



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 January 2023

6.00 - 8.49 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Martin Baxendale (Chair)

Councillor Martin Brown

Councillor Doina Cornell

Councillor Victoria Gray

* Councillor Lindsey Green

Councillor Haydn Jones

* Absent

Councillor Helen Fenton (Vice-Chair)

* Councillor Jenny Miles

Councillor Loraine Patrick

Councillor Nigel Prenter

Councillor Mark Ryder

* Councillor Lucas Schoemaker

Officers in Attendance

Head of Development Management

Majors & Environment Team Manager

Principal Planning Lawyer, One Legal

Senior Biodiversity Officer

Democratic Services & Elections Officer

DCC.096 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Green, Miles and Schoemaker.

DCC.097 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

Councillor Ryder stated that as a Ward Member for the area and his role within the Parish Council he had sought advice from the Monitoring Officer regarding his ability to take part in the item. It was agreed that he would not speak in the slot for Ward Members and instead would participate with the debate.

DCC.098 Minutes

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

DCC.099 Planning Schedule and Procedure for Public Speaking

Representations were received and taken into account by the Committee in respect of Applications:

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| 1 | S.22/0460/FUL |
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Late Pages relating to Scheduled Item S.22/0460/FUL had been circulated to Committee prior to the meeting and were also made available during the meeting.

DCC.100 **Parcel R17 EL, Hunts Grove Phase 4, Hunts Grove Drive, Hardwicke, S.22/0460/FUL**

The Majors & Environment Team Manager introduced the report and explained it was a full application for residential conversion and allocation of allotments. He showed the committee the plans for the site in relation to the wider 'Hunts Grove' site and highlighted the following key points:

- The application was split into two parts on either side of the motorway.
- The application was for 76 dwellings.
- There was an overlap with another section of the Hunts Grove scheme of approx. 6 houses. Those houses would be included in this proposed scheme.
- There was a mix of housing and the committee was shown the range of properties.
- The existing farmhouse on the site was proposed to be converted into commercial space.
- The proposal included a building in the middle of the housing area with 2 retail units on the ground floor and flats above.
- To provide space for the additional housing and commercial buildings the area for allotments had been reduced at the original location. To offset the loss, further allotments had been proposed on the other part of the application site which was situated across the M5 motor-way from the original site. This additional provision would increase the overall area for allotments.
- The proposal met the 30% affordable housing requirement although all of the affordable units were flats.
- The proposal departed from the original master plan for the site which affected the agreed ecological mitigation for the protected species of Greater Crested Newts (GCN) on the site. Significant weight was given to the loss of the ecological mitigation from the original plan.
- The County Council had confirmed that if the proposal was approved they would not seek contribution towards school transport.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager explained that they had weighed up the merits of the scheme against the harm and recommended refusal.

Mrs Turner-Wilkes, a Parish Councillor, spoke on behalf of Hunts Grove Parish Council in support of the application. She asked the committee to approve the proposal for the following reasons:

- There were substantial benefits from the application for the Parish and residents.
- The negatives of the application had been overstated and the balance was different from what had been presented.
- The proposal brought back the 'heart of the village' which was lost during the 2017 changes to the master plan. This meant that there were proposed communal facilities in the centre of Hunts Grove.
- The proposed facilities were greatly desired by the residents.
- The allotment allocation was proposed to increase by 16%. The second parcel of allotments was accessible by a Public Right of Way (PROW) and closer to some residents than the original location.
- Neutral weight was given to the community and commercial aspects despite shops being available at the heart of the village and space for local businesses.
- Without the proposed community facilities, Hunts Grove would only have a neighbourhood centre which had been relocated to the edge of the village.

- The proposed converted farmhouse would provide a base for the Parish Council to hold their meetings. It would also provide a place for community groups to meet and allow for youth provision.
- The retention of the farmhouse would provide a historical link for the new site of Hunts Grove.
- Limited positive weight was given to the allocation of affordable homes due to their concentration however the housing was more widely distributed than the 5% of affordable homes currently bought by housing associations.
- The proposal provides further ecological enhancements and mitigations and a bat house on the allotment site that would double as storage and toilet facilities.

In conclusion the proposal would be the last opportunity to secure a viable community benefit to part offset losses from the revised master plan which took place in 2017.

Mr Danks, the agent, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He asked the Committee to support the application for the following reasons:

- The proposal was Community, Environmentally and Sustainably led. It had followed 2 years of engagement with Hunts Grove Parish Council and was an attempt to deliver the community gateway concept that was lost as part of the 2017 master plan revision.
- The allotment provision was not only retained but expanded.
- The proposal focused on the 10 minutes walkable neighbourhood principle.
- The concept of the proposal was to achieve a high level of biodiversity net gain.
- There were also new ecology conservation improvements proposed to the GCN mitigation strategy and an optimally located bat barn.
- This was an exemplar scheme through the design, layout and use of materials.
- The sustainable proposal contained the use of air source heat pumps, electric car chargers and thermal efficient building fabric which would reduce cost of living bills for residents.
- The scheme would deliver 30% affordable homes against a 0-5% for the rest of Hunts Grove.
- The significant increase in allotments would be split over two locations which would increase the walking and cycling access to more residents of Hunts Grove.
- The affordable housing mix could be amended and would be amenable through the section 106 process.

