

MINUTES OF THEALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Extraordinary Council Meeting held on Monday 30th April 2018 in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, Theale.

Present: Councillors B. Williams (chair), J. Richardson, A. Clark, D. Wood, I. Hopcroft, D. Baker & P. Clifford.

Apologies received: Councillors Coker, Fenwick & Lye.

Present: Jo Friend (Clerk) in attendance. There were twenty seven members of the public present.

Declarations of Interest: Cllr Hopcroft declared an interest in planning application 18/00768/HOUSE (he knows the owner) and agreed not to take part in any discussion or vote relating to this item.

The chairman asked if any members of the council or members of the public were intending to record or film the meeting. The answer was a negative.

252/17/18 Open Forum for Members of the Public

Several members of the public wished to speak about planning application 18/00823/FULEXT - 19 & 19A High Street, Theale – Demolition of existing building & construction of 17 no. dwellings, 2 no. retail units, associated access, parking & landscaping. Their comments included:

There has been no communication from the developer to the occupants of 17 High Street and neither have they been invited to any meetings. The application doesn't mention that no. 19 is attached to no. 17, the buildings are 'wrapped around' each other in places. There is insufficient parking proposed; only one space per flat; no parking for the management company that is meant to be doing the bins. Not enough room for emergency vehicle access. The proposal to collect the bins from the High Street will mean the road will come to a halt. The rear access to no. 17 has been moved and is indicated as a small opening; no. 17 has a right of pedestrian and vehicle access to the rear. The access road at the rear will prove difficult, especially with all the extra traffic; there will be visitors, food delivery vehicles etc. Very little landscaping is proposed.

A lot of the surrounding properties are not shown on the plans, my property is close to the back end of the development, I have objected and I'm chasing the case officer to put my objection on the WBC website. With regards to communication – only a few houses received a letter from the developer; the plans shown to residents at the meeting with the developer were of the front High Street elevation but the rear building will be very tall – have chased T A Fisher about this. The meeting was not a consultation. The developer has advertised the plans in the press but in Oxford, Isle of Wight and somewhere in the North – it comes across as they are trying to evade proper consultation. According to the orange notice the deadline for comments is 7th May.

The rear development will overlook and overshadow existing properties; those in Woodfield Way and Crown Lane are not shown on the plans. The Falcon pub garden and Stable Cottage will also be affected by reduced sunlight. The Design & Access statement states that the building in the Conservation Area is of poor condition, hence the demolition, but its condition was ok when they applied and got change of use. Potentially, there will be 40 residents, the parking provision is insufficient, this will have knock-on effects elsewhere.

The access lane off Crown Lane is very narrow, one vehicle wide. WBC highways officer has asked the developer to provide the correct widths. This proposal will be detrimental to existing residents. The noise from it will affect existing residents day & night. The services, such as sewage, water mains etc, are poor in this area as it is.

A member of the public asked how much influence TPC would have on this application. The chairman replied that she would hope WBC would take on board any comments made by TPC and any comments they made on behalf of residents. She said that when this application was submitted, she had asked Cllr Macro, as district councillor, to 'call it in' so that the decision would

be made by the Eastern Area planning committee, she was pleased to report that he had now done that.

Further comments:

The development will cause major privacy issues for 77 Woodfield Way. The windows on the rear face their bedrooms. The building is very high and is very close to their boundary. Although the developer has stepped the height down from 3 stories to 2 stories here it won't make much difference because it will still overlook and overshadow no. 77's dwelling and garden. The applicant hasn't made any argument explaining how the rear building will fit in with its surroundings, has only made a claim that the High Street building will fit in. Developer hasn't taken into account any of the existing residents or businesses.

Could the parish council request a pre-construction statement? There is a weight restriction in the area and T A Fisher has said it will use only small construction vehicles but these don't exist so I suspect they will demolish the front building and then use this as access to the site. The rear building is very high; the front elevation image from the High Street doesn't show the enormous 3 storey building that will be behind it.

Residents living in Crown Lane, opposite the turning, will be affected by all the traffic going in and out. There is a lay-by there in which I park my car and already it gets scratched as the access lane is difficult to enter. Blossom Lane and Crown Lane will end up with an even worse parking problem than they have now.

I am concerned about the Eastern Area planning committee – they seem to make up their own rules when making decisions. Residents need to know the rules so they can know what to do.

