

MINUTES

of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 9 March 2021 at 6:00pm

Present:

Councillor J A Sosin (Chair)

Councillors L Ashley, H Ayres, S Dobson, J Frasca, P Hughes, R Hyland, R Lee, G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, T E Roper, E Sampson, C Shaw and I Wright

Also present: Councillors J A Potter and S Young

1. Chair's Announcements

For the benefit of the public, the Chair explained the arrangements for the meeting.

2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members are reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 9 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

5. Public Question Time

There were no questions or statements from the public.

6. Land Adjacent to 4 James Croft, Galleywood, Chelmsford – 20/01249/FUL

Councillor R J Hyland informed the Committee that he had chaired the committee of Galleywood Parish Council that had come to a view on this application and therefore would not participate in its consideration.

(M7, PL27, 2020, M7, PL31, 2020 and M6, PL35, 2021) At its last meeting the Committee had again deferred for a site visit consideration of an application for the construction of a single detached house on land adjacent to 4 James Croft, Galleywood. That site had been held on 2 March 2021 and the Committee had before it all the relevant information on the application that had been received since it had first been considered.

The Committee was generally of the opinion that the proposed development was not appropriate to the site or the area in which it was located. The site was too narrow to accommodate a property of the size proposed and the development would be out of keeping with the other properties in the area. It would have an overbearing effect on 4 James Croft and would result in a loss of light to the kitchen and conservatory of that property, both of which the Committee regarded as living accommodation. Whilst the narrow access to the rear could accommodate a small refuse bin, a normal size bin would need to be stored at the front of the property and reduce the space available for car parking.

Responding to questions on the application, the officers said that the proposal met the required parking standards and that although a previous application had been refused in 2005 for reasons similar to the concerns expressed by members on this application, a new National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan had been adopted since then and the proposal met the requirements and standards of both.

RESOLVED that application 20/01249/FUL in respect of land adjacent to 4 James Croft, Galleywood, Chelmsford be refused for the following reasons:

Character/street scene

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) gives significant weight to good design. Chapter 12 sets out planning principles and guidance in achieving well-designed places. This includes seeking to secure good design that would add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character and setting. Paragraph 127 (c) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments, amongst other matters, “are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”. Paragraphs 130 of the NPPF states that planning permission “should

be refused for development of poor design that fails to take opportunity for improving the character and quality of the area”.

Policy DM23 of the Chelmsford Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development that respects the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. Development must be compatible with its surroundings having regard to scale, siting, form, architecture, materials, boundary treatments and landscape. It also requires (amongst other things) that the design of all new buildings are compatible with the character and appearance of the area in terms of their siting, scale, form, massing, materials and detailing.

James Croft is characterised by wide span detached houses. The development proposed seeks a narrow width property on a cramped plot creating a form of development at odds with and visually discordant with the existing character and characteristics of the street scene and is contrary to policy DM23 of the Chelmsford Local Plan and the design principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Relationship with No 4 James Croft

Policy DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan requires that development safeguards the living environment of the occupiers of any nearby residential property by ensuring that the development is not overbearing and does not result in unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing.

The development as proposed by reason of its scale and siting and projection along the boundary with and beyond the rear of No 4 James Croft would be unduly overbearing and cause a harmful reduction in light for the occupiers of No 4 contrary to Policy DM29 of the Chelmsford Local Plan.

(6.10pm to 6.40pm)

7. Offices at Galleywood Hall, 279 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford – 19/01180/FUL

The Committee considered an application for the erection of B1 light industrial units at Galleywood Hall, 279 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow. A Green Sheet of additions and amendments had been circulated that set out a proposed change to one of the conditions should the application be approved.

