

Runnymede Borough CouncilPLANNING COMMITTEE11 April 2007 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J.M. Edwards (Chairman), D.W. Parr (Vice-Chairman), Mrs F.M. Angell, J.R. Ashmore, J. Broadhead, J.B. Dean, J.R. Furey, Mrs E. Gill, C. Knight, M.T. Kusneraitis, Mrs Y.P. Lay, H.W.V. Meares, Mrs J. Norman, N. Stewert and G.B. Woodger.

Members of the Committee absent: None.

657. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive Officer of its wish that the change listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be reappointed.

| <b>Group requesting Change</b>  | <b>Remove from Membership</b> | <b>Appoint Instead</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Runnymede Independent Residents | Councillor B.J. Relph         | Councillor Mrs E. Gill |

The Chief Executive Officer had given effect to these wishes in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

658. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 March 2007 were approved and signed as a correct record.

659. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The planning applications listed below were considered by the Committee. All representations received on the applications were reported and copies were made available for inspection by Members before the meeting.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the following applications be determined as indicated and any permission granted be subject to the conditions authorised.**

**APP. NO.****LOCATION, PROPOSAL AND DECISION****RU.07/0123**

**61, 63, 65 and 67 Church Road, Addlestone  
Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of a part two, part three storey building with additional accommodation in the roof for 24 sheltered apartments plus guest suite, with 8 parking spaces and new vehicular and pedestrian access off Church Road.**

**DECISION: REFUSE for the following reasons:**

- 1. The proposed development, by reason of the design, height, width, mass, bulk, distance to boundaries and scale of the buildings, would be**

**prominent and incongruous resulting in a cramped form of development, which would have a detrimental impact on the street scene and the character of the area. The scheme fails to improve the character and quality of the area, and is contrary to Policies BE2 and HO9 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001, Policies LO2 and SE4 of the Surrey Structure Plan 2004, Policy CS12 of the LDF Core Strategy DPD 2006, Planning Policy Statement 1 : 'Delivering Sustainable Development'; Planning Policy Statement 3 : 'Housing' and Surrey Design.**

- 2. The proposed development by reason of its height, scale and mass, and siting and number of proposed windows would be overbearing upon No. 69 Church Road and cause overlooking or loss of privacy, particularly the rear gardens of neighbouring properties, contrary to Policy HO9 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001.**
- 3. The applicants have failed to demonstrate that the proposed development could provide adequate sightlines from the proposed vehicular access onto Church Road, and no adequate provision is included within the site curtilage for the satisfactory turning of larger vehicles required to serve the site clear of Church Road, leading to additional danger and conflict with other highway users, particularly along Church Road, contrary to Policy MV4 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan, Second Alteration April 2001 and Policy DN2 of the Surrey Structure Plan 2004.**
- 4. Following the conclusion of an appropriate assessment carried out pursuant to Regulation 48(1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitat & c.) Regulations 1994 (HR94), the Council are unable to conclude that the proposal either alone or in combination with other similar proposals would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Accordingly, since the planning authority are satisfied that there are no alternative solutions nor is it likely that this proposal would pass the Regulation 49 test of imperative reasons of overriding public interest, it is bound to refuse permission in accordance with Regulation 48 (5) of the Habitats Regulations 1994 and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC.**

**RU.06/0765**

**87-89 Common Lane, New Haw  
Variation of Conditions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18,  
19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 of outline planning permission  
RU.04/0987 (demolition of existing dwellings and  
erction of 4 no. semi-detached and 1 no. detached two  
storey dwellings with parking/garage and vehicular**

**access from Loncin Mead Avenue) to allow details to be submitted prior to the commencement of construction in place of the commencement of development.**

**DECISION: Subject to payment of £2,000 for each new dwelling (net gain) as a contribution towards the cost of facilitating, upgrading and maintaining the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces in accordance with the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Interim Advice Note, within one month of the date of the decision, the Director of Technical Services be authorised to GRANT permission subject to Conditions, Reasons and Informatives listed on Agenda.**

**RU.07/0195 52 and 54 Bond Street, Englefield Green  
Removal of 1 no. Lime Tree subject to Tree Preservation Order No. 147.**

**DECISION: GRANT subject to Condition and Informatives as per Agenda.**

**RU.07/0222 Pipers Corner, Pipers End, Virginia Water  
Erection of detached two storey dwelling with rooms in the roofspace and dormer windows to front and attached double garage with dormer and velux windows with accommodation over. (Amendment to RU.06/1049 granted for replacement dwelling).**

**DECISION: GRANT subject to Conditions and Informatives as per Agenda.**

660. AFFORDABLE HOUSING – INTERIM ADVICE NOTE

The Committee considered the adoption of an Interim Advice Note on affordable housing.

In recent years the provision of affordable housing had gradually become very confusing with Development Plan policies and Government guidance contradicting each other. The new Planning Policy Statement (PPS3): 'Housing' became fully effective from 1 April 2007 and sets a national indicative minimum site size threshold of 15 dwellings for affordable housing provision. Consequently, as from 1 April 2007 the adopted Local Plan Policy HO4 did not reflect Government advice, was not a 'saved' policy and required interim advice until the formal policy position was established in the Local Development Framework.

