

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Record of Decisions of the meeting of the  
**Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee**  
Held Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Monday, 26 July 2021**

### PRESENT

Councillors: Councillor Jeff Haine (Chairman), Councillor Julian Cooper (Vice-Chair), Councillor Andrew Beaney, Councillor Nathalie Chapple, Councillor Merilyn Davies, Councillor Ted Fenton, Councillor David Jackson, Councillor Alex Postan, Councillor Geoff Saul, Councillor Dean Temple and Councillor Alex Wilson

Officers: Joan Desmond (Principle Planner), Stuart McIver, Phil Shaw (Business Manager - Development Management) and Kim Smith (Principle Planner (Enforcement)). Michelle Ouzman (Secretary).

#### **11 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Ted Fenton requested that it be noted that his name was missing off the draft minutes as in attendance. This has been rectified.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 28 June 2021, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **12 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mike Cahill, due to the recent death of his son. He was due to attend, although he is not a member of this Committee.

#### **13 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

However Councillor Andrew Beaney affirmed that he had no connection to Mill House Hotel application.

#### **14 Applications for Development**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Business Manager – Development Management, giving details of an application for development, copies of which had been circulated.

#### 20/01165/FUL - Mill House Hotel Station Road

The Planning Officer, Joan Desmond introduced the application for redevelopment of site to provide a new 33 bedroom hotel and ancillary facilities including restaurant, spa, gym, swimming pool, alehouse, bakehouse, and servicing together with associated parking and landscaping and reinstatement of former mill leat. (Amended plans and description).

The Chairman advised Members that the agent had advised that the required archaeological field evaluation work would soon be undertaken and if Members resolved to grant permission subject to a S106 agreement, this would allow time for the works to be completed prior to any permission being granted.

James Roberts addressed the Committee, and following questions from Cllr Nathalie Chapple he confirmed to the Chair that the sites facilities were to be open to the public and not just for residents of the hotel.

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The Planning Officer then presented her report including the late representations and concluded as follows:

The re-development of this site for improved hotel accommodation is considered to be acceptable in principle and would be supported by Tourism policy E4 of the Local Plan. The main issue relates to the scale of the proposed development, given its location within the Cotswolds AONB. The development comprises major development and the NPPF advises that 'Planning permission should be refused for major development in the AONB other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.' The report details the exceptional circumstances put forward by the applicant, notwithstanding their view that the development does not comprise major development.

Whilst it is not disputed that the existing hotel facilities will need investment including modernisation works and that the proposal would bring benefits, it has not been demonstrated that an alternative smaller scale hotel development is unviable (e.g. Boutique hotel concept) or that there is a need for this scale of development. Also no other sites (outside the designated area) have been considered. This is major development within the AONB and no convincing evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply in this case to justify the development.

Whilst it is recognised that the latest iteration of the plans is an improvement, the proposed development would still have a harmful impact on the scenic beauty of the area and would fail to conserve and enhance the landscape. The development would be visually intrusive with clear views from various public vantage points including the public right of way that passes through the site and beyond and from the adjoining roadside. The LO, has noted that only minor changes have been made to the treatment of the NE boundary with the loss of the existing cypress hedge and limited scope for significant new planting and it is still not considered that a Landscape-led Development approach has been adopted in this instance as advised by the Cotswold Conservation Board.

In terms of the impact on heritage assets, the revised scheme will now improve the immediate setting of the Mill building, a non-designated heritage asset but would still have a harmful impact on the setting of the adjoining conservation area and it is not considered that this impact is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. In addition, no archaeological field evaluation has been undertaken, as required by the NPPF and Policy EH15 of the Local Plan.

As such, the application is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out in the report, with Reason 3 amended as set out on the late representation sheet.

Councillors Beaney, Postan, Davies and Saul were supportive of the application especially as a tourism attraction to the area with the facilities it will provide.

There was a general discussion by the Committee about the suggested S106 contributions and whether such contributions would be better spend on addressing parking issues in the area, given the extra vehicles that the Hotel facilities will bring. The shuttle bus facility was discussed, it was agreed that this would help with parking.

