and ancillary buildings. The application also proposed the erection of 1 dwelling with residential garden and related change of use of land.

He recommended that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said that Place Services (Heritage) had been involved in consultations but not Historic England.
- Clarified mineral safeguarding arrangements.

Members discussed:

- The Class 2 camp classification previously stated at an Appeal in 2019.
- Green Belt concerns.
- Heritage and harm concerns.
- The possible need for views from Historic England.
- The possibility that the heritage assets may have come to the end of their life and that it might be time to remove the buildings and record the assets.
- The dangers of running out of homes and the need for new homes; together with the need for a practical approach.
- The continuation of an old established business in need of a refresh.
- Traffic movement concerns.
- Restrictions being placed on hours of business operation.
- The fact that use of the site was restricted by floorspace.

Councillor Church proposed that the application be approved, with a respectful request that hours of operation could be agreed with the applicant.

This was seconded by Councillor Sutton.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report.

Councillor N Robley (Hatfield Heath PC), N Champion, D Cox and M Ratcliff spoke against the application. A statement was also read out from D Sargeant against the application.

C Loon (Agent) spoke in support.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 am and Councillor Lemon rejoined the meeting when it resumed at 11.40 am.

PC164 UTT/23/2601/DFO - CLAYPITS FARM, BARDFIELD ROAD, THAXTED

The Senior Planning Officer presented a reserved matters application for 14 dwellings at Claypits Farm, Thaxted.

He recommended that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Clarified what a rain garden was.
- Said that the application of condition 3 in respect of flint panels and slates rested with the Conservation Officer.
- Said that any party wall matters would be covered under party wall legislation.
- Said that the footpath was locked in as part of the outline permission.
- Said that the drainage condition had now been discharged.
- Said that there were only three factors under discussion: Scale, appearance and landscaping. Layout was not to be considered.

Members discussed:

- Drainage and flooding concerns.
- Impact on the Conservation Area.
- Stability of the party wall.
- Possible use of tree screening.
- The electric substation.

Councillor Sutton proposed approval of the application with an additional condition in respect of planting two trees at the entry to the site (agreed with the applicant).

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Church.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report and the additional condition above.

PC165 UTT/23/2268/DFO - THE RISE, BRICK END, BROXTED

The Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented an application for reserved planning matters following outline planning permission being granted. Outline planning permission had been allowed at Appeal in October 2022, subject to conditions. He outlined various minor amendments to the report.

He recommended that the application be approved, subject to those items set out in section 18 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Said they would prefer that the report was not deferred for further discussions to take place with the Parish Council as this application was a long-standing one.
- Said that in relation to a rare bat species that Essex Ecology had raised no objections and that Conditions 14 and 16 assisted in the preservation of bats.
- Said that glint and glare issues had already been resolved.

A Gunne-Jones (Agent) was invited to address the meeting. He confirmed that the central building would have PV's and that lighting, glint and glare issues had already been discharged.

Members discussed:

- The need to know the current height of buildings to compare to those proposed buildings of around 7.5m.

There was a brief adjournment from 12.40 pm to 12.45 pm whilst officers considered this request.

At the resumption of the meeting, officers confirmed that all matters relating to scale had already been discharged and the only two issues under reserved matters consideration were appearance and landscaping. Officers confirmed again that issues relating to PV's and ecology had already been discharged. In respect of ensuring closer relationships between the applicant and the Parish Council, that there was perhaps an ideal time when the new buildings were built.

Councillor Lemon proposed approval of the application.

This proposal was seconded by the Chair.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 18 of the report.

Councillor Lemon recused himself from the meeting at 12.55 pm.

PC166 **UTT/23/2939/FUL - LAND REAR OF HIGH PASTURES, STORTFORD ROAD, HATFIELD HEATH**

The Planning Officer presented a planning application for the proposed erection of one detached dwelling. He highlighted the correction to his report paragraph 14.12.6 that had been made in the Addendum List.

He recommended that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Summarised the negative reasons against the application.
- Said there would not be significant traffic movements and no large vehicles.
- Said that in respect of the size of the garden, hard and soft landscaping conditions could be stipulated.

