
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the site listed below. on Monday, 6 January 2020 from 11.30am - 11.52am.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson (Chairman), James Hall, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Benjamin Martin (Vice-Chairman), David Simmons, Paul Stephen and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies, Eleanor Lakew and Graham Thomas.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cameron Beart, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Peter Marchington, Eddie Thomas and Tim Valentine.

409 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

410 **19/504412/FULL, OYSTER BAY HOUSE, CHAMBERS WHARF, FAVERSHAM, ME13 7BT**

The Chairman welcomed Members, officers, the applicant and representatives from Faversham Town Council to the meeting.

The Area Planning Officer introduced the application which was for an extension to the existing garage to create an observatory. He explained that the application site was within Faversham Conservation Area and the nearby Oyster Bay House was a Grade II listed building. He stated that the 3-bay garage that was going to be extended was of no architectural merit. There would be an extension to the end of the garage by way of a platform, with a tall octagonal structure topped with a glass fibre observatory dome. He said that the extension would be connected to the garage by an enclosed stairway, and that the proposal involved removal of three small trees. The top of the dome would be 11.6 metres in height. The Area Planning Officer reported that Faversham Town Council supported the application, and the Faversham Society considered the observatory would add visual interest to the area.

The Area Planning Officer acknowledged that it was an interesting application, but questioned whether it would preserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and the Listed Building. He considered the staircase to be bulky, and the proposal was intrusive to the setting, by both its scale and bulk. He added that the solar panels could be considered to be obtrusive.

The Applicant explained that the dome could be painted, and he considered the staircase added interest to the design. He said that although the facility was primarily for his personal use, local schools, and interested groups could also use it, and they would view the observatory findings on a screen in the Oyster Bay House. He was happy to consider any modifications to the scheme. The Applicant added that the fruit trees on the site could remain.

Representatives from Faversham Town Council spoke in support of the application and considered the site to be a logical place to put the observatory because of the lack of light pollution. They said the proposal could be a benefit to students, residents and tourists.

A Member asked whether the community benefit aspect had been included within the application. The Area Planning Officer explained that there had been no details of this within the application. The Member asked whether there had been any discussions on what parts of the application could be amended in order to make it more acceptable. The Area Planning Officer stated that there had been no discussions to-date.

In response to questions about whether the structure could be decreased in height, the Applicant explained that as there were large lights in the adjoining boatyard, and other lighting in nearby properties, it was necessary to have some height to the structure. This would allow a further range of visibility, and help to observe star galaxies.

Members suggested that the dome be painted green so that it blended in better with the surroundings, and that the solar panels be ground-mounted instead.

Chairman

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