

BURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 23rd July 2019 at 7.00pm, at the Centenary Hall, Smallfield

Open Forum: Two members of the public attended

Attendance: Vice Chairman Bob Locke, Cllrs Debbie Hale and Ashleigh Bolton.

- 1 Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Wates, for reasons noted in the attendance book
- 2 Declarations - None received
- 3 Dispensations – none required
- 4 The minutes of Tuesday 26th June 2019 were signed as a true record of the meeting, after the date had been amended
- 5 Matters arising – None

6 Planning Applications for Consideration

TA/2019/1058 – Wrentnall, Shipley Bridge Lane, Shipley Bridge

Two x single story side extension and conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include 2 x side dormers (CLOPD)

Recommend: Noted

TA/2019/1040/NH – Bonnietrees, Broadbridge Lane, Smallfield

Erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8 metres, for which the maximum height would be 3.096 metres, and for which the height of the eaves would be 2.8 metres.

Recommend: Noted

TA/2019/1115 – Field at Dowlands Lane, Smallfield

Erection of 88 dwellings, access and car parking (Outline permission with some matters reserved) (Resubmission)

The historic use of this site has been agricultural and over the last 30/40 years has been used as grazing for horses during the summer months. Previous tenants have stated that, whilst they have been able to use the field during the drier months, they have had to find alternative grazing for around 5 months each year as the site floods. This is no different to most fields in Smallfield due to the heavy clay soil and being a flood area.

Any development on this site will either be at risk of flooding itself or displacing surface water to nearby dwellings and agricultural land. The application still shows the creation of a new footpath in place of the existing ditch, thus further increasing localised flood risks from surface water. The sewage system along Plough Road is an old combined waste and surface water drainage system that is under huge strain to cope with existing demand. During periods of heavy or sustained rainfall dwellings feeding into the drainage system are unable to use their toilet facilities as to do so would flood their homes with foul water. There are regular occurrences of waste water being discharged into residential gardens and Thames water engineers have informed customers that their pumping station for the area is unable to cope with the load and frequently fails and that the pipework is operating at

capacity before the ingress of any surface water. This application claims it will not increase flood risk elsewhere but offers no evidence how this is possible.

The site lies within the green Belt and therefore the key issue is whether the proposal would constitute appropriate development within the green Belt and if not, whether there are any special circumstances to outweigh the harm by inappropriateness and any other identified harm, including harm to openness. It would also have to consider any harm to the character or appearance not only of the site, but also to the wider locality. Furthermore, the proposal would have to demonstrate that these very special circumstances are unique to this site and could not be replicated elsewhere, thus rendering them no longer 'very special'. In addition, the proposal would give rise to great harm to the Green Belt's openness by reason of its built form, its density, layout and domestic curtilage. In our opinion the proposal fails to demonstrate any evidence to demonstrate that very special circumstances apply in this case that would outweigh the substantial harm caused.

The application site is located approximately 1km to the east of Redehall Road, within the Green Belt area of Smallfield and outside the Larger Rural Settlement boundary. The site is accessed from Plough Road and Dowlands Lane and is approximately 2,99ha in size. Therefore, the application sits in direct contravention with CSP 6 where the Council may, subject to their being an identified need, allocate land within the defined rural settlement to provide housing in perpetuity. This land has clearly and explicitly been ruled as inappropriate to be included in the sites allocation. The 2016 HELAA considered this site (SMA 19) unsuitable for further consideration, as it is unconnected to the boundaries of a sustainable settlement.

A previous application to widen the smaller pedestrian gateway to permit entrance and egress of the field by a tractor was deemed inappropriate due to harm it would cause to the Green Belt and today access is via wooden bar gate with a width of 4ft. The 88 dwellings plus all paraphernalia associated with residential dwellings would certainly cause permanent harm to the Green Belt and we do not consider there to be any special circumstance to outweigh the harm.

Low hedges offering unobstructed views to the countryside borders the site. Several other fields with similar hedging are located in the vicinity. Surrounding residential property is either of the imposing 'manor house' style or small scale detached and semi-detached ribbon development along part of the highway. These vary in type, size and design. The proposed application does not fit within the existing street scene nor offer any enhancement to it.

Heritage - Para 128 of the NPPF states that *In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.*

No regard is given to the site's proximity to the Grade II listed building immediately to the south or the Grade II* listed building on the opposite side of plough Road, immediately to the north. The proposal also fails to comment on the previous 'common land' nature of the area and the openness associated with this.

