

Planning Committee

Thursday, 25 August 2016

Attendees: Councillor Lyn Barton (Member), Councillor Helen Chuah (Member), Councillor Pauline Hazell (Group Spokesperson), Councillor Theresa Higgins (Chairman), Councillor Brian Jarvis (Member), Councillor Cyril Liddy (Deputy Chairman), Councillor Derek Loveland (Member), Councillor Jackie Maclean (Member), Councillor Rosalind Scott (Member)

Substitutes: No substitutes were recorded at the meeting

365 Site Visits

Councillors Barton, Hazell, Higgins, Jarvis, Liddy, Loveland and Scott attended the site visits.

366 Minutes of 30 June 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

367 Minutes of 4 August 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

368 161099 23 Belle Vue Road, Wivenhoe

Councillor Liddy (in respect of his personal acquaintance with the objectors) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

The Committee considered an outline application with all matters reserved for the construction of a new 3/4 bedroom dwelling within the boundary of 23 Belle Vue Road, Wivenhoe. The application had been referred to the Committee following its deferral at the meeting on 30 June 2016 to allow for a site visit and the submission of illustrative plans to demonstrate that a satisfactory development could be achieved. The Committee had before it a report and amendment sheet in which all the information was set out. The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposals upon the locality and the suitability of the proposals for the site.

Chris Harden Planning Officer, presented the report and, together with Andrew Tyrrell, Planning Manager, assisted the Committee in its deliberations. The Planning Officer confirmed that illustrative drawings had been submitted which indicated that the gap between the boundary of No 25 Belle Vue Road and the proposed new dwelling would be 1.2 metres at its narrowest whilst the gap between the boundary to No 23 Belle Vue Road would be 0.8 metres with a further 1.0 metres to the wall of No 23 Belle Vue Road. The Parish Council has submitted a further representation which had repeated the comments made by the Council previously.

Greg Smith addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in opposition to the application. He asked the Committee to consider whether the gap between No 23 and No 25 Belle Vue, Road was sufficient to accommodate another property. He did not consider that the illustrative drawings provided any useful information and repeated his previous concerns that the application drawings were contradictory. He referred to the relevant planning policies requiring enhancement of the local area, character and spacing of existing dwellings and street scene. He was concerned that the distance proposed to the boundary of No 25 Belle Vue Road would not be adequate and considered that a minimum gap needed to be 2.5 metres. If the Committee were minded to approve the application he requested additional conditions to protect the front aspect of his property and to remove permitted development rights in respect of the new dwelling.

Councillor Cory attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He repeated his previous concerns regarding the cramming effect of the proposed new property and considered the additional information did not adequately address matters requested by the Committee previously. He sought clarification regarding the precise width of the plot and raised concerns in relation to the application's compliance with the Council's policy on infill development. He did not consider that there were other similar examples of this type of development in Belle Vue Road and, as such, was of the view that the proposed dwelling would be out of character and the parking spaces to the front of the property would adversely dominate the street scene.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the gap between the two neighbouring properties (Nos 23 and 25) was 8.6 metres wide at the point where the proposed property would be located. He explained that the application was for outline approval and was of the view that an appropriate design for the plot would enhance the area rather than be detrimental. He confirmed that the proposal did comply with the Council's policies in relation to infill development, it would not be out of character for the area and the proposal for two parking spaces for the new property and the existing property did meet the necessary standard. He also accepted that the removal of permitted development rights would be a reasonable additional condition.

Some members of the Committee considered the proposal would not be detrimental to the area, that there were similar examples of infill development in Belle Vue Road and a

varied mix of houses had been noted. The quality of the design of the proposed dwelling was considered to be important and was a matter which could benefit from being referred to the Committee for consideration. The suggestion to remove permitted development rights in respect of the proposed new dwelling was also supported.

One member of the Committee was of the view that a condition to provide for a minimum gap between properties of 2.5 metres should be applied as well as a condition to provide for the parking spaces at both the properties to be in place prior to the commencement of the development. Reference was also made to the benefit of a condition to provide for soft landscaping to the frontage of both properties and clarification was sought regarding the impact of the new property on the light levels from the side windows to the existing house.

The Planning Officer explained that a requirement for a 2.5 metre gap would not leave enough space for a dwelling whilst he did not consider there would be a significant impact in relation to the side windows to No 23 Belle Vue Road.

The Planning Manager confirmed that, although it wouldn't be practicable to apply a blanket condition in relation to parking space provision prior to development because of the vehicle movements during the construction phase, a car parking condition could provide for the spaces to be provided at the new dwelling prior to occupation of the property and for the spaces to be provided at the existing property prior to the demolition of the garage.