The Interim Advice Note sought to update the Council's affordable housing guidance and provide one clear note on how these different, emerging and adopted planning policies would be interpreted until the emerging policies had been formally proposed via the draft submission South East Regional Plan and Runnymede's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).

The more contentious elements of the emerging affordable housing LDF – Housing Development Plan Document (DPD), Policy HO8, such as seeking commuted sums for all housing schemes below 15 units, had not been included within the Interim Advice Note. These issues would be left for the formal consultations on the DPD.

The Interim Advice Note had been produced in consultation with the Director of Housing and Community Services in an attempt to provide an integrated approach to affordable housing provision. The Interim Advice Note was intended to provide some certainty and clarity to developers and applicants as to how planning applications would be determined in Runnymede. It would aid

consistency of advice from Officers on pre-application discussions and assist in providing some guidance when determining planning applications. The proposed integrated approach should also ensure that the affordable housing units met the requirements of the Housing Associations, the Housing Department and those in need of affordable housing and could actually be delivered.

Points (9) and (10) in Section 8 of the Interim Advice Note attached at Appendix 'A' required applicants proposing less than 40% affordable housing to submit a written and financial justification. This documentation would require verification from an independent valuer to confirm that the applicant's figures were both substantiated and realistic and the reduced amount of affordable housing provision being proposed for the development was reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case.

Members were informed that it was difficult to estimate how often an independent valuer would be necessary. With reasonable usage the costs of the independent valuer in assessing planning applications and defending decisions on appeal could be accommodated jointly between Development Control and Housing budgets. In the event that additional costs were incurred due to excessive demand for the services of an independent valuer or a high level of appeals etc, then a supplementary estimate might be required.

In approving the Advice Note, Members requested that appropriate RSL Extra Care/Sheltered Housing Providers be listed in an additional para 5.3 of the Note and that para 4.5 be clarified by the Director of Housing and Community Services. The Advice Note would, once approved by Council, be put out for public consultation after which further changes might need to be considered.

**RECOMMEND that –**

- i) the Interim Advice Note, as amended, on affordable housing at Appendix 'A' be adopted as the current planning policy for residential developments with 15 or more units (net) and/or on sites of 0.5 hectare or larger and on commercial developments over 10,000 sq m gross floor area until the emerging planning policies in the LDF Core Strategy and DPD have been formally adopted;**
- ii) the Interim Advice Note on affordable housing at Appendix 'A' be subject to public consultation and any views/comments reported back to the Planning Committee and the Full Council for formal adoption;**
- iii) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to make any necessary minor alterations to the Advice; and**
- iv) the financial consequences of using an independent valuer be noted.**

661. PLANNING SURVEY 2006 RESULTS

The Committee was informed of the results of the satisfaction survey undertaken of planning applicants in 2006, regarding processing of planning applications.

The response rate to the survey of 51% was good and satisfaction levels had increased since the last survey.

Over the last three years there had been a particular effort in Development Control to meet Government set performance targets relating to speed of determination of planning applications. It was to Runnymede's Planning staff's credit that not only had performance significantly improved, but over the same period, satisfaction levels had also risen. Members congratulated Officers on this achievement.

Officers would endeavour to look in more detail at improved service in those areas, where further work was needed to address applicant's concerns.

When comparative data was received on other Planning Authorities, a report would be made to Committee setting out how Runnymede compared.

662. PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

A list of planning applications recently determined by the Director of Technical Services under his delegated powers was noted.

663. WALNUT TREE COTTAGE, CHURCH WALK, CHERTSEY – TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

By resolution of the Committee, the Press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in para 6 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered placing a Tree Preservation Order on two Beech trees on land at Walnut Tree Cottage, Church Walk, Chertsey.

The Committee was informed that a planning application affecting the land on which the trees were sited (RU.07/0139), had been submitted for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of 7 no. x two storey 3 bedroom dwellings incorporating accommodation within roofspace and with vehicular access off Colonels Lane. This application had been withdrawn but Officers considered that the trees still required protection in the public interest.

Both Beech trees were very significant visually within the area and were estimated to have a future life expectancy of 20-40 years. The Council's Conservation Officer considered that the trees contributed significantly to the character of this part of Chertsey Conservation Area. The trees were located close to the town centre and in an area surrounded by built development except for the relatively open setting to which the trees front.

Whilst there was no evidence to suggest that the trees were under threat at present, there had been a recent planning application for the redevelopment of the site and they were considered to be in a vulnerable location where works might be undertaken to enhance the development potential of the site. In the circumstances, given the health and visual importance of the trees, the Committee considered that a Tree Preservation Order should be made.

The Human Rights considerations associated with this case were noted.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i) the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to make a Tree Preservation Order pursuant to Sections 198 to 201 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of two Beech Trees at Walnut Tree Cottage, Church Walk, Chertsey for the following reason:**

**The two Beech trees (T1 and T2) make a significant contribution to the visual amenities of the Chertsey Conservation Area and should therefore be protected in accordance with policies NE12 and NE13 of the Runnymede Borough Council Local Plan Second Alteration Adopted April 2001.**

- ii) subject to no adverse representations being received, the Director of Administration and Leisure be authorised to confirm the order without modifications.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.45 pm)