

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 16 June 2021

7.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Brian Sangha (Chair)
Cllr Harold Craske (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Brian Francis
Gary Harding
Samir Jassal
Bob Lane
Emma Morley
Elizabeth Mulheran
Tony Rice

Note: Councillor: Lauren Sullivan was also in attendance

Wendy Lane	Assistant Director (Planning)
Vicky Nutley	Deputy Head of Legal Services (Place)
Shazad Ghani	Service Manager (Planning)
Richard Hart	Team Leader (Development Management)
Amanda Grout	Planning Officer
David Herrington	Digital Manager (Technical Support)
Lauren Wallis	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)
Ciara Ferguson	Committee Services Trainee

8. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

9. To sign the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 19 May 2021 were signed by the Chair.

10. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

11. Planning applications for determination by the Committee

11.1 20210390 - 94 Gordon Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent - Conversion of dwelling into 2 self-contained maisonettes (1 no. one bedroom and 1 no. two bedroom) incorporating the formation of a new basement lightwell at the front, an enlarged dormer window in the side roof slope and entrance door on the side elevation

The Committee considered application reference 20210390 in relation to the conversion of a dwelling into two self contained maisonettes (one with 1 bedroom and the other with 2 bedrooms) incorporating the formation of a new basement lightwell at the front, an enlarged dormer window in the side roof slope and entrance door on the side elevation at 94 Gordon Road, Northfleet, Kent.

The Planning Officer introduced the report and advised that there was a typing error in paragraph 6.40 which should read “complies” not “conflicts”. An additional statutory consultee had also responded with no objections. The Committee was advised that the proposal complied with the Council’s Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework and there was therefore a presumption in favour of development. Members viewed photographs of the site which showed a residential area near the Rosherville recreation ground. Parking in the area was by permit only with some off-street parking. There was access from Gordon Road to the recreation ground via an alleyway that ran from the road alongside the curtilage of the application site and it was confirmed that the alleyway was not owned by the applicant.

The officer noted that this was a resubmission of an expired scheme for 2 two bedroom maisonettes. With regard to this application the ground floor flat now had one bedroom and a study as the room did not meet with National Space Standards for a bedroom. However, additional storage had been provided for both flats by means of the expansion of the lightwell.

In conclusion, the proposed development for a net increase of one dwelling unit (in this case one maisonette) would offer a minimal contribution towards meeting local need and delivery and, accordingly, added some weight in support of the application. In this case, it was considered that the proposal would accord with local and national planning policy and was therefore recommended for approval.

The application was before the Committee because it had been called in by Cllr Lauren Sullivan, a Ward Councillor.

The Committee heard the views of a public speaker in objection to the application who answered questions from Members.

The Committee heard from Cllr Lauren Sullivan, a Ward Councillor, who also spoke on behalf of her fellow Ward Councillors Peter Scollard and Gurbax Singh.

The following points were made during discussion on this item:

- Following a question with regard to the alleyway, the officer confirmed that it was a pedestrian path and not a driveway and should not be accessed by vehicles despite the fact that there was a vehicle parked on it in the photograph shown to the Committee. The alleyway led from the road to the park with no throughway to

another road. Members were reminded that the alleyway was not in the ownership of the applicant, was not a material consideration and therefore planning conditions could not be imposed for its improvement. The officer undertook to take up the matter with the appropriate officer as to whether a barrier could be installed that would prevent the alleyway being used for parking and would report her findings to the Chair of the Committee. Members were also advised that this could not be added to the decision as an informative.

- A concern was raised on whether the study could be used as a bedroom despite the room not meeting the National Space Standards. The officer confirmed that the application was for 100% market housing and therefore occupancy or tenancy could not be controlled by condition. The scheme was submitted as one bedroom and a study for flat 1 and that was what had been appraised.
- The Committee was advised that access to the communal garden was from the kitchen of the ground floor flat and via the alleyway through a gate in the boundary fence for the first floor flat 2.
- A couple of additional concerns were raised with regard to the alleyway in that it was unlit and therefore attracted antisocial behaviour, and the pathway surface was uneven and therefore a trip hazard. The Assistant Director (Planning) confirmed that the alleyway was unregistered.
- It was confirmed that there were stairs in both flats and no information had been submitted in relation to disabled access.
- Members noted that the area was predominantly single dwellings many of which had been built in 1903 with a few maisonettes with the application site having a terrace of town house next to it. Concern was expressed on the proposal possibly setting a precedent. The Committee was advised that the building had previously been a public house and then an off licence after which it became a 4 bedroom dwelling so it was a larger dwelling than the majority in the locality. The officer acknowledged that other proposals to split dwellings might come forward in future and that each application would be judged on their own merits.
- The Committee was advised by the objector that parking was a major issue in Gordon Road and the surrounding area. Many families with small children lived in the road and despite the fact it was controlled by permit parking, people parked outside of the painted bays, on corners and it was very dangerous.
- Concern was expressed that the proposed two flats could attract as many as four cars where the existing four bedroom dwelling might not. The additional dwelling might also put pressure on the existing amenities of the area.
- The Planning Officer noted that that Council's parking standard for a four bedroom property was two parking spaces which was the same for the proposed two maisonettes and this was set out in CS11 of the Core Strategy.
- The Committee was advised that the parking issues in the area were exacerbated by the distance from the town centre and lack of access to good transport links.
- An opinion was expressed that the proposal was not in keeping with the character of the area especially in relation to the side dormer. In addition, the communal garden had the potential for conflict and a lack of maintenance and the front lightwell had potential security and privacy issues. The removal of Permitted Development Rights was suggested.
- Members noted that given that the alleyway was not in the ownership of the applicant and the proposal had been designed to meet National Space Standards and national and local planning policies. Therefore, if the application was refused, the Council would have a difficult task defending this decision if it went to Appeal.

Resolved that:

- (a) The application 20210390 be DELEGATED to the Service Manager (Development Management) for the issue of planning PERMISSION subject planning conditions as set out in the report and completion of the Unilateral Undertaking for SAMMS; and
- (b) Officers investigate the matter of action in relation to stopping vehicles from accessing and parking in the alleyway between Gordon Road and Rosherville Recreation Ground with the Property Services and other appropriate officers in the Council and to report their findings back to the Chair of the Committee.

- Note:
- (a) Mrs Donna Ives (an objector) addressed the Committee.
 - (b) Ward Councillor Lauren Sullivan spoke with the leave of the Chair.

12. Planning applications determined under delegated powers by the Director (Planning & Development)

A schedule showing applications determined by the Director (Environment) under delegated powers had been published on the Council's website.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 7.58 pm