

Planning Committee

Thursday, 7 March 2024

7.00 pm

Present:

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

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam
Gary Harding
Samir Jassal
Alan Metcalf
Peter Scollard
Alison Williams
Deborah Croxton

Note: Councillor: Shane Mochrie-Cox was also in attendance.

Shazad Ghani	Head of Planning
Faye Hobbs	Team Leader (Development Management)
Lisa Fisher	Senior Planner
Laura Caiels	Assistant Head of Legal Services (Place)
Karen Gingles	Committee Service Officer (Minutes)

32. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Lyn Milner. Cllr Deborah Croxton attended as her substitute.

33. To sign the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 January 2024 were signed by the Chair.

34. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

35. Planning applications for determination by the Committee

36. 20231182 - Site Of Battle Of Britain Coldharbour Road, Northfleet, Gravesend

The Committee considered application 20231182 - Site Of Battle Of Britain Coldharbour Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent. The application was for the variation of condition 2 attached to planning reference 20221251, for the construction of a care home (within Class

C2) associated parking, access, drainage, boundary treatments, landscape and other associated works; to allow the increase of 65 bedrooms to 75 bedrooms and the provision of a basement.

Members were informed of the proposed changes to the previously approved scheme under planning reference 20221251. These were as follows:

- An increase to the number of bedrooms from 65 bedrooms to 75 bedrooms and associated internal alterations.
- The creation of a basement floor.
- Partial set back on first floor north elevation changed to create a consistent wall line.
- Introduction of a shallow lightwell at the north corner of the building adjacent to the sight entrance to allow basement level access.
- 2no. additional private patio areas to southern side of south wing.
- New path introduced adjacent to resident's courtyard to link to relocated service entrance.
- Altered Windows.
- Altered Materials.

The Planner explained that the only change to plans in relation to landscaping was to accommodate the new basement with a small section of hard landscaping near the entrance to the side, providing a pathway to the new basement.

Members were informed of changes to room configurations internally which consisted of:

- the basement space would be used to relocate staff rooms, freeing up space for resident bedrooms on the ground, first and second floors. Staff rooms in the basement would include; staff WC's, kitchen' laundry facilities, staff rest area and a plant room.
- The ground floor would see an increase from 25 bedrooms to 29 by removal of staff areas.
- Staff rooms would be removed on the first floor and would therefore see an increase in bedrooms from 25 to 29.
- The second floor would see an increase of resident bedrooms from 15 to 17.

The Planner outlined the minor external changes due to the proposed scheme such as altered windows, new pathway, new shallow light well and 2 additional patio areas on the southern side.

The Committee were advised that the proposed changes would have not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area and any changes made, took into consideration the character of the site and surrounding townscape.

The Committee were invited to ask questions for clarification:

- It was queried whether the parking provision should be increased due to the additional 10 bedrooms proposed. The Planner informed the Committee that although there were additional rooms this would not mean a commensurate increase in staff numbers. There would still be the previously agreed, 27 spaces and 1 ambulance space provided which continues to meet the minimum parking requirements.

- Members wondered if the increase in residents should impact the number of spaces allocated for disabled parking. The Planner advised that as per the original permission, there was no additional disabled parking. The Head of Planning added that due to the health of the residents they were not encouraged to leave the site or able to drive, as such they would not require parking spaces. He went on to say that a planning condition for the existing permission prevented able-bodied residents from residing at the site. Therefore, it was deemed that no additional disabled parking would be required.

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

- In light of comments made by the registered speakers, concern was raised over whether financial viability was a material planning consideration for this application. The Head of Planning confirmed that financial viability was not a consideration for this application, and that it did not form part of the planning considerations before Members as set out within the report. Clarity was sought regarding staff working patterns in relation to the available parking on site. The speaker confirmed that staff would operate shift patterns.
- Members queried why there were no additional staff appointed in account of the extra residents and whether this met legal requirements. The speaker assured the Committee that the original quota of staff was still sufficient for the increased number of residents. This ratio was based on the new operator's experience, which reflected how they operated other care homes in their portfolio.

The Committee heard the views of Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, Ward Councillor for Coldharbour and Perry Street.

Addressing points raised, the Head of Planning informed the Committee that Kent County Council Highways and the Council's Highway's officer did not consider there to be any issues in relation to parking concerns, that needed to be addressed via the imposition of further planning conditions or a planning obligation.

The Committee were invited to make further comments:

- It was highlighted that the principle of the application had been approved previously and noted that the amended design had mitigated the need for too much design change, through utilising the basement area. It was not felt the design effected the surrounding area.
- It was noted that the local area and Borough lacked dementia respite care, and this could be a consideration by the operator, when utilising the additional 10 bedrooms.
- Observation was made that from the parking available, consideration should be given to disabled visitors, as increased residents meant increased visitor need.
- Members were in agreement that residence for dementia care was in high demand.

RESOLVED that the application be granted PERMISSION subject to planning conditions outlined in the report.

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

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

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 7:37pm