

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2008 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors A.A. Meredith (Vice-Chairman sitting as Chairman), R. Aveley (substitute for Cllr I.T.W. Fletcher), J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, H.Rhodes, C.F. Smith (substitute for Cllr F.R. Picken) and M.J. Smith

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor S. Burrell for planning application W2008/0648 and Councillor A.J. Eade for planning application W2008/0702

#### **PB-29        MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PB-30        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher, R.G. Chaplin and F.R. Picken

#### **PB-31        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R. Aveley declared a personal interest in planning application W2008/0890.

#### **PB-32        PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

##### **(a)        W2008/0648 – Ashcroft, Sambrook, Shropshire**

This planning application related to the erection of a single storey linked annexe, a two storey rear extension to the main house, and a detached double garage. The proposed annexe was required by the applicant to accommodate his mother-in-law. She currently lived in her own house in Cressage but, although independent at the moment, the applicant felt it would be beneficial to her future health and well-being if she could move to an annexe adjoining his house. In addition, her husband resided in a nursing home in Newport and moving to Sambrook would make visiting easier.

The annexe would comprise an entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom and the two storey rear extension would comprise a dining room on the ground floor and an additional bedroom on the first floor. The proposed double garage would be a timber framed structure, with a first floor storage area and with access along an extended driveway around the right hand side of the building.

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Officers had no objections to the two storey rear extension and the proposed double garage nor to the principle of an annexe but considered that the annexe extension was too large and the amount of floor space excessive. Whilst it was recognised that extensions could provide a means of adapting dwellings to changing family needs, such as extending existing properties to provide for dependent relatives, in general, it was considered that extensions should be subsidiary in scale and not out of proportion with the original size and character of the dwelling. Moreover, extensions which created, or would be capable of creating, a separate dwelling, were considered to be unacceptable. The proposed annexe would have a floor area of almost 70 square metres and, given its design, it would be easy to create a separate dwelling unit in the future. Such a development would be contrary to current policies restricting new residential development in the rural area.

It was also considered that the elongated shape of the extension did not relate to or respect the character and appearance of the main house, or indeed other houses in the immediate vicinity of the site. 'Granny' annexes, by their very nature, were only intended to satisfy the short-term accommodation needs of an elderly relative and were not intended for long-term occupation by any particular person. They were also expected to be modest in size as it was anticipated that there would be a degree of sharing of the facilities of the main house.

Officers had met with the applicant and his family and explained that there would be no objection in principle to the provision of a small 'granny' annexe attached to the property but that the current plans showed too much self-contained accommodation. It had been suggested to the applicant that the annexe could be scaled down, as set out in the report, which would reduce its floor space by about one-third. However, the applicant had indicated that he was not willing to compromise or amend the submitted plans to accord with the Council's suggestions and, therefore, the application was recommended for refusal. Members noted the points, as set out in the report, made by the applicant in support of the application.

Councillor Burrell, the Ward Member, was invited to address the Board and spoke in support of the application. He said that the applicant wished to provide safe but independent accommodation within Sambrook for his mother-in-law before her mobility became reduced by age. Not only would the proposed annexe be used by her but, in future, would be available for the applicant's parents. Whilst the officer's report stated that the proposed annexe was proportionately too large in comparison to the existing house, Councillor Burrell explained that, as a single storey dwelling, it would have a larger footprint than a double storey dwelling. In addition, the size of the annexe had been designed for the practical purpose of accommodating the turning circle of a wheelchair, which was likely to be used by the occupant in the future. The applicant had no intention to convert the annexe into a separate dwelling and this would be precluded by the permanent link to the main house. However, if Members were minded to approve the application but were concerned at the possibility of the annexe being used in this way, he would have no objection to the inclusion of a restrictive condition.

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In terms of its possible detriment to the existing house and surrounding area, Councillor Burrell said that the annexe would not be visible from the front and there was open farmland to the rear. In addition, the existing dwelling was bordered on its right hand side by a 28 bedroom residential care home with additional unmatched single storey buildings. No objections had been made by neighbours or by the Parish Council. In conclusion, Councillor Burrell asked Members to balance the requirements of planning policy against the need to provide safe and independent living space for a vulnerable adult.