Members discussed:

- Overdevelopment concerns with two very adjacent properties.
- The issue of the garden being significant.
- Any removal of existing shrubs and screening compromising the amenity space.
- Infilling and backland concerns.

Councillor Haynes proposed refusal of the application on the grounds of GEN 2, covering overdevelopment, neighbour amenity issues, infilling beyond the original development and being out of character with the area.

This was seconded by Councillor Bagnall.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to refuse permission for the development on the grounds of GEN 2.

Councillor N Robley spoke against the application.

The meeting adjourned for lunch from 1.10 pm to 2.05 pm. Councillor Lemon returned to the meeting following the lunchbreak.

PC167 UTT/23/2867/HHF - ALDBORO HOUSE, PARK STREET, THAXTED

The Senior Planning Officer presented an application to extend the existing garage by one bay and to convert two bays to an Annexe. This application had previously been deferred as Place Services had not responded. Proposals for a pair of gates had now been removed.

He recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions set out in section 16 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers

- Said that any foul drainage proposals would be covered by Building Regulations.
- Said this was not an issue for Highways as it was a household application and would not impact on the Highway.
- Said that three parking spaces would remain.
- Said that a landscaping condition could be drawn up to cover such matters as hedge maintenance concerns.

Members discussed:

- Car parking issues in a private road and the possible parking knock-on effects to Park Street.
- The current hedge providing a natural barrier.
- The significant view of the windmill.
- Drainage concerns.
- Concerns relating to future letting out of the property.
- Access arrangements for traffic such as refuse vehicles.
- The need for the annexe to remain ancillary as an annexe to the main dwelling.

Councillor Sutton proposed approval of the application, together with a landscape condition and for the annexe to remain ancillary as an annexe to the main dwelling.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Bagnall.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development subject to the conditions set out in section 16 of the report, together with a landscape condition and for the annexe to remain ancillary as an annexe to the main dwelling.

PC168 UTT/23/3179/HHF - 2 PARSONAGE FARM BARNs, BARNSTON ROAD, HIGH EASTER

The Planning Officer presented a householder planning application for the proposed mounting of 20 photo voltaic panels on the west facing elevation. The site concerned a Grade II listed property to the western side of Barnston Road.

He recommended that the application be refused for the reasons set out in section 17 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, officers:

- Confirmed that this was a matter of planning balance, rather than tilted balance as stated in the report.

Members discussed:

- Heritage harm concerns and the appropriate great weight that should be given to any such concerns in line with paragraph 205 of the NPPF.
- The property not being viewable from the road.
- That as the pv's would be west facing consideration should be given to utilising a battery storage system.
- The possible risks of setting a precedent if approved and the necessity to consider each case on individual merits to protect heritage assets.
- The possible conditioning of the future de-commissioning of the pv's.

Officers suggested that if Members were minded to approve the application that they could condition a pre-commencement bat survey and that they could work on appropriate wording in respect of both the continuation of use and the future de-commissioning of the solar panels with reviews after certain periods of time. This would look to protect the heritage asset.

Councillor Church proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Sutton.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development in line with the suggested conditions.

Councillor N Reeve (as a neighbour, also UDC portfolio holder for the Environment and Climate Change and High Easter PC Member) and V Lockie (Applicant) spoke in support of the application.

PC169 **UTT/23/3180/LB - 2 PARSONAGE FARM BARNES, BARNSTON ROAD, HIGH EASTER**

The Committee considered the listed building consent application for the property considered under the previous application.

Members considered that the matter had been fully debated under the previous agenda item.

In line with a Member's suggestion, officers stated that they would look to future proof conditions for the de-commissioning and review of time periods relating to such matters. Possible shorter time periods could be considered along with the possibility of the need to make further applications after a certain time. Officers would work on appropriate wording. It was also stated that no bat survey was necessary under this application.

Councillor Church proposed that the application be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Bagnall.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to grant permission for the development in line with the suggested condition.

The meeting ended at 3:10 pm.