

Planning Committee

Thursday, 20 August 2020

Attendees: Councillor Lyn Barton, Councillor Helen Chuah, Councillor Pauline Hazell, Councillor Brian Jarvis, Councillor Cyril Liddy, Councillor Derek Loveland, Councillor Jackie Maclean, Councillor Philip Oxford

Apologies: Councillor Martyn Warnes

Substitutes: Councillor Chris Pearson (for Councillor Martyn Warnes)

808 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

809 191093 Land at Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester

The Committee considered an application for a residential development of 32 detached and semi-detached dwellings and flats complete with garages, access and open space. The Committee had before it a report and detailed amendment sheet in which all information about the application was set out.

The Committee members had been provided with video clips of the site taken by the planning officer to assist in their assessment of the impact of the proposals upon the locality and the suitability of the proposals for the site.

Simon Cairns, Development Manager presented the report and, together with Karen Syrett, Lead Officer for Planning, Housing and Economic Growth, and Martin Mason, Strategic Development Engineer, Essex County Council assisted the Committee in its deliberations.

Mary Stuttle addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8. Mrs Stuttle explained that she had previously commented on this site and the new plan raised questions. There are real concerns regarding road safety when all 3 sites of the development are considered. The additional traffic generated by new users of an already congested and dangerous part of Berechurch Hall Road would increase the volume of traffic and impact on existing and new residents (both motorists and pedestrians).

The possible removal of the ditch and the hedgerow that runs along the ditch that was removed in February was of concern. In addition, some work had been undertaken on oak trees. Assurance was sought that the remaining hedgerow would be protected.

The proposed temporary site entrance would impact greatly on the houses opposite and this impact would be worsened if the permanent site entrance to the adjoining 164 dwelling site was allowed to go ahead as it would be directly opposite a mews entrance.

At times it was extremely dangerous to pull out onto Berechurch Hall Road due to the

volume of traffic and the number of speeding motorists, and that crossing the road as a pedestrian was similarly difficult. Details of any road improvements by Essex County Council Highways were requested as well as information on services and facilities accessible by foot. Public transport provision was queried. The Committee should consider traffic calming measures, a pedestrian crossing and relocation of the permanent entrance further towards Maypole Green in an area not opposite existing dwellings entrances and with the provision of a roundabout.

The Development Manager explained that in course of negotiations with the planning officers the proposals had been revised taking into account the concerns of residents including those on the boundary in Catkins Mews and Amber House, particularly in regard of overlooking.

A traditional approach to the development had been taken with an L shaped site that includes public open space, 1 wheelchair adapted unit, nine affordable units and a significant number of single storey buildings/chalet bungalows and bungalows mitigating the impact on dwellings on the west of the site. Points for electric vehicles would be provided.

The temporary access to Berechurch Hall Road would be closed when the adjacent site was developed and brought forward for consideration in due course. Pedestrian links to the next phase of the site and links to the Colchester orbital footway were proposed.

The footway on the frontage was a requirement of the scheme and the ditch on the site frontage would be culverted to maintain existing drainage capacity allowing the footway over it for eventual use by pedestrians and cyclists. The coppicing of a heavily overgrown hedgerow had been undertaken to improve visibility splays and any new planting will be covered in planned landscaping. It was confirmed that an archaeological survey had already been undertaken but had yielded little. The Council's archaeological adviser was content with the archaeological condition.

Members of the Committee acknowledged the quality of the proposed development, the changes to ameliorate residents' concerns and the provision of affordable housing. The Committee requested the provision of a disabled parking space

Committee members were primarily concerned with road safety issues arising from the development and sought an assurance regarding road safety and to assist with this consideration accident statistics had been provided by Essex County Council. Members explored the need for road safety measures such as a vehicle activated sign at the Layer Road end of Berechurch Hall Road and a layby for the bus stop;

Martin Mason explained that Essex County Council could only ask the developer to mitigate the impact on the application before the Committee which was for 32 dwellings. When the larger scheme was brought forward, then a transport assessment would be required which would lead to more significant highway improvements and safety measures such as a central refuge island and possible half lay-by. The Development Manager agreed that the highways infrastructure provision required as a result of this particular application must be proportionate.

Concern was expressed that applications being submitted in small parcels made it difficult to look at the schemes as a whole. The Development Manager clarified that when the remainder of the site allocation comes forward the wider mitigation sought by the Committee should be delivered and was required by the site allocation policy. The Committee considered that an informative should be added advising that the applicant must make appropriate provision for effective traffic calming on Berechurch Road when bringing forward the remainder of the allocation, and that the Planning Officer should write to land owner and developer of the remainder of the allocation to stress the need for a Transport Assessment including full and effective mitigation of the highway impacts of the development including pedestrian safety and crossing points on Berechurch Hall Road.

RESOLVED (SEVEN voted FOR, TWO voted AGAINST) that –

(a)The application be approved subject to the signing of a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the developer obligations identified, within 6 months from the date of the Committee meeting. In the event that the legal agreement is not signed within 6 months, to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Place and Client Services to refuse the application, or otherwise to be authorised to complete the agreement. The permission will also be subject to the conditions as set out in the report, the precise wording of which may also be amended under delegated authority and an additional condition to require the provision of a disabled parking space;

(b)further Informative advising that future applications for the remainder of the allocation pursuant to the allocation policy ref: SC1 must make appropriate provision for effective traffic calming on Berechurch Hall Road to ensure highway safety and safe access/egress for residents.

(c)Planning to write to land owner/promoter and developer of remainder of ELP allocation SC1 (Berechurch Hall Rd) to explain the policy requirement for a Transport Assessment and full and effective mitigation of highways' impacts of development including pedestrian safety and crossing points on Berechurch Hall Road.