Whilst Members appreciated the need to provide such accommodation, they expressed concerns at the size of the proposed extension in comparison to the existing house. As officers had previously indicated that the principle of an annexe but on a smaller scale would be acceptable, Members advised the applicant to submit an amended scheme.

**RESOLVED** – that with regard to planning application W2008/0648 planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- (a) **The Local Planning Authority considers that the size of the proposed single storey linked annexe is too large and that the amount of floor space being created is excessive;**
- (b) **It is considered that this extension contains too much self-contained accommodation and could too easily be adapted to create a totally independent dwelling unit in the future;**
- (c) **The extension is disproportionate in size in relation to the existing house and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the existing house and the surrounding area. Moreover, the elongated shape of the extension does not respect or relate to the form and design of the existing house on the site, and thereby contravenes Policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan, Policy CS15 of Telford & Wrekin Core Strategy DPD and PPS.**

- (b) W2008/0693 – 28 St. Leonard's Road, Malinslee, Telford, Shropshire

This application had been deferred at the Plans Board of 13<sup>th</sup> August 2008 to allow the applicant to consider amending the submitted plans in light of the concerns raised by Members.

The original plans had shown the proposed fencing hard up against the edge of the footpath with the potential to block views along it leading to an unsafe environment. The proposed positioning of the fencing had now been stepped in by 1.5m along the side and 2m to the rear, which would enable views along the footpath and so provide a safer environment.

Members were recommended to approve an additional condition to that recommended in the report to the last Board meeting namely to ensure that the development was undertaken in accordance with the revised drawings.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2008/0693 planning permission be granted subject to the condition as set out in the report and to an additional condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the amended plans.

(c) W2008/0702 – Village Farm, Preston, Shropshire

This planning application was for the conversion of a single storey barn to residential use, the demolition of three redundant barns, and the erection of an extension to the barn building for mixed domestic/commercial uses. Councillor A.J. Eade, the Ward Member, had requested that it be submitted to the Board for consideration.

The converted barn would comprise a sitting room, dining room, kitchen and utility room on the ground floor, and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. The proposed extension, to be constructed in matching brick and tile, would accommodate a common lobby, double garage, office/workroom, and a small kitchen. Access to the new dwelling and workshop would be over an existing private drive which served both the farm and the barns. The proposed development would provide a new dwelling completely independent of Village Farm, which would virtually surround it and continue to be in agricultural use. The applicant had stated that he wished to protect and enhance the local environment by the refurbishment of a barn of distinctive character, thereby protecting the visual amenity of the village. In addition, the proposed development would provide a residence with dedicated commercial space to enable a 'home-work space' to be embedded with the community.

Policy H18 of the Wrekin Local Plan stated that the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use in the Rural Area would be strictly controlled and that applicants needed to demonstrate that every reasonable attempt had been made to secure suitable business re-use. Outside of 'suitable settlements', which Preston was not, the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use would only be permitted where the building was, in the opinion of the Council, of sufficient architectural or historic merit or made a significant contribution to the character of the local area, to justify residential conversion to ensure its retention. The building should also be in a sound state and be capable of being converted without major or substantial reconstruction.

In this case the buildings were marketed for a variety of commercial uses for a period of nine months but this without success. Officers were of the opinion, as detailed in the report, that the barn had very little architectural or historic merit and did not make any contribution to the character of the local area. It was set within a farm complex surrounded by more modern farm buildings and did not have a prominent location in the village or in the street scene. The brickwork of the barn showed signs of erosion, loosening, cracking, bulging, and bowing, with the front elevation being mainly affected. It was, therefore, considered that the building could not be sympathetically converted without major demolition, alterations and substantial reconstruction, which

would amount to the erection of a new dwelling in a village which was not considered suitable for new development.

The Council's Conservation Officer did not agree that the barn was a Listed Building in its own right as, if had been considered worthy of listing, it would either have been mentioned in the listing description of the farmhouse (which was a Listed Building), or listed in its own right. The Council's Highway's Engineer had no objections and the Drainage Engineer had none, subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the need to undertake soakaway tests for both foul and surface water disposal.

