

Minutes of a meeting of the Ashwell Parish Council Planning Committee held on Sunday 10th March 2019 at 9.00am.

Present: Councillors Mark White (Chairman), Madeleine Legg, Bridget Macey, David Short, David Sims. The Clerk (Jane Porter) was in attendance. *See individual items for members of the public.*

Part A

1. Apologies: Cllrs Martin Hoffman (other commitment), Graham Lee (away).
2. Minutes of the meeting 30th September 2018.
3. Declarations of interest. Item 11. The Chairman reported that Cllr Martin Hoffman had given his apologies but in any case he would have declared an interest as a contiguous neighbour and would not have participated.

Part B

On site considerations and proposals for recommendations to the NHDC Planning Officer

Item 11

NHDC Case Ref. 19/00424/FP. 1 Newnham Way

Full Planning Permission: Erection of replacement four bedroom detached dwelling and attached double garage (as a variation to approved application 17/01634/1) following demolition of existing dwelling and garage.

Members of the public present: Applicant and four parishioners.

The Chairman explained the procedures for the meeting. Standing orders were suspended for the applicant to explain the proposals, answer questions and for members of the public to speak.

The history of applications for this site was noted. In responding to consultations the Parish Council had raised concerns including the height of the new house and its impact on neighbouring properties and the landscape. There had been particular concern re the applicant's proposal for dormer windows in the front elevation.

It was noted that the Design & Access statement submitted by the applicant stated the following:

Reason For Application.

A minor design change to the approved dwelling –

This will comprise of the addition of,

- A single storey addition to the rear of the approved garage and bringing the garage slightly forward.
- Rear rooflights to the main house roof
- 3No. dormer windows to the main house
- Minor variations to door / window positions.

Also

Conclusion

The design of the proposal is such that it causes no overlooking to an increased level for objection and no additional overshadowing of existing properties. It is designed to a high standard with the frontage to a traditional period style while the rear takes the environmental enhancement with the provision for sunlight to major rooms, all of which assist in the construction of a modern well built efficient dwelling, reducing Co2 omissions and being sustainable.

The building fits comfortably within the street scene but in reality with the level differentials and the raised hillside plots to the South of Newnham Way the true facts are that the buildings on this side are hardly visible and well secluded.

The design is of a high standard which compliments and enhances the locality improving the quality of the area not only for the client but also the adjoining neighbours.

It is therefore hoped that the Council will still recognise the benefits of this.

The Chairman invited the applicant to explain the proposals. The applicant stated his reasons for the proposed changes; he assured that the ridge height would not be altered. The applicant stated that the new proposals had been discussed with neighbours. He stated that the neighbour opposite had no objections re any potential over-looking of their property by the addition of dormer windows in the roof. He stated that the next-door neighbour at no. 3 Newnham Way had been shown the structural engineers report re the proposed retaining wall and side-access path alongside the boundary and was satisfied with this.

Concerns were raised by members of the public and parish councillors re the following:

- (i) Damage to the Highways verge in Partridge Hill alongside the north-west boundary of the site. A significant amount of vegetation and a mature Walnut tree had been removed from the bank. This destruction had had a detrimental effect on the 'street scene' of this rural route that led to the Arbury Banks scheduled ancient monument. It was noted that the Herts County Council (HCC) Countryside Access Officer had been alerted and had been in contact with the applicant.
- (ii) Alleged encroachment onto Highways land at Partridge Hill. It was alleged that the barrier fencing installed to surround the site during the build process and the extent of the land cleared did not follow the correct line of the site boundary; there had been encroachment onto Highways land. References were made to HCC Highways maps and Land Registry documents.

The applicant stated that he had removed the Walnut tree for health and safety reasons having been alerted to a branch overhanging the Right of Way by a member of the public. The applicant stated that had been in contact with the HCC Countryside Access Officer re the vegetation removed from the bank; he admitted that this was only following concerns raised by members of the public and the Parish Council.

The applicant stated that the temporary fencing was on the correct line of the boundary. He stated that his intention, once the build process had progressed, was to erect a five-foot high fence along this boundary. He agreed that he would liaise with the HCC Countryside Access Officer re the correct line of the boundary before installing the new fencing.

Parish councillors expressed the following objections;

- The mass of the house already granted permission was considered very large for the site. The proposed additions would exacerbate this.
- The size of the house already granted permission was much larger than the bungalow that had been demolished and therefore not supportive of the housing needs of the village, ie for smaller units, that had been established by surveys for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed addition of dormer windows to facilitate extra rooms in the roof-space would make it even larger. The proposed addition of a garden room to the rear of the garage would have a detrimental effect on the neighbouring property.
- Concerns re the dormer windows, ie contributing to the dominance of the building and overlooking neighbouring properties, that had been expressed in relation to previous applications were reiterated.

It was **resolved** that a recommendation be made to the NHDC Planning Officer that permission be refused on the grounds of the objections stated. Also that a request be made for Permitted Development rights to be withdrawn to restrict any additions that would have a detrimental effect on the street scene by increasing the size and/or mass of the house and the privacy/enjoyment of neighbouring properties.
(*vote unanimous*)