The chairman confirmed that residents could attend the Eastern Area planning committee meeting and could request to speak. Residents may also attend site visits – if you have objected then you should be told when this is taking place. WBC no longer informs neighbours that development is being proposed but individuals can register, via the WBC website, to be notified by email whenever any application in a certain area is submitted.

There is talk of possible development on the sewage works site, if that happens the works traffic will come down Crown Lane, it will lead to gridlock. The applicant owns Theale Court, have they considered using that as an access for construction traffic? The autotrack diagrams do not show the parked cars in Crown Lane – there are always parked cars along there, it is never clear, the vehicles will not be able to follow the autotrack path as shown.

As there were no further comments from the public the chairman closed the public open forum.

Several members of the public left the meeting.

SECTION B

252/17/18 Planning Applications

18/00823/FULEXT	Demolition of existing building & construction of 17 no. dwellings, 2 no. retail units (use class A1/A2/A3), associated access, parking & landscaping	19 & 19A High Street, Theale RG7 5AH	T A Fisher Developments Ltd	Object
18/00844/HOUSE	First floor rear extension	6 Volunteer Road, Theale RG7 5DN	Mr & Mrs Terry	Object

18/00872/HOUSE	Single storey rear with two storey side extension & demolition of garage	22 Blossom Lane, Theale RG7 5BD	Min Li & Tim Tu	Object
18/00768/HOUSE	Single storey side extension, two storey rear extension & detached garage with store over	1 Wigmore Lane, Theale RG7 5HH	Mrs Falkiner	No objection

Members discussed the applications:

18/00823/FULEXT

19 & 19A High Street

Inadequate parking; what is being proposed is not realistic. The access doesn't show enough width for vehicles to pass. Concern over drainage; no sanitation services shown in the retail units. The Heritage Statement tries to quash the importance of the Conservation Area by saying WBC hasn't confirmed it, States the building is not attractive – that's subjective. Don't think knocking it down and rebuilding it would enhance the CA. Parts of this building are early 19th century not Edwardian. The building is part of the fabric of the High Street, part of the street scene.

Although there is already part of the view from the pub car park obstructed by the current building, the proposed structure comes out much further and would increase this obstruction. It would appear the applicant is claiming that all trees on site, especially those with TPOs, are ill, diseased or unsightly! Is tree T7 actually on 19's land or is it on 17's?

There is no mention of affordable housing or any allowance for affordable housing. The viability study is confidential so we don't know what that says.

Refuse – can't get large vehicles round the back so want to collect bins from the High Street. This is close to the pharmacy which receives a lot of foot traffic. Members disputed that the footpath is 2.1m wide all along here. The footpath also slopes towards the road. Bins will be left on footpath. What if the management company doesn't put them out in time and they're not collected – in the summer this could attract vermin.

Retail units – no mention of how their waste will be dealt with. No staff parking. How will they receive their deliveries?

There is overlooking of existing properties, especially 77 Woodfield Way. This is overdevelopment of the site. There is a lack of amenity space, especially for the flats above the retail units. The nature of the communications from the developer appear somewhat cynical. If there was a fire in Tasty Bites, a fire engine wouldn't be able to access the rear of the building. The archaeological report is interesting. If the building is demolished then scaffolding will be required and will cover the pavement and probably extend into the parking bays. Works must not be permitted to interfere with the High Street. The rear building doesn't look like its surroundings. The impact of this application on existing residents is very high.

Members unanimously agreed to object to the application on the grounds contained within this evening's discussions.

Several members of the public left the meeting.

18/00844/HOUSE

6 Volunteer Road

Members were made aware of the reasons the previous application for a similar extension was refused. This revised application was little different and would not address the reasons for refusal.

Members unanimously agreed to object to the application on the grounds of: previous reasons for objection, too bulky, overdevelopment of site, not in keeping with surrounding area, blocking daylight from neighbouring property.

18/00872/HOUSE

22 Blossom Lane

Members were concerned about the size of the development in relation to the original dwelling. It seems very close to the boundary with the attached dwelling and to their existing extension. Also seems close to boundary on the other side. Would cause probable loss of light to neighbours.

Members unanimously agreed to object to the application on the grounds of: overshadowing, over dominance, loss of light to 20A, too close to boundary. Also comment on fact that garage has been labelled on the plans as a 'room'.

18/00768/HOUSE

1 Wigmore Lane

Members discussed the application and unanimously agreed that they had no objections.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.25pm.

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Chairman to the Council