Policy CS1 (Homes) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy stated that the number of new homes in the Borough within the LDF period should be consistent with the policy of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands. Monitoring of current planning permissions had identified that this level of commitment had already been exceeded and, therefore, the creation of what would be a new dwelling in the Rural Area would not accord with policy. The proposed development also contravened Policy CS7 (Rural Area) which stated that development within the Rural Area would be limited to that necessary to meet the needs of the area and would focussed on the settlements of High Ercall, Tibberton, and Waters Upton. Planning Policy Statement No.7 (PPS7) advised that new housing development could potentially be considered acceptable outside identified service centres but that it should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Ward Member, was invited to address the Board in support of the application. Although the barn itself was not a Listed Building it was within the curtilage of the Grade II Listed farmhouse. He referred to the outstanding features of the barn, such as the braced trusses and the purlins and, in particular, the stepped crow feet gables which were considered rare and unique in the county. Councillor Eade made reference to an e-mail from 2006 in which the Council's Conservation Officer had expressed the view that the barn met the test of being of sufficient archaeological and historical merit and that, if the barn's structure was deemed to be suitable, which the then structural engineer's report believed it was, then the barn could be converted to residential use. Councillor Eade said that the barn was of sufficiently sound construction that it would only require conversion rather than rebuilding, and was, therefore, not contrary to policy. In conclusion, he asked the Board to approve the application in order to retain the barn as an integral part of both a working farm and the village of Preston.

Members voiced concern at the differing opinions of the Conservation Offer stated in 2006 and 2008 and the Head of Planning & Environment advised that the comments and reports had been made on the basis of the information available at the time. With regard to the officer recommendation that the application be refused as it constituted a new dwelling outside of Tibberton, High Ercall and Waters Upton identified for development in the LDF Core Strategy, he stressed the importance of this policy which was intended to protect the rural area by ensuring that development only took place where there were sufficient local services and a sustainable local economy.

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However, there remained options and opportunities for infill sites and Members needed to be mindful of this in making a decision. Policy would not be weakened by approval of the application if it was considered that the barn had archaeological or historical merit and its conversion would not be detrimental.

Several Members spoke in support of the officer's recommendation for refusal but other Members considered that an appropriate conversion would retain the barn as an integral part of the village and was preferable to allowing the building to deteriorate further.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2008/0702 delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning & Environment to grant planning permission subject to appropriate conditions.**

### **Reasons for Approval**

**It was considered that the barn was of sufficient historical merit to justify its conversion to residential use and its retention as an integral element of the village.**

(d) W2008/0737 – Manor Heights, Haybridge Road, Hadley, Telford, Shropshire

The principle of renovating the existing block at Manor Heights had previously been established by approval of application W2007/1547 and this proposal sought approval for the addition of a three-storey block of eight flats, a twelve storey extension to the rear of the existing tower block, alterations to the façade and associated landscaping and car parking layout. A total of fifty-one car parking spaces for residents of both blocks was proposed together with landscaping and the enclosure of the site by 2.1 metre railings with brick piers and a dwarf wall. The plans also showed internal alterations to create a mix of one, two and three bed units, together with the creation of communal space for a media room and cycle store at first and ground floor levels respectively. Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council had requested that the application be brought before the Board for consideration and their comments thereon were set out in the report.

The Council's Highways Engineer had expressed concerns regarding the shortfall in the proposed car parking provision, as set out in the report, and the applicant had been requested to address these before highway approval was given. The applicant's agent had submitted justification for the proposals but the Highway's Engineer remained of the opinion that the shortfall in the proposed level of provision remained a material consideration. In addition, the Fire Authority had advised that adequate access for emergency fire vehicles, sufficient water supplies and installation of sprinkler systems should be provided.

One objection had been received from a resident of the adjacent Mulberry Court on Brookdale and, following discussions with officers, the Agent had

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submitted amended plans whereby the block had been repositioned twenty metres from the properties on Brookdale, the height of the roof had been reduced and alterations made to the design in order to minimise its impact. In addition, the disabled spaces had been located closer to the rear entrance of the building; refuse storage had been relocated and details of cycle storage had been provided, thus overcoming the main issues relating to the design of the scheme. The three-storey building was, therefore, considered acceptable in terms of its scale and design in relation to the context of the main block and the existing three-storey development at Mulberry Court. It would also be in keeping with the character of the area and would not be detrimental to the streetscene.

