



MINUTES OF THE 'REMOTE' MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020 AT 7PM

Present:

Councillors:

Andrew McAuley - Chair
Rob Smith (RS) Vice Chair
Terry Jackson (TJ)
Matt Reid (MR)
Ian Hill (IH)
Nicky Smallbone (NS)

Co-opted Member:

Gill Bindoff, Tony Powell

Minute Taker:

Nicky Smallbone

Members of the Public:

Peter Richardson

1. Apologies for Absence
Ian Hill, Alex Basden.
2. Minutes of the meeting of held on 7 July were accepted by Council on 14 July 2020.
Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting above be agreed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.
3. Minutes of meeting of the Planning and the NPAB Committee held on 28 July have not yet been accepted by Council
3. Declarations of Interest
There were none notified.
4. Matters Arising
None other than agenda items.
5. To consider the following applications:
P20/S2287/HH Arthurs Cottage, 12 Ingham Lane, Watlington
Proposed single storey side extension and porch
Vote: 3 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.
No Objection

Applicable WNDP Policies:

P1 Protect and Enhance the Character of Watlington and the historic Setting of the Town

WPC has no objection to this proposal. The plot lies within the Watlington Conservation Area (CA) but is situated on a discrete plot not readily visible from the wider area. The property is not listed and therefore, there are no conservation constraints. The proposed single storey, flat roof, extension to the side of the existing property will not have a detrimental impact on the CA. The modern design and use of contemporary materials (burnt cladding) gives the extension a distinctive and complementary appearance and echoes the former agricultural nature of the area. However,

WPC is concerned that the use of extensive floor to ceiling glazing has the potential to impact the dark skies nature of the WCA. A planning condition should be imposed to minimise light spill from the new extension to the property. The addition of an open porch to the main entrance is a positive addition. Overall, the proposal complies in full with policy P1 (a, c, d & e) of the WNDP. It respects the local and historic character of the town and will not alter or affect the nature of the streetscape along Ingham Road.

P20/S1885/DIS Britwell Road, Watlington

Discharge of condition 9 (tree preservation) of application P17/S3231/O. Hybrid Application (1) Full Application for the 183 dwellings and (2) Outline Permission for up to 650 sqm of Use Class B1a floorspace.

WPC has no comments to submit on this discharge application.

P20/S2257/FUL Glebe Barn Cottage, Cuxham Road, Watlington

Demolition of dwelling and replacement with new dwelling.

Vote: 4 in favour, 1 abstention.

No Objection

Applicable WNDP Policies:

P1 Protect and Enhance the Character of Watlington and the historic Setting of the Town

P3 Conserve and Enhance the Natural Environment

WPC has no objection to this application. The application is identical in most respects to P18/S1541/FUL for which planning permission was granted on 16th July 2018. The main difference being that the building is smaller and that there is now no reference to, or application for, a garage. The development of the site in accordance with the submitted plans complies with the policies P1 and P3 of the WNDP. However, WPC concurs with the forestry officer's comment that a tree survey, an Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan are completed and submitted to support the application. Also, because the site has been unoccupied for some time a bat survey should be carried in order to ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the local ecology.

P20/S2311/FUL Five Acres, Howe Road, Watlington

Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and other ancillary buildings. Erection of replacement dwelling and garage in addition to widening of existing access.

Vote: 1 in favour, 4 against

Objection

Applicable WNDP Policies:

P1 Protect and Enhance the Character of Watlington and the historic Setting of the Town

P3 Conserve and Enhance the Natural Environment

WPC objects to this application. Watlington Parish Council (WPC) considers that the plans submitted in this application are both inappropriate and excessive in scale for this site and the replacement of the existing single storey bungalow that exists currently within the curtilage.

It believes that the proposed plans do not meet the requirements of current planning rules for such a highly sensitive site in the Chiltern Hills AONB, particularly one that is close to – and overlooked by – Watlington Hill, a local landmark and registered SSSI.

WPC does not agree with some of the statements made in the Design & Access Statement accompanying this application. The Council's position is that the statements cannot be justified or supported by evidence provided, are invalid on planning grounds and not in accord with both national and local planning policies and guidance.

In particular,

- 1) Paragraph 13.2 (of the Design & Access Statement) states that *“Due to the limited relevance of the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) the majority of the policies that are relevant which are relevant to this proposal are those saved within the SODC Local Plan (2006) and the Adopted Core Strategy Plan (2012).”* As the WNDP is a 'made' plan, and the

SODC local Plan is still to be approved there is wide recognition that the WNDP carries considerable weight and cannot be dismissed so lightly. It is not true therefore that only Policy 3 of the WNDP applies to the proposal.

