
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the site listed below on Monday, 11 July 2022 from 10.00 am - 11.10 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Tim Gibson (Chair), James Hall, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Ken Rowles and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Simon Algar, Billy Attaway and Andy Byrne.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Richard Palmer and Alan Horton.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney, Mike Henderson, Elliott Jayes and Tim Valentine.

186 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

187 **ITEM 2.3 21/506474/FULL BURNTWICK, THE STREET, UPCHURCH, SITTINGBOURNE, KENT, ME9 7EU**

The Chair welcomed the Agent, members of the public and Members to the meeting.

The Area Planning Officer introduced the application which sought planning permission for the erection of two four-bedroom semi-detached dwellings and one detached garage, with associated fencing, gates, access, and parking. He explained to Members that the proposed development would be sited roughly in line with the existing property at the front and rear and would have the same roof height with lower eaves than a standard two-storey dwelling and use of features such as half dormer windows. He outlined that the property was located outside the conservation area and not in the built up area of Upchurch.

Members of the public raised the following issues:

- The land at Burntwick was higher than the land at The Poles, Upchurch so any housing development would be overbearing on those residents;
- the proposed houses would stop any light getting to the south facing gardens at The Poles;
- the windows at the property would be overlooking onto neighbouring properties;
- the land at Burntwick was not big enough for two four-bedroom semi-detached houses;
- traffic was poor in the area during commuting hours and weekends and adding extra cars would make it even worse;
- happy to see that the applicant had cut down some of the large trees that used to affect light into the garden of the neighbouring property but was concerned that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on light to their property;

- the local nursery used the footpath outside of Burntwick to walk around the village so had concerns with small children being near building work; and
- loss of amenity for residents at The Poles, and The Street, Upchurch.

The Applicant's Agent made the following points:

- The development had been changed to address the overbearing issues as the applicant had originally hoped for two detached houses;
- the houses had been designed to keep in character with the local area;
- the height of the proposed houses had taken into account the ridge height of houses at The Poles, Upchurch to ensure there was no overbearing impacts; and
- understood the concerns with a loss of light for those residents at The Poles, Upchurch but Swale officers had done a basic loss-of-light test and the application had passed the test.

A representative from Upchurch Parish Council was invited to speak and made the following points:

- Emphasised that of the objections received on the application, only three adjoining residents had not raised objection;
- concerned with the safety of the site; and
- the development was out of character for the area.

Two Ward Members were present and were invited to speak and made the following points;

- Felt that the working group needed to walk around the site and the surrounding roads to appreciate the impact the development would have on the residents of The Poles, Upchurch;
- there would be a huge loss of amenity for residents at The Poles, Upchurch;
- the development was outside of the allocated housing plan of the Swale Borough Local Plan;
- Upchurch was classed a 'Tier 4' village in the Local Plan and not suitable for development because of the sustainability of Upchurch;
- Upchurch had no train station and a poor bus service so the residents of the proposed development would be reliant on a car; and
- the site only offered space for three cars which was not enough for residents and any visitors to the house.

In response to some of the loss of light comments the Area Planning Officer clarified that there were guidelines that could be applied to test daylight and sunlight impacts arising from developments that officers could use, and that this proposed development had passed the required tests. However, it was important to acknowledge that the tests and other planning judgements could not prevent any impact on neighbours and the test was whether impacts would be unacceptable or not. Following a suggestion from the agent that a technical daylight and sunlight assessment could be carried out, the Area Planning Officer informed Members that a loss-of-light test could be commissioned if they felt it was necessary, but the

results would not come back in time for consideration at the next Planning Committee meeting.

The Conservation Officer responded to concerns from local residents about the impact of the development on the area. He said that in his view the proposed development would not significantly impact the setting of the listed church or the setting of the conservation area. He advised that the applicant could put in place some hedgerow and other landscaping measures to help mitigate the limited harm to visual amenity which would arise from the development. The Conservation Officer clarified that in his view, the original (more contemporary) design of the proposed development might be more appropriate than a more traditional design as it would help to visually separate the buildings contained within the conservation area (dating from the 12th to 19th Century) from the post-war development.

A Member asked the Area Planning Officer if an application for a new design of the proposed houses had been submitted. In response, the Area Planning Officer advised that no plans had been formally submitted, but the applicant had made some informal plans available for Members to view at the site visit. Members viewed the site plans and decided that there was no need for the new designs to be submitted.

Chair

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