The Business Manager - Development Management, Phil Shaw reminded the Committee that the site is located within the Cotswolds ANOB where there is a presumption against major development. Were the scheme not in the AONB or were of a smaller scale it would be acceptable but it was in the AONB and it was of major scale and the law was clear that as such permission should be refused except in exceptional circumstances. The site was visible-particularly from the footpath network and local roads and the Parish Council had raised valid concerns as regards the application of Government policy. The fall back of 5 detached houses was less intrusive than the terraces proposed and merely because the Cotswold Conservation

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Board had indicated that they had insufficient time to comment should not be seen as them supporting the proposals. The decision would have potential consequences beyond this application and Members should be aware of unintended consequences if developments of this scale were deemed by Members not to be major.

The consensus of most of the committee and the Chair that the site had been a Hotel for many years and if it was not uplifted we could be left with a Hotel in disrepair and future planning applications for a housing estate.

Councillor Beaney proposed that the application be granted.

This was seconded by Councillor Wilson.

A recommendation for approval was then put to the vote and was carried.

**Resolved:** Approved subject to conditions and SI06 to be agreed with the Chair.

### 21/00898/FUL - Barley Hill Farm Chipping Norton Road

The Planning Officer, Stuart McIver introduced the application for demolition of agricultural buildings to allow for the conversion and extension of the traditional barn to form one dwelling with associated garaging and access and landscape works.

Paul O'Brien addressed the Committee and asked if a site visit could occur.

The Planning Officer then presented his report containing recommendations.

Councillor Temple noted that the change of application is unusual as it's getting smaller and proposed a site visit.

Councillor Postan seconded a defer on decision until a site visit has occurred

A recommendation for deferral and site visit was then put to the vote and carried.

Chair decided that a site visit should occur Thursday 19th August at 09:30 hours.

**Resolved:** This application is to be deferred until the next full meeting on 23 August 2021 after the site visit has occurred.

### 21/00985/FUL – The Old Bank, Chipping Norton

The Planning Officer, Phil Shaw, introduced the application for the change of use of former bank to provide a new community hub, incorporating a community hall, meeting rooms, lettable office space and administrative offices. Demolition of existing rear extensions and provision of replacement extensions.

And

### 21/00986/LBC – The Old Bank, Chipping Norton

The Planning Officer, Phil Shaw, introduced the application for Internal and external alterations to convert former bank to provide a new community hub incorporating a community hall, meeting rooms, lettable office space and administrative offices. Demolition of existing rear extensions and provision of replacement extensions.

Emma Kennedy addressed the Committee, and answered Councillors Beaney, Cooper, Fenton and Davies questions on the location, cooking spaces, and community scheme.

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The Planning Officer then presented his report containing recommendations, noting that at the moment they were missing the Historical England report, that should be received by 30 July 2021.

Councillor Saul also noted it would be a benefit if the Historical England report was available, and that even though the extension already dwarfs the neighbour, this application is uplifting and inspiring, and should be considered and proposed a site visit.

Councillor Postan agreed with the idea of a site visit and asked if we could defer and hold a special Sub-Committee, immediately after.

Councillor Chapple concurred that a deferral should be quick as the applicant was losing government funding.

The planning Officer reminded the Chair that the report from Historical England was due by 30 July 2021.

Councillor Beaney asked the Chair if a deferral and Exceptional Sub-Committee is setting a Grant president, the Chair confirmed that this application was exceptional circumstances.

Councillor Davies was in full support of the application and expressed that an Exceptional Sub-Committee would turn this around quickly.

Councillor Beaney asked if we could not vote and approve today, Councillor Postan agreed.

Councillor Saul stated that the Council owes it to the neighbour to visit site to fully appreciate the application.

Councillor Cooper stated that he knew the site.

Councillor Saul proposed a deferral and site visit.

Councillor Postan seconded.

It was put to the vote and carried that decision should be deferred until a site visit had occurred

The Chair decided on receipt of the HE report by 30 July, a site visit would occur 09:30 on the 9 August 2021. This would be followed by an Exceptional Uplands Sub-Committee at 11:00am in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Woodgreen Witney.

**Resolved:** This application would be deferred until a site visit had occurred and the planned Sub-Committee had taken place.