- 2) Paragraph 13.5 of the D&AS – referring to Policy CSEN1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Plan - claims that the plans submitted for a replacement dwelling within the residential curtilage “*will not result in harm, rather, create visual enhancement to the AONB*”. Little evidence to support this subjective claim is provided except to reference the poor condition of the existing single storey bungalow and garage located on this site. The existing buildings have low visibility to and from Watlington Hill and surrounding footpaths. The planned replacement building appears to be at least double the size of the existing dwelling, is two storey, while the location on the site has been moved closer to Watlington Hill and the SSSI. Moreover, the design is such that it incorporates substantial glazing – and, thus, potential light spill in a designated ‘dark skies’ area – which we deem inappropriate for this location, both from appearance and its impact on ecology and the local SSSI.
- 3) The proposed plans do not meet the requirements of the existing Local Plan:
 - (i) the proposed dwelling will be materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling. (The existing dwelling is reported as being 647m³ plus a garage of 54m³ against the proposed dwelling stated as 1384m³. We would request also that the volume assessed for the proposed dwelling is confirmed as the appearance, footprint and dimensions suggest that 1384m³ may not be accurate.)
 - (ii) the overall impact is likely to be significantly greater than the existing dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area (due to its size, re-siting within the curtilage, additional storey and overall design)
 - (iii) the siting and design are not in keeping with the locality given its location in a particularly sensitive part of the AONB.
- 4) In paragraph 13.8 of the D&AS the application acknowledges that the footprint of the proposed replacement building is closer to Watlington Hill (than the current building on site) but suggests that “*the difference is minimal and the result is no greater visual impact*”. However, elsewhere in the application, the justification for the re-siting is stated as creating “*improved views from the rear of the building*”. This is reinforced by the design incorporating a first-floor balcony at the rear of the building facing North-East – ie, directly the direction facing towards Watlington Hill. This will result inevitably in the view of the proposed dwelling from Watlington Hill and its associated footpaths also having “*improved views*”. This appears to undermine and contradict not only the statement in 13.8 but also the assertions made in 13.6 (points iv. and v.).

In conclusion; WPC objects to this application. The development site lies outside the town limits of Watlington but sits firmly within the Chilterns AONB. It is visible from the surrounding public footpaths and more significantly from Watlington Hill, a designated SSI. WPC has critical concerns that the size and orientation of the new building and the extensive use of floor to eaves glazing to the rear that faces Watlington Hill and the woodland to the southeast has the potential to have a detrimental impact on the night ecology of the surrounding area. A property of this scale and design will not enhance the surrounding area but rather has the potential to have a very real detrimental impact on the AONB. WPC welcomes the very detailed ecology report and notes the reference to the potential for disturbance of, and impact upon, the local bat community. WPC therefore strongly feels that it is imperative that the proposed bat surveys are carried out and the results known before planning permission is determined by the LPA. WPC also concurs with the forestry officer’s stipulation that a detailed tree protection condition is attached to the planning permission if granted. Also, should the case office be minded to approve this application a strict planning condition must be imposed to limit the impact of light spill from the property.

Discharge of Condition 18 (Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation (WS1) of application P17/S3231/O. Hybrid application comprising (1) Full planning permission for the demolition of the existing pig farm and its associated buildings, the erection of 183 dwellings (Use Class C3), the creation of a new vehicular access from Britwell Road; the creation of a vehicular access from the industrial estate road south of Cuxham Road (to serve the proposed employment area); public space; sustainable urban drainage system; landscaping; and other ancillary works, including off-site highway works; and the relocation of a telecommunications mast and equipment; and (2) Outline permission for up to 650 sqm of the Use Class B1 (a) floorspace with access and all other matters reserved.

WPC has no comments to submit on this discharge application.

6. To consider the following amendments:

P20/S1794/DIS 28 Church Street, Watlington

Revised Arboricultural Method statement received 10.07.2020

No comment required from WPC. Applicant has complied with the Forestry Officers requirements.

P20/S1722/HH 1 Ingham Lane, Watlington

Amendment to replacement/repairs to the close board fences along the north eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the highway as per additional plans submitted 20 July 2020.

No comment required. This application has already been given permission by SODC.

7. Decisions

<u>APPLICATION</u>	<u>SODC DECISION</u>	<u>WPC RECOMMENDATION</u>
P20/S1372/FUL Highwood, Greenfield	<i>Planning Permission is GRANTED</i>	<i>No Objection</i>
P20/S1358/HH The Flint Barn	<i>Planning Permission is GRANTED</i>	<i>No Objection</i>
P20/S0698/FUL Popes Cottage	<i>Planning Permission is GRANTED</i>	<i>No Objection</i>

All decisions were noted

8. Correspondence

1. **Ian Kemp** – Hearing Programme for 4th August 2020. A statement has been sent to the Inspector and GB will be representing WPC.

GB had spoken at the hearing (4th August) and reported that it went as well as expected. She did say that OCC and SODC could have been more supportive.

9. Any Other Business

Britwell Road Discharges – GB reported that there will an Ecological Clerk of Works appointed to investigate all ecological issues. TP will review Conditions 11 & 12 and advise if comments need to be submitted to SODC.

Light Spill. AM undertook to write to Emily Hamerton seeking clarification of the SODC policy on light spill. In particular the enforcement of dark skies requirement within the AONB and surrounding areas.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.30PM