

Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 3 September 2018 at European School of Osteopathy, Boxley commencing at 8.50 pm.

Councillors present: Mrs A Brindle (Chair), Ms L Clarke, Mr D Hollands, Mr J Willmott, Mrs P Bowdery (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

1. **Apologies and absences**
2. **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying**
None.

The meeting was not adjourned as no members of the public requested to speak.

3. **Planning Applications for Consideration**
Ratifications

18/504202/TPO application to fell three Ash Trees. 2 Woodlands Walderslade ME5 9JX. Deadline 4 September 2018. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision after consulting members, do not wish to object defer to the views of the borough landscape officer.

18/504144/FULL Retrospective application for a replacement barn workshop. Cossington Fields Farm, North Bell Lane Walderslade. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision after consulting members;

Wish to see refused and reported to the Planning Committee for the following reasons: Contrary to Policy DM37 Expansion of existing businesses in rural areas. Whilst the parish council recognises the need for diversification in rural areas this site is unsustainable. It cannot be reached by walking or public transport as it is at the end of an extremely long and narrow country lane with few vehicle passing places.

The design of the replacement building and increase in floor space will allow expansion of the business to 24 hours Monday to Saturday. This is a full two storey building replacing a smaller unit and the design is not of a traditional farm building or in fact a business type building it is essentially designed as a barn conversion style house.

Policy DM 37 requires buildings to be small in scale and that the increase in floorspace would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads or significant increase in use of an existing substandard access. The Bell Lane junction with Harp Farm Road is substandard with poor vision splays and is located on a bend. The site, with retrospective planning permission also being applied for an illegally built workshop, is turning into a small industrial area which has poor supporting highway infrastructure. The applicant clearly wishes to expand his business which will increase traffic along Bell Lane and Policy DM 37 clearly states rural business requiring expanded premises should look to relocate to one of the Economic Development areas identified in policy SP 22.

18/500535 Retrospective application for erection of a detached garage, stores and workshop. Cossington Fields Farm North Bell Lane Boxley Maidstone Kent ME14 3EG. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision, after consulting members;

Wish to see refused and reported to the Planning Committee for the following reasons: Contrary to Policy DM 37 Expansion of existing businesses in rural areas. Whilst the parish council recognises the need for diversification in rural areas this site is unsustainable. It cannot be reached by walking or public transport as it is at the end of an extremely long and narrow country lane with few vehicle passing places.

Policy DM 37 requires buildings to be small in scale and that the increase in floorspace would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads or significant increase

in use of an existing substandard access. The Bell Lane junction with Harp Farm Road is substandard with poor vision splays and is located on a bend. The garage, stores and workshop are quite substantial being built over two floors and the design is not of a traditional farm building or in fact a business type building it is essentially designed as a house.

The business use is quoted as restoration of classic vehicles and it would not, it is felt, be unreasonable to expect that some, if not most, of these vehicles would be brought to the site on low loaders adding to the highway safety issues surrounding the inadequate junction of Bell Lane/ Harp Farm Road.

The site is turning into a small industrial area which has poor supporting highway infrastructure and Policy DM 37 clearly states rural business requiring expanded premises should look to relocate to one of the Economic Development areas identified in policy SP 22.

If the Planning Committee is minded to approve the application then it is requested that a condition is applied that the structure cannot be used as residential accommodate and Permitted Development Rights are suspended for this building requiring any changes to use or internal layout must require planning permission. Business Class Usage should be assigned to the building so that it cannot be changed to residential use without Change of Use being applied for.

Boxley Parish Council considers that retrospective planning applications are an unacceptable abuse of the planning system as they take away the right of Planning Officers and Planning Committees to influence and guide development. This site was reported to Maidstone Borough Council in early 2016 as being developed without planning permission and building work should have been stopped immediately.

If permission is refused, then MBC is requested to take immediate enforcement action to have the building demolished.

18/503390, Chesterfield House 1 Longwood, Walderslade. **Ratified** the Clerk's decision after consulting members, to amend the original response to remove the request to have the application reported to the Maidstone Planning Committee. The following submission being made to MBC website.

"Having received additional information and having had two councillors undertake a site visit the parish council wishes to amend its response to remove the request for it to be reported to the Maidstone Borough Council Planning Committee and for the decision to be left to be made under Officer Delegated Powers. Members do however request a condition that the garage cannot be converted to residential accommodation and cannot be sold separately."

Decisions

Tree Preservation Order no 5008/2018/TPO Lordswood Urban Extension, Gleamingwood Drive. Members wish to support this application.

18/504235/TPO application to reduce Hazel Tree by 30% all round as the tree is overhanging the footpath and neighbours garden. 28 Forestdale Road Walderslade ME5 9NB. Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

18/504380/TPO application Tree Preservation Order application - T1. Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - fell to ground level. Tree at rear of number 10 Abigail Crescent. Cavity and bark wound with decay at base. T2. Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - fell to ground level. Tree at rear of number 11 Abigail Crescent. Extensive bark wound with decay along stem. Major dead wood within crown. T3. Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - fell to ground level. Tree at rear of number 11 and 12 Abigail Crescent. Bark wounds along stem. Reason: health and safety. All trees could be infected by ash

bacterial canker. Land to R/O 10,11and 12 Abigail Crescent, Walderslade ME5 9DZ. Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

18/504447/TPO application 1 x Hazel – fell to ground level and grind the stump reason: pushing the resident’s fence. 3 Sylvan Glade, Walderslade ME5 9PW. Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

4. **Next Meeting**

Next Environment Committee meeting 17 September 2018 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, ME5 9RU commencing at 7.30pm.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman Date

DRAFT