However, there remained outstanding parking issues due to the introduction of eight additional units, which the Highways Engineer and other respondents had raised concerns about. The shortfall in parking provision had not been resolved by the Applicant, in terms of reducing the number of units or creating additional parking spaces within the site. As detailed in the report, the applicant had submitted supporting information for the limited parking provision, including the likely level of residents' vehicle ownership and the fact that a number of their other projects had been permitted with a parking ratio of 0.75 per unit, as would be the case with this scheme. While the latter assertion could not be controlled by planning, given the limited on-street parking available in the vicinity and the proposed parking provision, there could be an element of self-regulation in relation to location and the amount of parking. However, whilst the development would not provide sufficient car parking to meet the Local Plan Parking Standards, and the previous refurbishment scheme of 1 space per unit was a material consideration and fallback position, the current scheme met the sustainability criteria set out in national and local planning policy due to the site's proximity to Hadley District Centre and main bus routes and a reduced number of parking spaces to units could encourage sustainable travel practices.

Therefore, notwithstanding the under provision of parking spaces, the additional three storey building was considered to provide an improved streetscene and street presence and, together with its sustainable location, the development was deemed to be acceptable.

Members welcomed this opportunity to improve and bring back into use a building that had been empty for some time. Concern was expressed regarding the shortfall in parking spaces but the Head of Planning & Environment advised that occupants would be aware of this restriction before acquiring an apartment in the building. In addition, car parking was available in Hadley Centre and public transport was acceptable in the area. Councillor C.F. Smith supported the application but asked that contractors be instructed not to park on the road, or near to the adjacent road junction, and to ensure mud was removed from the road surface. In response to a question from Councillor Aveley regarding public access to the proposed gym, the Head of Planning & Environment suggested that an additional condition be attached to the approval stating that the use of any such facilities within the development was restricted to its occupants.

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**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2008/0737 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and to additional conditions restricting the use of the gym any facilities within the development to its occupants and the construction hours.

(e) W2008/0759 – Coronation Bungalow, Station Fields, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire

This application for the demolition of the existing bungalow and erection of two dwellings on the site had been deferred at the last meeting of the Board to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

The comments of the Council's Highways Engineer had been reported to the last meeting of the Board as an update. He had had no formal objection to the application as Station Fields did not form part of the adopted highway network nor would the development adversely affect any part of the adopted highway network in terms of highway safety. Furthermore, the proposal would only result in one net additional property however, he had suggested an informative be included to advise that Station Fields was of narrow character and in need of maintenance in places. In addition, there were limited opportunities for vehicles to pass and more intensive use of the road as a result of this and any future development might be to the detriment of residents.

Details of the objections from Oakengates Town Council were tabled at the meeting. These referred to the risk of flooding if additional properties were built on the site and the single width track access which was not capable of being widened resulting in access problems and safety issues. The applicant's agent had responded that the development could see a reduction in run-off by adopting sustainable drainage methods such as permeable block paving for hard standings, together with rainwater harvesting. Their client would be agreeable to such a condition being imposed. In addition, the Council's Geotechnical Engineers had advised that a 12 metre standoff should be observed from the partially treated mineshaft located in the rear garden of the adjacent property 'Newquay'. The agent had responded that the siting of the dwellings was a reserved matter and the mineshaft issue could be addressed at that stage.

Having requested a site visit, Councillor H. Rhodes drew Members' attention to the consultation responses, as set out in the report, relating to safety and flooding issues. In addition, Councillor Rhodes said that she considered that the site, if approved, was not suitable for large detached properties. Councillor R. Aveley raised concerns concerning the stability of the site and the Head of Planning & Environment responded that all the professional services of the Council would be used to ensure that an appropriate development was built.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2008/0759 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in the report.

- (f) W2008/0846 – Lloyds Cottage, The Lloyds, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought approval of a change of use of Lloyds Cottage from residential to Use Class B2 office use. Over time the property had been affected by the land stability issues associated with the wider Lloyds area which had resulted in it no longer being occupied for residential purposes. The proposal was that the building be used for meetings by the project team working on the stabilisation and future landscaping of The Lloyds, including scope for meetings and presentations with members of the public interested in the redevelopment. Such use would utilise the existing fabric of the building and would not necessitate any changes to the layout of the property. It was, therefore, considered, that this approach was in accordance with the aims of Policy HE8 and did not conflict with Policy E4.