To conclude, Mr Danks requested the Committee to support the planning application subject to the completion of the section 106 which would address the Affordable Housing Officers comments.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager explained that the M5 acted as a barrier between Hunts Grove and the second parcel of allotments. They were also working with the developer to bring the agreed community facilities to the development.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager gave the following answers in response to questions asked:

- Page 43 listed the refusal reasons, number 3 being affordable housing (lack of). This was because there was not yet a signed legal agreement for the 30% affordable housing within the proposal. There were also concerns regarding the lack of property type variation of the affordable units.
- The original 106 agreement for the Hunts Grove development had trigger points which needed to be met before community facilities would be built. The trigger point for the allotments had now been met and was overdue however the developer was awaiting the outcome of this planning application.

In response to Councillor Patrick the Senior Biodiversity Officer confirmed that the closer the replacement roosting facilities were to the original habitat the more successful the mitigation would be. The new proposal looked to move the mitigation site further away from the existing habitat to the second parcel of the allotments.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager further explained the greater concern was with the Great Crested Newts and the proposal would move their breeding site and would also fragment the green corridor which was created as part of the original ecological mitigation for the site.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager provided the following answers to Members:

- The foot bridge that connected Hunts Grove to the second allocation of allotments was the only direct way to access them from Hunts Grove. Otherwise residents would need to either drive around Hunts Grove, to junction 12 of the M5 and then come back on themselves or they would need to travel all the way along Naas Lane in order to gain access.
- The proposed farm building conversion would provide flexible commercial space and was not directly comparable to the neighbourhood building seen on the master Hunts Grove plan.
- The farmhouse was not subject to any reserved matters applications, the deadline for which had now passed. Therefore any decisions made with regard to the farmhouse would require a separate planning application to come forward.

The Senior Biodiversity Officer explained, in response to Councillor Brown, that the new proposed site for the GCN was felt to be more isolated than in the original plan. This was due to the loss of the access to the green corridor which surrounded the development.

The Majors & Environment Team Manager confirmed the following in response to Councillors:

- The 106 agreements from the original master plan had set out the criteria for the size and potential uses of the neighbourhood building. They were working with the developer to make the space as flexible as possible to ensure it could have multiple uses. The trigger point for the neighbourhood building to be brought forward had not yet been met. The farmhouse conversion would not replace the neighbourhood building.
- GCN lived most of their life on land and used the pond for breeding therefore the green corridor on the original plan would allow the meta species to move around and mix together to prevent isolation.

The meeting was paused briefly and continued once all Members were present in the Council Chamber.

In response to Councillor Gray, it was confirmed:

- How affordable housing was defined in relation to the planning sector.
- That the 30% affordable houses were divided equally into rented and shared ownership. However, the only option was currently flats and there were no other property types available for affordable housing.
- A sufficient level of parking was provided for the proposed flats.

In response to Councillor Fenton it was confirmed that:

- The allotments were already overdue however the developer was awaiting the outcome of this application. If the allotments were not brought in within a timely manner then enforcement action could be taken.

- Allotments were a protected use and would require a large amount of information and evidence in order to change the use.

Councillor Jones proposed to approve the application subject to a deed variation and the 106 agreements. Councillor Ryder seconded.

Councillor Ryder debated at length the balance of the application in relation to the residents of Hunts Grove and the benefits it would bring to them against the harm discussed during the meeting.

Councillor Jones echoed Councillor Ryders comments and commended the comprehensive engagement completed by the applicant with the community.

Councillor Patrick echoed Councillor Jones and also debated the need for single person accommodation in the district.

Councillors Brown, Fenton and Prenter expressed support for the retention of the farmhouse however they debated their concerns for the balance of the application.

In response to Councillor Prenter, the Head of Development Management explained that if the Committee was minded to approve the application, they would also need to decide if they were happy with the proposed affordable housing arrangements or whether they wanted Officers to negotiate further.

Councillor Ryder echoed the need for single person accommodation in the district and debated the other phases of Hunts Grove with a similar grouping of affordable housing.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was refused with 4 votes for and 5 votes against.

Councillor Ryder proposed to defer the application until further discussions on biodiversity and housing could be addressed. Councillor Jones seconded.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was refused with 3 votes for and 6 votes against.

Councillor Fenton proposed the Officer recommendation to refuse the application. Councillor Brown seconded

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried with 5 votes in favour and 4 votes against.

RESOLVED To refuse permission.

The meeting closed at 8.49 pm

Chair