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## PLANNING WORKING GROUP

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held at the site listed below on Tuesday, 11 June 2019 from 10.01pm - 10.37am.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Monique Bonney, Simon Clark, Tim Gibson (Chairman), James Hall, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Peter Marchington, Paul Stephen and Tony Winckless.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Matt Bembridge, Philippa Davies and Andrew Spiers.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Cameron Beart, Roger Clark and David Simmons.

### 39 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### 40 **19/500050/FULL & 19/500051/LBC TUNSTALL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, TUNSTALL ROAD, TUNSTALL, ME9 8DX**

The Chairman welcomed the Applicants, representatives from Tunstall Parish Council and members of the public to the meeting.

The Planning Officer introduced the application which sought permission for the conversion, part demolition and extension of the former school building to provide two 4-bedroom dwellings and the erection of two detached 4-bedroom dwellings with associated landscaping and parking.

The meeting started to the front of the old school building and the Planning Officer briefly outlined the architectural and historical interest of the building which had been built in 1846. He explained that it was a former primary school, a grade II listed building with an attractive façade to the front, and had a 1970s extension to the rear. The Planning Officer said that the building was outside the built-up area, within Tunstall Conservation Area and near other listed buildings. He explained that an application had been withdrawn in 2017 as the Council, at that point, had a 5.4 year supply of building land. A further application in 2018 for the conversion of the school building which would have provided three dwellings was approved.

The Planning Officer explained that the current application was for conversion of the school, plus two new 4-bedroom dwellings to the rear, with the removal of the 1970s extension. The dwellings would have their own amenity space and parking, and access would be from the adjacent track, which was also a Public Right of Way (PROW).

Nine letters of objection had been received and the comments were summarised in the Committee report. One letter of support had also been received, and the comments were also summarised in the report. The Planning Officer also referred to the responses to the comments from the Applicant. He also referred to the comments from Tunstall Parish Council, and concerns raised by a resident that

extra houses should not be considered as 'enabling' the restoration of the school building.

Historic England and Natural England raised no objection to the application, subject to mitigation relating to SAMMS payments. Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation and the Council's Tree Consultant also raised no objection.

The Planning Officer summarised and confirmed that the building was outside the built-up area boundaries, but not within the strategic Countryside Gap. He explained that the Council no longer had a five-year supply of housing land; if it had, it was likely that the two new dwellings would be refused. As the building was in a sustainable location, he considered the principle of development at this location, and in these circumstances, to be acceptable.

The applicants outlined the application and welcomed bringing the building back into use. They considered the design was suitable for families, it was sympathetic and in-keeping, and explained that this application was for only one more house than a previous application, which the Parish Council had supported. They explained that originally there would have been three houses, but that was when the 1970s extension was to remain. Now that it was being removed, two houses were proposed to be constructed in its place.

Local residents raised the following points:

- Accepted the principle of development here, but this was over development;
- there was not enough space for two 4-bedroom properties with associated gardens and parking;
- issue with access for emergency vehicles, and utility vehicles;
- two semi-detached houses would be better;
- not-in-keeping with the village;
- this was a departure from the linear pattern of the village;
- access to the site was a narrow track, with no pavement;
- access was very close to the cottage at the end of the lane;
- unreasonable to compare projected vehicle use, with the potential for 24hr/day use, with the previous school use;
- safety issues with lane being used by walkers;
- egress from the site was not easy;
- more modest development preferred;
- the access route/public footpath was used a lot at community events, connecting various parts of the village;
- if the path became dangerous, people might start to use their cars instead;
- there was no mains drainage at the site, the cess pit truck could not get up the track;
- the Council had opposed this when there was a five-year housing supply; and
- issues with construction traffic during the build.

The Transport and Development Planner (KCC) explained that with the additional dwelling this was not significantly different to the previous application, and with the total of the four additional dwellings, 18 daily vehicle movements were predicted,

and this included visitors and deliveries. He said that whilst the previous school use was busy at peak times on the network, the proposed new use would see vehicle movements more evenly spread out across the day, which was preferable. The proposed parking met the current standards, providing for residents and visitors, and there was adequate provisions for vehicle turning to allow for a forward facing exit. He added that the principle of the access proposals had been established by the previous planning application, including parking to the rear of the building, and he advised that there would be a construction management plan which would allow temporary access via the site frontage.

Members and officers toured the site.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel