



Minutes of a meeting of Caterham on the Hill Planning Committee held on Friday 1st May at 2pm via Zoom

Present: Cllr G Dennis (Chair), Cllr D Brent, Cllr C Botten, Cllr J Orrick, Cllr J Webster

In attendance: Mrs H Broughton, Clerk

PL 001 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rujbally.

PL 002 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest arising from the agenda

PL 003 Planning Decisions

Recent planning decisions were noted

PL 004 2015/1746: RAF Kenley Officers Mess

RESOLVED to approve the following letter to TDC planning, copying to Whyteleafe Village Council and Caterham Flood Action Group

The Parish Council understands that this planning application is progressing but our members feel that they are not in possession of key information. Our previous communications with the District Council covered several issues of joint concern but the last briefing was received one year ago and we have heard nothing since. Therefore please provide the Parish Council with a short update note on the current status, including any progress on the following matters previously under discussion between us:

- The Parish views very special circumstances justifying development of Green Belt land as consisting exclusively of tangible benefit to our community. We are seeking transfer into community ownership of the land parcel to the north of the development area containing Ancient Woodland and protected habitat; and the land parcel to the south containing Battle of Britain airfield heritage assets under S.106 or similar. Our understanding from the last briefing was that this matter had been taken up with Comer Homes. It has also involved RAFA and the Kenley Revive lottery project.
- The future of the listed building. The Parish has previously expressed concern that in the event of approval, Flintfield House could be constructed first and then viability introduced as a reason to delay or prevent what would clearly be a technically complex listed building project. Will the District Council be undertaking an independent viability assessment of restoration, including the extent to which the arson attacks are covered under the applicant's insurances? The Parish Council regards guaranteeing full restoration of the

historic officers mess as one of the very special circumstances, without which approval or development cannot be justified.

- Flood resilience, particularly attenuating surface water flow down Whyteleaf Hill into Whyteleaf centre. We note that the input from the LLFA (November 2016) indicated that the surface water drainage strategy does not comply with technical standards but there appears to have been nothing since.
- Concerns expressed by Whyteleaf Village Council regarding the need for details of traffic access onto Whyteleaf Hill to be made available prior to a planning decision.

PL 005 Revisions to 2019/1538 Coulsdon Lodge

RESOLVED: to approve the following objection to Coulsdon Lodge as follows:

In its statutory response of 1st October 2019 the Parish Council (whilst accepting the principle of development) identified material aspects of the scheme which rendered it unacceptable, requiring further design work. We have considered these key issues again, in the light of the current revisions. Our conclusion is that in each case insufficient information has been supplied and so we maintain our objection until this can be rectified.

Loss of TPO trees

Conservation and enhancement of the tree belt along the Coulsdon Road and Chaldon Road frontages is of paramount importance. It has been a strong local character feature associated with St Lawrence's Hospital for over one hundred years. The mature mixed woodland and distinctive conifers perform an important function in screening redevelopment of the former hospital site behind, in combating air pollution and surface water run-off and providing a sanctuary for wildlife. The wide arc of 26 TPO trees proposed for felling included a range of the characteristic larch, yew, Scots pine and western red cedar up to 22 m. high. This high level of loss weakens the integrity of the stand of tall trees, narrowing it considerably and exposing the survivors to wind damage and further loss. This is exactly what happened on the adjacent Oakgrove development when parking areas were allowed to intrude too far into the tree belt and as a result tree losses have since become ongoing and cumulative. The proposed felling was regarded as wholly unacceptable.

One house plot has now been removed but the impact only reduces to 23 TPO trees. We are particularly concerned at the loss of characteristic conifers in the better quality B category: G314 and T319 (Scots pine), G316 (larch) and G320 (Western Red Cedar). All are mature trees of 18-22 metres height and difficult to replace in any meaningful way. This proposal implies significant harm unless the losses can be offset by a detailed green landscaping scheme. It must be able to demonstrate that it can deliver a net environmental gain in line with local and national policy. Such a scheme would need to be multi-functional addressing the visual amenity, biodiversity, climate control and flood attenuation benefits that the woodland currently provides and how this might be enhanced in order to deliver environmental gain. However the approach is disappointing and one dimensional – all that has been provided is a single sketch plan indicating a few additional trees. Therefore the information supplied is inadequate to judge this key issue.

Flood resilience

Caterham Hill is recognised as being vulnerable to regular episodes of surface water flooding during storms. The risk is predominantly from this site rather than to it since any net run-off as a result of development would migrate westwards down slope into the known valley flow path along Roffes Lane, where properties were flooded out in 2016. The site will be naturally absorbent in its present mature woodland state. It is therefore essential that the proposal includes a sustainable drainage design that can replicate this. It should demonstrate no net off-site flows (and preferably betterment compared to the green field state) during defined storm

events in order not to make the existing situation worse. A professional SUDS design must be submitted to the Local Lead Flood Authority. It must show how the development can be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, in compliance with NPPF (155). We note that the LLFA has now recommended planning conditions despite previously indicating that traditional soakaways would not be feasible. They have also stated concerns that overloading the foul system with surface water has major flooding implications downstream. They therefore indicate that Thames Water should confirm that capacity exists within their network to handle both foul and surface water flows. However this has not happened. Similarly the applicant's covering letter for the revised proposals refers to an addendum to the Flood Risk Assessment including associated plans and drawings but this has not been provided either. Therefore the information supplied is inadequate to judge this key issue.

Site Access

The Highway Authority has indicated no objection provided that the construction and emergency access onto Chaldon Road is removed from the proposal on safety grounds. However the latest site layout plan still shows this route as serving emergency access yet it is not clear how it would work. How would access by all other vehicles be prevented? Would there be a barrier served by a padlock or key code? The emergency services must be asked to confirm that the proposed arrangement meets their requirements.

The main concern is use of Blackthorn Road for both construction and permanent access. Whilst the role of the Parish Council is restricted by this being an unadopted road over which the applicant states a legal right of access, we have legitimate concerns about the residents' amenity and welfare. Blackthorn Road is a particularly narrow cul de sac built to accommodate four dwellings. Instead it would serve seventeen. We have therefore asked that the applicant confirm that the geometry fundamentals of using it as the permanent access meet the Surrey Highway Design Standards (sections 3.3 and 3.6). The logistics of delivery and refuse vehicle access need clarification. Is there sufficient space for them to enter, turn and exit? No information has been provided. We are especially concerned at the impact of construction vehicles using Blackthorn Road. The Highway Authority has asked for a Construction Transport Management Plan but in our view this is inadequate. It should be a Construction Management Plan covering broader safety and welfare issues potentially affecting residents such as noise, dust, vibration, supervision of plant, nominated points of contact, hours of working etc. Therefore the information supplied is inadequate to judge this key issue."

PL 006 Planning applications

It was noted that the Parish Council and residents had been unable to access some information on the TDC planning portal which was time consuming to try and rectify and was affecting the work of the planning committee.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Botten would report issues to the CEO at TDC.

2020/481: 97 Foxon Lane

Replace existing garage, shed and workshop with 3 bed detached dwelling

Objection: Although reduced in scale the latest proposal does not address the previous reasons for refusal, upheld at Appeal. The Design and Access Statement is notably vague (without definitive design proposals) on several key issues identified by the Parish Council in its previous objection (application 2019/1).

A principal reason for the previous refusal is that inappropriate plot subdivision would insert a detached house alongside the existing semi-detached; resulting in a cramped form of development out of character with the street scene formed by the well-spaced layout of the former RAF houses. The DAS relies instead on the mixed variety of house styles elsewhere along Foxon Lane. However nos. 93-99 form a different, more spacious and distinctive group. They are a key local heritage feature directly associated with RAF Kenley, one of the best preserved Battle of Britain airfields nationally. The design therefore needs to be fully in keeping but the detached house with its sheer vertical north elevation and gable end appears strangely unbalanced within the street scene, like half a semi-detached or an extension that has somehow drifted away from the host dwelling.

The rhythm of the streetscape created by the two pairs of large semi-detached would be broken by the insertion of an incongruous detached house on a very narrow plot. The cramped layout would be particularly apparent on the south side where the separation distance from the boundary of no. 95 remains unchanged at only 1.3 m. The amenity impact on that side would be worsened by the felling of five mature trees 16-25m high. The loss of wildlife habitat, air quality, screening and absorption of rainwater would be significant. Neighbours report the presence of a variety of nesting birds, squirrels and badgers. The application is again vague, giving no design detail or drawings explaining how this loss could be mitigated successfully, sufficient to demonstrate a net environmental gain in line with local and national policy. It is essential that the Council's Tree Officer is consulted but this does not appear to have happened, despite the Parish Council's previous request.

In common with most streets within the built up areas of Caterham Hill, Foxon Lane suffers from congested on street parking. It is therefore essential that the TDC Parking Standards SPD is adhered to but yet again the DAS provides only vague assertions and no design detail. Because of the plot subdivision, the arrangements for the host dwelling are equally relevant to the application. The design therefore needs to demonstrate how the required 2 spaces for the proposed dwelling and 3 spaces for the host would work, especially in terms of how vehicles could turn and exit safely in forward gear onto Foxon Lane.

The Design and Access Statement appears to be in denial about flood resilience, despite an officially identified medium to high risk flow path northwards along Foxon Lane towards Ninehams Road. It is clearly shown on Environment Agency surface water mapping. Particularly given the loss of tree cover, the risk is that storm water discharge from the roof and hard standing of the additional dwelling will flow out onto the highway and worsen the flow path, increasing the risk to downstream properties. It is therefore essential that the proposal provides evidence to demonstrate compliance with NPPF 155 - ie making development safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

In its previous statutory submission the Parish Council indicated that all development along these known flood routes must incorporate a SUDS design. It should include calculations to demonstrate no off-site flow onto the highway during the storm events that are becoming more frequent and severe with climate change. Why else has the District Council declared a climate emergency? Because of the well-recognised flood risk in Caterham Hill, the green landscaping and SUDS design must be submitted in advance to the LLFA for sign off. This matter was previously identified by the Parish Council but neither the District Council nor applicant has

responded. We also stated that names water should also be consulted about the ability of existing sewers to cope with the additional demand. Inadequate street drainage resulting in sewer surcharge and overflow was a prime cause of the floods that ruined homes and businesses here in 2016. There is now sewage and sanitary debris in the streets somewhere in Caterham Hill after every heavy storm. Despite the importance of this material issue for local residents the application has ignored it.

2020/489/TPO: 6 Strathmore Close

Cherry – remove left stem, in poor condition and prune conifer

No comment

2020/494: 12 Le Personne Road

New front hardstanding parking area and pavement crossover

Objection:

The application form states that no one other than the applicant has ownership over the land being applied for. These houses are set some distance back from the road behind an area of open communal green that gives a feeling of spaciousness and visual amenity to the street scene in an otherwise constricted built up area. However the plan indicates that (rather than the stated pavement crossover) quite a long driveway would have to be installed across this green space to access the parking area. We presume that the green belongs to the District Council – in which case TDC should be included in the application as joint owner. The Parish Council has concerns if this open space begins to be taken up by vehicle driveways, raising the possibility of encroachment of parked cars onto it, inhibiting public use. We feel that this point needs some discussion and clarification before the application proceeds, not least because the communal area has been included for Local Green Space designation in our emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

2020/613: 19 Macaulay Road

Loft conversion inc. dormer roof extension

No comment

2020/684: 10 Manor Avenue

Single storey side extension

No comment

2020/41: Flat 1, 9 Queens Park Road

Ground floor side and rear extension

2018/2445/Cond 3: land off Annes Walk

Discharge of conditions 5 (hard and soft landscaping) and 8 (reptile mitigation strategy)

It was noted that information was unavailable on the TDC planning portal

Objection:

There is a clear risk that the extensive areas of roadway, parking and other hard landscaping in the design layout will worsen the known surface water flow path that presently runs across the site from SW to NE, in the direction of Annes Walk. The risk is that these surfaces will shed storm water into Annes Walk and hence down slope to Whyteleafe Road, where it already overwhelms street drains down Whyteleafe Hill, resulting in flooding in Whyteleafe centre. Permeable hard landscaping materials therefore have a key contribution to make to the sustainable drainage

system required under Condition 14. However no details have been provided here, under Condition 5. Instead the materials schedule appears to be a hymn to hard standing. It specifies various surfacing in stone, asphalt, concrete, blockwork etc but no mention is made of the permeability performance despite porous materials being readily available commercially. This is a serious omission that requires clarification given the recognised surface water flood risk to residents in this area.

Condition 5 also requires soft landscaping including tree planting as compensation for the loss of TPO tree T40 and those trees removed prior to planning permission being sought. Details shall include all proposed and retained trees, hedges and shrubs; ground preparation, planting specifications and ongoing maintenance. Planting schedules shall include details of species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities.

One of the main objectives of the green landscaping scheme would be to support biodiversity and to replace trees already removed as the Inspector has indicated. However the details submitted appear meagre. The Soft Landscaping Specification is entirely generic, applicable to any such development. As a result there is no detail explaining how a net environmental improvement over what has been lost can be delivered in line with local and national policy. The drawings show that small decorative garden centre type species typical of domestic gardens seem to have been chosen for communal areas. Native species may well perform better in those areas (eg new hedging chosen to deliver year round benefit to small mammals, birds and insects) but there is no explanation of wildlife benefit. This is a serious omission given the amount of existing habitat that will be lost and the role of the site as a natural extension of the adjoining high value ancient woodland. Similarly at least two larger landmark trees would be appropriate to offset the loss of T40. They should have space to grow to a mature size, allowing a longer term contribution to amenity and biodiversity by way of mitigation. Given that the Council has recently declared a climate emergency it is extremely disappointing that neither of their professional advisors (the Tree Officer and Surrey Wildlife Trust) has so far offered an expert opinion on the adequacy of the submitted details. Given the increasing importance of environmental conservation and enhancement this must be rectified before the application proceeds any further.

Regarding Condition 8, the Reptile Mitigation Strategy shows how the receptor location in the SE corner would be fenced off during construction. However no detail is given about safeguarding what would then become the dedicated site wildlife area during the life of the development. The layout drawings appear to show an open communal zone adjoining a road that would presumably be accessible to dogs etc and therefore hardly a habitat sanctuary. How would wildlife be protected? Would it have fencing and wildlife hedging? Clarification is needed and again Surrey Wildlife Trust must be asked for guidance on the longer term operation and maintenance of the wildlife area. At present insufficient detail has been provided.

2020/633/TPO: 16 Halton Road

Various works reducing height and width, raising crown etc to 5 pear trees, a lime and a eucalyptus

It was noted that information was unavailable on the TDC planning portal

2020/737: 25 Fairbourne Lane

Single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear roof extension/dormer

No comment

The Parish Council understands that this planning application is progressing but our members feel that they are not in possession of key information. Previous communications from Parish and District Councillors with TDC and the applicant covered several issues of joint concern but we have not heard if or how these are being addressed. Therefore please provide the Parish Council with a short briefing note on the current status, including any progress on the following matters previously under discussion between us:

- Parish and District Councillors have consistently for over a year (by means of correspondence and meetings) sought a single integrated form of development between the adjoining applications of Shanly Homes and Chartwell land, as set out in Local plan site allocation HSG08. We note the letter submitted by Shanly as part of this application, proposing a collaborative agreement and a combined scheme with single access but it is dated August 2019.
- In the absence of a combined scheme, the Parish Council has expressed concern with both the District Council and Highway Authority about the potential impact on road safety of twin entrances to these developments onto Whyteleafe Road. They would potentially serve 98 dwellings but be separated by the width of one detached house. We have asked for the cumulative traffic implications to be assessed.
- In its statutory response of November 2019 the Parish Council drew attention to the density, layout, green space provision, loss of trees and wildlife habitat and the affordable element all being worse than the Appeal scheme (2018/2445). For example of the 86 individual trees and groups surveyed, 14 (16%) were proposed for felling under 2018/2445 including one TPO. Under this new application the felling increases to 46 (58%) including 6 TPOs. The area previously proposed for species protection would be built over. We therefore asked that the TDC Tree Officer and Surrey Wildlife Trust be asked for inputs but nothing is shown on the TDC portal.
- Caterham Hill Parish Council and Whyteleafe Village Council have expressed concerns about specific technical aspects of flood resilience including surface water drainage, groundwater effects and the underlying aquifer. In November 2019, the Parish Council noted that the application is only supported by an outline drainage addendum that is mostly indicative and therefore does not address the detailed matters that both Parishes have raised with the District Council. We asked that the Local Lead Flood Authority sign off the SUDS strategy (including any groundwater issues associated with the proposed deep drainage boreholes) and that the Environment Agency approve in principle the use of such boreholes with regard to the aquifer GSPZ. There is though no further information on the TDC portal.

Annes Walk

2018/2445 and 2018/2445/Cond 1 (copied to the case officer Paige Barlow) as follows:

Comment:

The Parish Council notes the statutory response from the County Highway Authority dated 26th March 2020, pointing out inadequacies in the applicant's Construction Transport Management Plan, a document of considerable importance in safeguarding the welfare of the residents of Annes Walk. The CTMP has been submitted to the District Council for approval of details under application 2018/2445/Cond 1. However, the CHA response has been logged erroneously to 2018/2445 (the original application previously determined by the Planning Inspectorate in December 2019). Please correct this and move the CHA response to 2018/2445/Cond 1 because

It is highly material to any decision that the IDC Planning Committee may now make regarding the adequacy of the Construction Transport Management Plan.

Any other business

The Chair informed the meeting that notification had been given regarding Town End and Rochester Gardens revisions with a 2 week consultation.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm