
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Monday, 21 December 2020 from 10.00am - 10.38 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart, Simon Clark, Richard Darby, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson (Chairman), James Hall, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Peter Marchington, Ben J Martin, David Simmons, Paul Stephen and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Claire Attaway, Rob Bailey, Philippa Davies, Megan Harris, Andrew Jeffers, Kellie MacKenzie, Jo Millard and Jim Wilson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Steve Davey and Mike Whiting.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Monique Bonney and Tim Valentine.

373 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Policy and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392.

374 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

375 18/504562/FULL ELLENS COURT, LADY MARGARET MANOR ROAD, DODDINGTON, KENT, ME9 0NT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Planner introduced the application which sought planning permission for alterations and extensions to the existing residential care home to provide 12 no. bedrooms and two no. self-contained two bedroom units with associated facilities, erection of a single storey building to provide four supported living self-contained apartments, a new workshop building and associated landscape works at Ellens Court, Lady Margaret Manor Road, Doddington.

The Planner explained that there were three routes to the application site: Lady Margaret Manor Road; Payden Street; and Slade Road. The Planner then showed videos of the site and surrounding area which included: dash-cam footage driving along Lady Margaret Manor Road towards Ellens Court; the existing car park at Ellens Court and siting of the car park extension; walking along Payden Street towards Ellens Court, which included footage of damage to a wall caused by vehicles; driving along Payden Street heading towards Ellens Court then onto Doddington; driving-up Slade Road heading towards Ellens Court and then left at the crossroads; site boundary with the property known as Greet Cottage, view of

site alongside Greet Cottage, view of the site next to the property known as The Hermitage; and view of the site from Payden Street.

The Planner reported that Lady Margaret Manor Road was a narrow single track with few passing places. She further reported that the existing car park would be enlarged to provide a total of 21 parking spaces with parking space for a minibus and ambulance. The Planner advised that the building would be “G” shaped in footprint and would be sited between three and four metres from the side boundary with Greet Cottage, and a similar distance to the front boundary of The Hermitage.

Parish Councillor Steve Coates, representing Doddington Parish Council spoke against the application. He stated that whilst they had no objection to the site being developed, they had concerns with the size and scale of this application which they considered would have an adverse impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). They also had concerns about access to the site along very narrow country lanes. Parish Councillor Coates requested that if Members were minded to approve the application, a suitable condition be imposed requiring the premises to be used solely as a care home.

The Major Projects Officer referred to condition (33) of the report which addressed concerns about the future use of the site as a care home, and the possibility of the building for other purposes.

Mr Adam Woodbridge, the applicant’s agent, spoke in support of the application. He stated that they been working closely with the Council’s planning officers since 2018 on the application which had been through a rigorous consultation process and all statutory consultees were happy with the application. Mr Woodbridge reported that there had been a care home on the site for approximately 100 years and if the application was approved they would be able to accommodate a total of 22 residents and employ a further 10 new members of staff. Mr Woodbridge advised that not all staff would be on site at any one time, and that the care home’s minibus was mainly used for transportation to and from the site. He also said that the development would ensure the viability of the care home for the future.

Mrs Helen Odejimi, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Mrs Odejimi stated that there would be no significant increase in the number of people accessing the site and if residents needed to travel, they had a mini-bus for this purpose.

Mr Lee Davison, an objector spoke against the application. He considered the application was out of scale with the small rural hamlet. He noted that the Kent Downs AONB unit were against the proposal. Mr Davison spoke about the narrow lanes accessing the site which meant they had to have special refuse collections, and that there were no local amenities or public transport.

The Ward Member spoke against the application. He acknowledged that it was a much-needed facility but did not consider this to be the appropriate site. He asked in what way the officers considered the site to be sustainable?

The Major Projects Officer said that Members needed to consider the application as a whole and assess it in the round. He also referred to conditions (9) and (10) of

the report which helped to promote sustainability in terms of water use at the site and with regard to reducing CO₂ emissions beyond the standard required by the current Building Regulations . He added that Kent County Council (KCC) Social Services backed-up the need for the site to expand. With regard to the location, the Major Projects Officer stated that the use of the site as a care home had been established and in his opinion the benefits of the scheme outweighed any potential harm to the area.

In response to a query from a Member, the Chairman considered that the video footage of the damage to the wall in Payden Street was shown to demonstrate the narrowness of the road. The Planner confirmed this was the case and that the wall would remain.

The Chairman thanked the Planner for the video footage shown which had been very helpful to Members. He also thanked Democratic Services and IT for their support in ensuring the first ever remote planning working group meeting went smoothly.

Chairman

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