

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 14 June 2023

7.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Lee Croxton (Chair)
Cllr Rajinder Atwal (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam
Gary Harding
Samir Jassal
Alan Metcalf
Lyn Milner
Peter Scollard
Ektaveen Thandi

Note: Councillors: Burden, Meade, Mochrie-Cox, Rolles, Sizer, Singh Thandi and Wardle were also in attendance.

Shazad Ghani	Service Manager (Planning)
Richard Hart	Team Leader (Development Management)
Faye Hobbs	Team Leader (Development Management)
Lisa Williams	Career Grade Planner (Development Management)
Laura Caiels	Assistant Head of Legal Services (Place Team)
Karen Gingles	Committee Service Officer (Minutes)

1. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alison Williams. Councillor Ektaveen Thandi attended as her substitute.

2. To sign the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 March 2023 were signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Metcalf declared that his daughter was previously landlady of the former Battle of Britain Public House.

4. Planning applications for determination by the Committee

4.1 20221251 - Former Site of Battle of Britain, Coldharbour Road, Northfleet

The Committee considered application 20221251 – Former Site of Battle of Britain, Coldharbour Road, Northfleet. The application was for the construction of a care home

(within Class C2) associated parking, access, drainage, boundary treatments, landscape, and other associated works.

The Planning Officer outlined key points from the report:

- The site was located in an urban residential area, on the corner of Coldharbour Road and New House Lane and covered an area of approximately 0.45 hectares. Shears Green School playing field was located to the northeast of the site with St Clements Close located to the southeast.
- The proposal would provide 65 single occupancy bedrooms for dementia specific care.
- It was proposed that the site offer car parking for 27 cars, which would include 2 blue badge holder spaces with additional space for an ambulance. There would also be a cycle storage provision for 8 bicycles.
- The development would include a number of onsite facilities for residents to include; a hairdresser, cinema, dining rooms and cafes, family room and lounges.
- The development would require the removal of some trees with new trees being planted. This was outlined within the soft landscaping condition of the report.
- The hard standing would be retained, and this was outlined within the report in condition 21.
- The proposals would have no detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape, character of the area, amenity, highway safety or parking.
- The proposed scheme was deemed acceptable in principle and provide much needed residential care for elderly people with dementia.
- The development was considered to comply with local and national planning policy.

The Committee were invited to ask questions for clarification and raised the following:

- Clarification was sought regarding height of the proposed building and whether three stories would encroach on the surrounding residential dwellings, dominating the street scene. The Planning Officer assured the Committee that consideration had been given to the proposed elevation of the building and the prominence of the structure would be mitigated with several factors which were outlined in paragraph 6.35 of the report. The Planning Officer went on to inform Members, that the height of the proposed building was between 1.5 to 2 metres higher than that of the previous structure. The Service Manager (Planning) explained that the separation distance between the proposed building and surrounding dwellings meant the bulk and massing would not have a detrimental impact upon the townscape.
- Reference was made to the distance between the proposed position of the building and that of properties opposite the plot. The Planning Officer clarified that the new structure would be 5 metres from the roadside boundary and 14 metres from New House Lane, so reducing the impact on residents.
- Members raised concern regarding what would happen if the care home were to cease operation in the future and whether this could lead to the property being used for general residential purposes. The Service Manager (Planning) advised that if Members were minded to approve the proposal it would be subject to a Class C2 condition, (care home providing residential and nursing care for the elderly), which was outlined on page 58 of the report. This condition would mean that, the building

could not be used for any other purpose. Any request to change this to a residential C3 building in the future, would require further planning permission.

- Members queried why consideration had not been given to locating the building further back into the plot, to reduce noise for the care home residents and also to minimise the impact of the proposal on the neighbouring residents close to the street scene. The Planning Officer explained that the proposed development had rooms on both sides of the building and there was a noise condition within the application to reduce the noise for residents. It was highlighted that there were also 12 residential dwellings located to the rear of the plot, so it was considered a better option to have the building closer to the street scene.

The Committee heard the views of two registered speakers in favour of the application and had their questions answered:

- The Committee questioned the statement that the care home would be for the use of the local people. The speaker advised that assessment had taken place looking at people living within a 5 mile radius and so those in residence would largely be people living in the local area.
- Members noted the historic importance of the former Battle of Britain public house. It was asked if a memorial would be included within the plans, as it had been on the previous application. The speaker informed Committee this request was noted during the public consultation event and it was proposed to include a decorative railing, to commemorate and link back to the historic element of the site.
- Members queried whether the speaker was aware that in recent times 2 care homes had been lost within Gravesham. The speaker advised she was aware of this.
- Concern was raised regarding the number of parking spaces within the site. The speaker informed Committee that residents would not have cars, due to their complex needs, so parking would be mainly for staff and visitors. She advised that research of other sites suggested that at busiest times the car park would be at 50% capacity, as such the agent was confident that the proposed provision would be sufficient.
- Clarity was sought regarding the projected completion time of the care home. The speaker stated that subject to permission it was estimated that work would begin in January 2024 with completion in July 2025.
- Members queried that if the permission was not granted whether the applicant would revert to the previously approved planning permission. The speaker advised that from a commercial perspective they would.
- The Committee queried whether the principal contractors used would be inhouse or sourced locally. The Speaker advised that there would be a local tender process carried out within Kent.

The Committee heard the views of Councillors Mochrie-Cox and Narinderjit Singh Thandi, Ward Councillors for Coldharbour & Perry Street.

Following discussion, the Committee raised the following points:

- It was highlighted that although there was concern regarding whether there would be sufficient parking, studies had been carried out to indicate the provision would be sufficient.

- Concern was raised regarding parking demand impacting residential street parking. The Service Manager (Planning) advised Committee that Kent County Council were content with the proposal, so this could not be a reason for refusal.
- The site was currently derelict which was not attractive and harmed the street scene and there was a great need for care homes and specialist dementia care within the community locally.
- The proposal was deemed a good opportunity to provide employment and provide much needed care home facilities for the elderly and thereby a benefit to the local community.

RESOLVED that application 20221251 be delegated to the Service Manager (Planning) to grant PERMISSION subject to the applicant agreeing pre-commencement conditions and the finalisation of planning conditions.

Note: Laura Grimason (Planner) and Max Paddick (Applicant) spoke in favour of the application

4.2 20230136 - Land at Worcester Close, Istead Rise, Gravesend

This item was withdrawn.

5. Appointment of Appeals Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the wishes of the political groups in relation to the appointment of Members to the Appeals Sub-Committee.

Resolved that an Appeals Sub-Committee be appointed as shown below:

Labour:	Conservative:
Cllr Lyn Milner (Chair)	Cllr Jordan Meade
Cllr Jo Hart (Vice Chair)	

6. Appointment of Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the wishes of the political groups in relation to the appointment of Members of the Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee.

Resolved that a Hackney Carriage Sub-Committee be appointed as shown below:

Labour:	Conservative:
Cllr John Burden (Chair)	Cllr Jordan Meade
Cllr Lee Croxton (Vice Chair)	

7. Planning applications determined under delegated powers by the Director (Environment)

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 7:53pm