### 21/01204/FUL – 29 - 30 High Street, Chipping Norton

The Planning Officer, Phil Shaw, introduced the application for proposed mixed-use conversion and redevelopment of existing retail and residential premises to form a 2-screen cinema, eight residential apartments (C3) plus five serviced short-term let apartment suites, with 14 spaced car park and shared bin and bicycle stores to rear.

And

### 21/01205/LBC - 29 - 30 High Street, Chipping Norton

The Planning Officer, Phil Shaw, introduced the application for internal and external alterations to include a mixed-use conversion and redevelopment of existing retail and residential premises to form a 2-screen cinema, eight residential apartments (C3) plus five serviced short-term let apartment suites, with 14 spaced car park and shared bin and bicycle stores to rear.

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Stephen Pickles the agent, then Alex Giacchetti the applicant addressed the Committee. The Officer advised that we had 34 letters of support. The proposed closure time on a Sunday at 10pm would give the applicants an issue with film lengths and finishing on time and so recommended this be 11pm like local Public Houses in the area. The Planning Officer then presented his report containing recommendation for approval.

At this point Councillor Chapple left the meeting.

Councillor Saul thanked the Planning Officer for balancing the issues of a derelict building, no leisure facilities, the fact that highways were happy. Parking maybe an issue but this was an issue for the area generally.

Councillor Beaney supported amending a condition for hours of construction work. And it was agreed this should be incorporated

Councillor Poston declared his support for this application.

Councillor Saul proposed to approve the application.

Councillor Davies seconded the approval of the application.

The Officers recommendation of approval ,as amended, was put to the vote and carried.

**Resolved:** Approved

### 21/01443/FUL – Land at Enstone Airfield North

The Planning Officer Kim Smith introduced the application for temporary use of land for the storage of tipper lorries.

The Planning Officer then presented her report containing recommendations, including conditions on approval, one of which would be a three year term, as laid out in page 4 of her report and as laid out on pages 75 and 76 of the Agenda.

Councillor Beaney proposed to approve the application.

Councillor Wilson seconded the approval of the application.

The Officers recommendation of approval was put to the vote and carried.

**Resolved:** Approved

### 21/01476/FUL – Shabbanoneuk, Bladon

The Planning Officer Joan Desmond introduced the application for demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of three dwellings with associated works including landscaping and formation of parking.

Karen Capel addressed the Committee opposing the application, stating daylight and Sunlight issues as well as parking.

Michelle Ouzman, Councils Strategic Support Officer read letter from Ridge Property and Construction Consultants, on behalf of the neighbour Helena Norrmen of Toad Cottage, who objects to the application, as the newly proposed scheme is not fundamentally different to the previously refused application.

The Planning Officer then presented her report containing recommendations, confirming a Daylight and Sunlight report had been received, and this report had taken into account the impact on Toad Cottage, and this had been acceptable in the report.

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Councillor Postan commented that a variety of design will add as a mix development.

Councillor Cooper stated that given the difference in levels, with Toad Cottage at a lower level , a site visit should take place to assess the impact on Toad Cottage.

Councillor Davies seconded a defer on decision until a site visit has occurred

A recommendation for deferral and site visit was then put to the vote and carried.

Chair decided a site visit should occur Thursday 19th August at 10:15 hours

**Resolved:** This application is to be deferred until the next full meeting on 23 August 2021 after the site visit has occurred.

## **15 Applications Determined under Delegated Powers and Appeal Decisions**

The report giving details of applications determined under delegated powers was received and noted.

The Chair outlined the Appeal Decisions report, and informed the Committee that the first Appeal noted on the report, fell on the Uplands border but was in actual fact a Lowlands Appeal, and therefore should be omitted from this report.

The second Appeal on the report was noted.

The Planning Officer Phil Shaw informed the committee that Planning Department had planned some training on the Appeal Process, which can only benefit the Council by enhancing the Appeal Process Knowledge.

Councillor Davies wanted it noted that the Committee were aware of the increase in planning applications, and thanked the planners for their commitment and hard work.

The Meeting closed at 4.51 pm

CHAIRMAN