A ward councillor attended the meeting to speak against the application for the following reasons:

- The proposed use conflicted with the rural nature of the site and was not in keeping with the residential nature of other properties in the vicinity
- It was a large building that would be better located on a site designated for industrial use

- The new building would be slightly higher than the existing one
- The boundary between the site and 285 Beehive Lane was narrow and no landscaping was proposed between them to reduce the impact on No 285
- There were no conditions restricting the hours of operation at the units and there were concerns of potential disturbance to neighbours

Some members of the Committee expressed similar reservations during their discussion of the application. In addition, they asked whether:

- There was a potential for safety concerns in view of the proximity of the site to a nearby school
- The access to the site was close to an existing footpath alongside it, giving rise to concerns about pedestrian safety
- The proposal was contrary to Local Plan policy DM6 as the site was in the Green Belt
- The number of electric vehicle charging points complied with Policy DM25
- The combined footprint of the buildings on the site included the proposed glasshouse
- The loss of the albeit redundant educational facilities at Galleywood Hall was contrary to policy DM21 which envisaged the retention of educational and community facilities, where possible
- Great Baddow Parish Council had objected to or supported the application, as their views were not clear

In response to those points and questions, officers said that:

- Although the proposed building was higher than those it would replace, it was set back further within the site and would be screened by landscaping; it would therefore not be harmful to the character of the area
- In terms of the units' relationship with 285 Beehive Lane, they were set back from the bungalow and there was a degree of separation, with the nearest unit being 3.2 metres from the boundary with No 285. Taking into account the units' hipped roof, it was not thought that the proposal would be detrimental to the amenity of residents of No 285. A condition could be added about the boundary treatment between No 285 and the site if the Committee considered it necessary
- A condition on the hours of operations at the units was not considered appropriate because the nature of the proposed use would not cause disturbance, noise or pollution and would take place entirely within the buildings
- A condition was proposed requiring a service and delivery plan that avoided delivery times that coincided with school drop off and collection times
- Policy DM6 allowed, as an exception, the redevelopment of previously developed land provided it had no greater impact on openness. In this case, taking into account the size and visual impact of the development, the proposed landscaping and the fact that the footprint of the units was 17% less than the current buildings' combined footprint, there would be no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt

- New railings and a landscaping strip would provide greater separation between the access to the site and the footpath than existed at present
- The number of charging points met current standards but could be increased if the Committee wished
- Great Baddow Parish Council appeared to have no objection in principle to the proposal but had concerns about traffic and the appearance of the site in the street scene
- Galleywood Hall had not been used as an education facility for a long time and such facilities did not come within the policy that governed the retention of community facilities. Protection of Education Establishments is covered by Policy DM22 and allows their redevelopment where they are surplus to requirements.
- The combined footprint of the new buildings included the glasshouse, which had been used as part of the previous use of Galleywood Hall, was not classed as an agricultural building and therefore was considered to be part of the previously developed land

On balance, the Committee felt that the application was acceptable and that there were no reasonable grounds for refusing it.

RESOLVED that application 19/01180/FUL in respect of the offices at Galleywood Hall, 279 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford be approved, subject to the conditions set out in the report to the meeting, with the amendment to condition 17 set out in the Green Sheet.

(6.40pm to 7.19pm)

8. Mosaic Play Area, Guys Farm Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford – 20/01848/FUL

The Committee had before it an application for the change of use of the site at the Mosaic Play Area, Guys Farm Road, South Woodham Ferrers from public open space and playground to residential garden land.

During discussion of the application, members asked whether consideration had been given to using the site as allotments; who would be acquiring it; why it had taken so long to reach agreement for the sale; whether the sale would set a precedent for disposing of other areas of open space; whether the Town Council was interested in acquiring the land; and whether a local school might use it for an environmental project.

The Committee was informed that a review of open space held by the Council in 2012 had resulted in the decommissioning of a number of sites that were regarded as being of poor quality and unsuitable, this site being one of them. Associated with this, play areas near such sites had been enhanced to make up for their loss. The delay in the sale of this site had been caused by legal issues associated with its disposal to three adjoining landowners who intended to use it as extensions to their gardens. South Woodham Ferrers Town Council had previously been offered the site but had declined to take it on.

RESOLVED that application 20/01848/FUL in respect of the Mosaic Play Area, Guys Farm Road, South Woodham Ferrers be approved, subject to the conditions detailed in the report to the meeting.

(7.19pm to 7.43pm)

9. Planning Appeals

RESOLVED that the information on appeal decisions between 27 January 2021 and 25 February 2021 be noted.

(7.43pm to 7.44pm)

The meeting closed at 7.44pm

Chair