The proposal is the construction of 88 dwellings plus access and curtilage. Access and egress is from two entrances, one on Plough Road and the other on Dowlands Lane.

The site is directly visible from both roads and to nearby residential dwellings and would present in a densely packed urban appearance utterly out of keeping with the surroundings and contrary to CSP18 & 21 and DP7, 10 & 13.

The site is outside of the larger Rural Settlement of Smallfield and is totally dislocated from Smallfield and its facilities is contrary to the NPPF, CSP1 and DP1. The site is approximately 1km away from the amenities offered in Smallfield along busy road and with no pavement or street lighting for a significant portion of the journey.

Para 35 of the NPPF states *Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to*

- *accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;*
- *give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;*
- *create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;*
- *incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and*
- *consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.*

The application notes that a new pavement and bus shelter are to be included in the development. However, the pavement only covers the roadside fronting the application site and then leaves a significant section of Plough Road without safe pedestrian space. Furthermore, the section of Plough Road has a narrow verge and a ditch running alongside the road. This is further complicated by a number of telegraph poles sited along the verge/ditch.

Pedestrian safety would be compromised by the lack of safe passage along a road where the speed limit of 40mph is regularly exceeded. Contrary to the NPPF, this proposal does not provide safe, well signed, pedestrian and mobility scooter access to local amenities. Residents would be required to walk along a narrow road, regularly used by vehicles ranging from small private vehicles to large HGV's that straddle the mid line.

The proposal includes provision for the construction of a bus shelter. Currently a 'hail and ride' system allows residents to wait at the bottom of their drive for the three buses that travel along Plough Road on a weekday. The introduction of a shelter could lead to the 'hail' section ceasing and residents (who are predominantly schoolchildren traveling to Oxted or Redhill) walking along Plough Road to the bus shelter.

Sustainable travel, access and mobility are key objectives of the Core Strategy and the NPPF, which recognises that congestion and road safety are major concerns of the community. This application fails to offer safe pedestrian space, is in a location with very poor public transport and forces complete reliance upon cars onto residents living in the proposed development in direct contravention of CSP12.

Using DoT statistics, it is calculated that in excess of 600 additional vehicle movements will be introduced to the local area from this proposal. This is based upon a national average that spans from areas with poor public transport to those with excellent links e.g. London. Smallfield has very poor public transport services therefore we would expect the daily traffic movements to be significantly greater than 600. Smallfield has insufficient infrastructure and parking to cope with such large demands. There have been at least 3 significant RTC's involving pedestrian/car collisions. A one-day survey carried out by volunteers, on behalf of the Parish Council recorded 172 HGV's passing through the Plough Road junction between the hours of 7.30am and 4.30pm.

We believe that the congestion on roads around Smallfield was a contributory factor in all three collisions.

In addition, the applicant asserts that the railway station at Horley is approximately 3k distant. Any online mapping service easily measures the distance in excess of 5km

Highway Safety – the proposed drawing as submitted indicates two means of entrance and egress to the site.

- Access via Plough Road to the site
- Access via Dowlands Lane

Plough Road is a narrow unclassified road running east/west between Smallfield and Horne. The speed limit increases from 30 MPH to 40MPH immediately before the access.

Vehicles have routinely been tracked exceeding the speed limit up to and over 60 mph.

Over 1000 vehicles have been caught speeding, spaced over 66, 1-hour Speed Watch sessions since January 2018 along the main road fronting the site. Using DoT statistics, it is calculated that in excess of 600 additional vehicle movements will be introduced to the local area from this proposal.

Dowlands Lane is a single-track unclassified lane bordered on both sides by deep ditches. Traffic is mainly made up of residents travelling to and from their homes in addition to farm traffic such as milk

tankers and tractors. There are no passing bays in Dowlands Lane, nor is there sufficient space for two vehicles (other than bicycles) to pass side-by-side.

A one-day survey carried out by volunteers, on behalf of the Parish Council recorded 172 HGV's passing through the Plough Road junction between the hours of 7.30am and 4.30pm.

The Government's Manual for Streets, in Chapter 6, recommends design and layout at side-road junction. The manual advocates that pedestrian desire lines should be kept as straight as possible. Small corner radii minimise the need for pedestrians to deviate from their desired lines and significantly reduce the speed at which vehicles travel through the turn. The schematics proposed within this application offer large radii from both Plough road and Dowlands Lane into the site affording vehicles the opportunity to travel at 20 -30 mph instead of 10 – 15mph. Junction designs should facilitate direct pedestrian lines.