For long term use, however, the site was not seen as being appropriate for an independent office use not associated with any other commercial work being undertaken in the local vicinity. Therefore, it was recommended that any consent granted should be limited to a period of two years. In terms of impacts on the site and the surrounding area, the scheme would not result in any material change on the surrounding landscape and, due to the remote nature of the building, there would be no impact on the privacy or amenity levels of other residents.

Councillor C.F. Smith voiced his concern at the proposed use of a building on such an unstable site. He considered it inappropriate to introduce additional traffic and visitors until the stabilisation works had been completed. However, the Planning Officer advised that the cottage would only be used for those meetings currently being accommodated in portacabins on the construction compound.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W2008/0846 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (g) W2008/0871 – Muxton Primary School, Marshbrook Way, Muxton, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought planning approval to construct an extension to the existing car park within the school's grounds to provide an additional five parking spaces and one disabled parking space for staff and visitors. The parking area would be of standard design and materials with tarmac surfacing and concrete kerbing in keeping with existing parking and drive access at the school site. The proposal stated that the existing box hedge and fruit trees would be removed and transplanted from the area of proposed parking spaces and a condition would be imposed to ensure

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landscaping details were submitted prior to commencement of the development.

The existing car parking, located to the side of main school building, comprised thirteen spaces with associated turning areas providing additional informal parking space. The Parking Standards, as identified in the Wrekin Local Plan, stated that there should be one space per full time member of staff and a minimum of three visitor spaces for primary schools. An update was tabled at the meeting which set out the additional information requested on the number of staff on site, namely 18 full time and 26 part time for the school and the nursery, both of which were within the curtilage of the site. In addition, there was a travel plan in place which was currently being reviewed. Following receipt of this information, the Council's Highways Engineer had confirmed that there were no objections to the scheme in principle. However, the school's existing travel plan was old and did not meet the current criteria and he, therefore, recommended the imposition of a further condition regarding the submission and implementation of a new Travel Plan.

As this was a relatively modest extension to the car park, it was not considered necessary to impose a condition regarding the submission of a Green Travel Plan. However any future expansion to the car park might not be deemed appropriate and further assessment of staff travel and parking need would be required as well as consideration of alternative, sustainable travel modes through a Green Travel Plan.

**RESOLVED – that with regard to planning application W2008/0871 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and to an additional condition relating to the submission and implementation of a new Travel Plan.**

Councillor Aveley, having declared an interest in the following application, left the room during determination thereof.

(h) W2008/0890 – Shortwood Primary School, Limekiln Lane, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This application by Telford & Wrekin Council sought permission for the erection of a 112.5 square metre extension to the nursery located within the existing barn in order to create an additional staff work room.

As the application site was located within the Green Network, as defined in the Wrekin Local Plan, extensions to existing uses were permitted providing that they accorded with certain criteria. With regard to this application, it was considered that the extension would not significantly affect the function of the Green Network, as it would be contained within the existing element of the building. In addition, the scale of the building would be compatible with the long term aims of the Green Network and would not impact adversely on the ecological, geological or archaeological value of the site. The proposal was, therefore, considered in accordance with policies OL3 and OL5.

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The new extension would be located on a prominent corner of the existing building to the front of the site in a semi circular design in keeping with existing design features on the school building. The external appearance of the building was contemporary and officers considered that it would make a strong and positive visual statement to enhance the surrounding area in accordance with policies UD2 and CS15. It was further considered that the proposal was unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring residents given the separation distances.

The extension would be constructed of material to match the new school, rather than the brick and tile of the existing nursery building and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Buildings in accordance with policies HE16 and CS14.

An update tabled at the meeting informed Members that Wellington Town Council had no objections to the application.

**RESOLVED** – that with regard to planning application W2008/0890 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (i) W2008/0892 – Windmill Primary School, Beaconsfield, Brookside, Telford, Shropshire

This retrospective application had been submitted by Telford & Wrekin Council in respect of a new canopy which had been installed over the main entrance to the school building. The canopy was of a satisfactory, contemporary appearance which enhanced the main entrance to the school building. As a minor addition to the main building, it had little or no effect on the general amenities of the surrounding area.

**RESOLVED** – that with regard to planning application W2008/0892 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

**PB-33            SITE VISITS**

None.

**PB-34            PLANNING APPLICATIONS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

The Board received for information details of planning applications that had been determined under delegated powers.

The meeting end at 7.47 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

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