RESOLVED (FIVE voted FOR, THREE voted AGAINST and ONE ABSTAINED) that application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report, additional conditions to provide for the removal of permitted development rights in relation to the new property and soft landscaping to the frontage of both the new and existing property and the amendment of the parking space condition to provide for parking spaces to be in place to the front of the existing property prior to the demolition of the garage.

369 161181 Laborne, Chapel Lane, West Bergholt, Colchester

The Committee considered an application the proposed development of two two-storey dwellings, associated garage/stores and associated works including upgrading of the existing vehicular access, following demolition of the existing dwelling, at Laborne, Chapel Lane, West Bergholt. The application had been referred to the Committee because it had been called in by Councillor Willetts. The Committee had before it a report in which all the information was set out. The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposals upon the locality and the suitability of the proposals for the site.

James Ryan, Principal Planning Officer, presented the report and assisted the Committee in its deliberations.

Christopher Brindle addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in opposition to the application. He asked the Committee to consider what it was that constituted a village and what it was that stopped a village becoming a town. He felt that the Village Design Statement had tried to address this issue. He was of the view that the proposal created an excessive volume which could be viewed from the street. He was concerned that the character of Chapel Lane would be undermined by the proposal and that it would benefit from the same considerations given to the recently approved application at nearby Homecroft in Chapel Lane which had been given approval for a development of bungalows.

Dean Pearce addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in support of the application. He acknowledged that new developments were sometimes not welcomed in smaller communities but referred to the very high quality of the designs which had been arrived at following detailed discussions with the planning officers and to take into account the concerns expressed by local residents. These revised designs had embraced a more vernacular approach which had been wholeheartedly welcomed as more acceptable by the planning office. He also referred to the lack of objection from statutory consultees and that the proposals complied with all necessary planning policies.

Councillor Willetts attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He agreed that the bungalow was in need of a sympathetic development proposal to enhance the site and that a proposal needed to be of a high standard. However he considered the current proposal would be more acceptable on a larger site and in a less prominent location. He was concerned that the two dwellings would appear to be too large for the plot. He referred to the Village Design Statement and other relevant policies which required new developments to be in proportion with existing properties and was of the view that the bungalows approved at Homecroft were more appropriate for this location and would better fit into the street scene. He was of the view that the character of the community needed to be preserved but that this proposal would create too great a change. He referred to the existence of higher density developments in West Bergholt, indicating that the village was not opposed to this type of development as a matter of principle. He went on to acknowledge the revised designs had gone a long way to meet residents' concerns but was of the view that a chalet or 1 ½ storey style proposal would be more inkeeping.

Councillor Barber attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He supported the views expressed by Councillor Willetts and agreed with the suggestion that a chalet or 1 ½ storey style proposal would be preferable. He was of the view that the proposal did not comply with the principles contained in the Village Design Statement, especially given the recent approval for the bungalow scheme at Homecroft. He was of the view that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on views across the site to the valley beyond and considered that this impact

would be more acceptable if the proposal did not include two storey dwellings. The Principal Planning Officer also confirmed that although 21 objections had been received these were from 11 addresses.

The Principal Planning Officer was of the view that the street scene would not be negatively impacted as the site was a corner plot and was not as prominent as the Homecroft plot. Additionally, he considered that 1 ½ storey dwellings would dilute the architectural quality of the proposals on the basis that the current drawings provided for slate roofs with slack pitches which were likely to be preferable to 1 ½ storeys which would require much steeper pitched roofs.

One member of the Committee was concerned about the overbearing nature of the proposal and the impact it would have on the scenic character of the village and the need for the Village Design Statement to be adequately taken account of. The application had generated 21 objections and these views needed to be considered fully.

Other members of the Committee did not consider the proposal would lead to a loss of view for residents, particularly given the aspect and triangular shape of the site and the location of other two storey houses to the rear and around the plot. Committee members also welcomed the very high quality design of the proposals and were of the view these would complement the locality.

RESOLVED (EIGHT voted FOR and ONE voted AGAINST) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report.

370 161913 19 Layer Road, Colchester

The Committee considered an application for a two storey side extension and wall at 19 Layer Road, Colchester. The application had been referred to the Committee because the agent was employed by the Council on a consultancy basis. The Committee had before it a report in which all the information was set out.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report.

371 161805 20 Dale Close, Stanway

The Committee considered an application for a two storey side extension and first floor side extension at 20 Dale Close, Stanway. The application had been referred to the Committee because the applicant was an employee of the Council. The Committee had before it a report in which all the information was set out.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report.