We do not consider the location of either access point offers safe passage to vehicles entering and leaving Plough Road and believe that Dowlands Lane, in its current form, is utterly inappropriate for any additional two-way traffic.

Waste water - Residents living on Orchard Road, Plough Road to the west of the site, Wheelers Lane and Redehall Road regularly report backed up or overflowing sewage drains in the gardens. Their homes and manholes along the roads have been observed overflowing onto the roadside. The wastewater drainage is a combined system that operates at near capacity in dry weather. Any heavy downpours result in residents being unable to shower, use a toilet, operate a washing machine/dishwasher and there is a fear that at any point this will result in contamination to their homes and gardens. Thames Water has recently surveyed and cleaned the main pipework but has acknowledged that the system is inadequate for the demands currently placed upon it.

Density - To have less than 25 dwellings per hectare is considered to be low density. Previous development of brownfield land located within the green Belt (e.g. Clay Hall Lane) has had a density of approximately 7dph. This application proposes a density of greater than 29 dwellings per hectare on Green Belt land that has never contained any built form. The prevailing street scene around the site is of individual dwellings, either a standalone property or as some ribbon development surrounded by fields. A densely packed proposed development such as this, with associated curtilages and domestic gardens, is utterly out of keeping with what one would expect to find in Green Belt.

Biodiversity/Ecology – Burstow Parish Council formed part of the 'Lingfield Hub' from its inception. The Hub had devolved powers from Surrey County Council that enabled it to carry out grass cutting since 2011. Year-on-year the Hub has reported the presence of Japanese Knotweed on Cogmans Lane approximately 10 metres from the junction with Plough Road. Consideration should be given to the close proximity of known, established, Knotweed to the application site. Crested newts have also been recoded as present in ponds at Rough Beech and Dowlands farm nearby.

Affordable Housing - PPS3 Housing indicates that in rural communities the opportunities to deliver affordable housing tend to be more limited and the aim should be to deliver high quality housing that contributes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities. CSP 5 allows, exceptionally, land adjoining or closely related to rural settlements, which would otherwise be considered inappropriate for development, to be released in order to provide affordable housing in perpetuity to meet local needs.

This application does not comply with CSP 5 – the land has no relationship to the Larger Settlement of Smallfield, the housing is not protected 'in perpetuity' and is not targeted to meet local needs. In fact, the proposal is contrary all tenets of the policy that state:

- the housing comprises 100% affordable housing
- the housing is to meet local needs
- the housing would be justified by a Parish or settlement housing needs survey
- the development is small scale and respects the setting, form and character of the settlement and the surrounding landscape
- the development would accord with all relevant Development Plan Policies

The proposal limits the affordable component to ten years, after which the McIntosh Foundation would be free to sell at market price.

Community Consultation – The applicant has re-submitted a consultation from a previous application, 2489, that does not reflect the views and comments put forward by either Parish Councillors or residents who attended the meeting and considered the attitude and arrogance exhibited by the representatives of the application to be indicative of their disregard and dismissal of the worries and concerns raised. When questioned about their practical knowledge of the area the representatives were quite willing to admit that not only were they not from the locality, they had also not bothered to carry out site visits and practical examinations for pedestrian safety or the suitability of roads to absorb the additional traffic. Concerns raised about the incomplete pavement between the site and the village were brushed off with a statement that Surrey County Council would provide it, that lack of capacity in waste water pipes would be addressed by the water authority relaying mains and lack of public transport would suddenly be corrected by the construction of a bus shelter.

It is disingenuous at the very least to suggest that support was vocalised for this application. Favourable comments about affordable housing have been cherry picked from a dialogue that mentioned the desire for affordable housing but not in the inappropriate location of this application or of the scale proposed.

The Parish Council does not consider the passing of three years has improved the relevance of this consultation.

The Parish Council is fully aware that there is a need for housing in the District and the Parish – but this demand must only be addressed by using sustainable locations and developments of a size commensurate with their surroundings. Burstow Parish Council has responded to the Local Plan offering suggestions at locations they consider suitable – this site is not one of them, a view confirmed by the 2016 HELAA.

The applicant claims the McIntosh Foundation is registered with Companies House and an application is underway to have it registered as a charity. There is no such company registered under that name with Companies House.

Recommend: Refuse

- 7 Decisions and Appeals

- 8 Items of an urgent nature brought to Committees attention for inclusion on a future agenda - None
There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.15pm. The next Planning meeting is scheduled for 7.00pm on Tuesday 10th September 2019

Signed.....Dated.....