NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE - WEST

At a meeting of the Area Planning Committee - West held at Council Chamber, Prospect House, Hexham, NE46 1XD on Wednesday, 20 November 2013 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

CW Horncastle (Chair), E Armstrong, A Dale, JB Fearon, R Gibson, I Hutchinson, A Reid, JR Riddle, A Sharp (for part of the meeting)

OFFICERS

M Bird  Team Leader (Scrutiny/Regulatory), Committee Services, Legal and Democratic Services
M Francis  Planning Officer, Development Services
E Gray  Senior Building Conservation Officer, Development Services
T Graham  Solicitor, Legal and Democratic Services
J Green  Senior Planning Officer, Development Services
M Ketley  Acting Strategic and Urban Development Manager, Development Services
G Robbie  Principal Planning Officer, Development Services
J Seaton  Rural Development Manager, Development Services
I Stanners  Housing Enabler, Housing Services
T Wood  Senior Planning Officer, Development Services
J Wood  Planning Officer, Development Services

ALSO PRESENT

Press (1)
Public (29)

PART I

88. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dodd.

89. Minutes

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013, as circulated, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. It was noted that the minutes of the special meeting held on 30 October would be presented to the committee’s next meeting.

90. Disclosures of Interests

Councillor Dale declared an interest on application 13/10112/FUL as she

Ch.’s Initials.........
considered that she had prejudged it, but would speak in the local member public speaking slot on behalf of local residents, and would leave the meeting for the rest of consideration of the application once she had spoken. Councillor A Reid declared a prejudicial interest in relation to the same application, as he had discussed the application as a member of Prudhoe Town Council previously, before he knew he would be appointed to this committee. He would leave the meeting for the duration of consideration of the application.

91. **Determination of Planning Applications**

The report requested the committee to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. The Chair also explained the process for how each application would be considered and the public speaking arrangements.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

92. **13/02119/LBC - Listed Building Consent for the retention of solar pv panels on roof of building: Morley Hill Farm, Whitfield**

With the agreement of the Chair, this item was brought forward on the agenda as it had been considered and deferred for a site visit at the previous meeting.

Mr Graeme Robbie, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Mr Chris Harrison then spoke in favour of the application. His key points were:

- the panels were dark grey, fitted in with the roof and were not visible unless somebody stood right by the building
- the brackets used to attach the panels caused no physical damage to the building; the materials could be removed without altering the historic merits of the building
- the applicants had explored other means of alternative energy, and solar panels were the most suitable for the site; it would contribute to the green economy and assist a farming family
- the panels needed to be south facing so the outbuildings were the only option to use from the buildings available.

Councillor Hutchinson moved that the application be granted; he considered that the site visit had assisted and the panels needed to be south facing so were the only feasible option given the circumstances of the site, and would not have a major effect on the building. This was seconded by Councillor Armstrong.

Further discussion followed, with a number of points made including the assistance of the site visit, which helped consideration of any effect on the listed building, and any effect on neighbouring area, as there were no other properties locally. The gates on the property that were required for the building’s use had more impact on
the building than the panels would. Views were expressed that the panels would not cause lasting damage and could be removed. Another member referred to why there were restrictions on listed buildings and considered that the panels were not in keeping with the property nor appropriate. Following this and clarification regarding no time limit conditions being required as it was a retrospective application, it was put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that authority be given to the Head of Development Services to Grant Conditional Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions to be agreed with the Chair / Vice-chair.

13/01102/FUL - Proposed development of 22 new family dwellings (19 for social rent and 3 shared ownership), with two parking spaces within each curtilage, including new vehicular and pedestrian access: former allotments East Of Dene Workshops, West Road, Mickley

(6.20pm: Councillor A Reid left the meeting in advance of this application being considered.)

Ms Joanne Wood, Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Mr Ian Morphet then spoke in objection to the application. His key points were:

• he was representing businesses in Mickley, who all objected
• he questioned the reference to sufficient retail facilities being available within Mickley, for example it was not possible to buy bread there
• every business that objected had questioned the application on economic grounds, so how was there a sustainable and adequate level of services?; many businesses were specialist and little account had been taken of their concerns
• the proposal would result in lost parking space and make the businesses economically unviable
• it went against NPPF paragraphs 7 and 9 regarding the impact on local businesses, restricting economic growth, and traffic issues.

County Councillor A Dale then spoke in the local member public speaking slot. Her key points were:

• the Section 106 requirements had been omitted from the report, which should provide priority for Mickley residents and adhere to the housing allocation policy
• instead of it contributing to a strong and competitive economy, there would be a negative impact on the viability and amenity of all 11 local businesses
• it would lead to a loss of parking and result in more parking on the A695, where there was already a parking problem
• applications should assist strong, vibrant and healthy communities by delivering high quality buildings, but the application did not meet the 10m required for rear gardens, instead only 6m, and there would be
overshadowing on the south side of the boundary
- road safety problems would result from the access at the rear of the workshops as cars could park and reverse onto the road without any clear sight
- pedestrian access was down a steep slope, and there was no pedestrian crossing to the school. There was no safe or suitable access and it would lead to a residual cumulative impact, unacceptable on NPPF grounds
- the proposed development was too large for the site.

(6.38pm: Councillor A Dale then left the meeting for the remainder of the consideration of the application.)

Ms Sandra Manson then spoke in support of the application. Her key points were:

- the demand for housing had been demonstrated, as 242 per annum was required over 10 years. Local authorities were meant to meet targets within a five year period, and Northumberland needed to build 484 affordable houses per year to just meet its backlog
- long term management arrangements had been confirmed and it would be a good quality development
- if grant funded schemes were not delivered, the requirements could only be met through increasing the level of market housing through cross subsidies
- off-site open space stipulations could be waived if they would affect the viability of schemes
- no statutory consultees had objected, for example highways, and the planning officer’s assessment to support the scheme should be approved.

In response to some of the issues raised, members were advised by officers that:
- discussions had taken place with highways officers, who had looked at, and confirmed they were happy with, the scheme
- to restrict the existing car park from possibly becoming a ‘rat run’, a barrier was proposed to be conditioned to stop unauthorised access
- no accidents had been reported at the steep bank junction; the area was routinely maintained and gritted
- relevant policy referred to 10m in depth for gardens. Whilst some of the proposed gardens were only 6m wide given their width it was not considered that this would be a justification to refuse the application. The development had a density of 36 dwellings per hectare, but this was considered acceptable as it did not result in harm in terms of impact on the amenity of existing or proposed residents or highway safety.

In response to further questions, members were advised that:
- regarding there being a broad range of services, the area did constitute a sustainable settlement appropriate in principle for new development, with a garden centre and links to Prudhoe and Blaydon. The area had been accepted as a sustainable settlement when the local care home had been approved two-three years previously, and the situation had not changed
- there would be provision of two parking spaces per unit, catering for the demands and needs of parking standards
- the barrier would assist in preventing unauthorised access and a new footpath would be put in
- there had been pre-application discussions with the previous developer who had wanted to develop the site regarding highways matters, particularly the location of the access / junction. The current developer was continuing with what had been agreed previously between the last developer and the Highways Authority.

Councillor Sharp then moved the recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Armstrong.

Discussion followed in which concerns were expressed about the steep access onto the A695 and how an entrance to the east to the main road would have been safer. The provision of affordable housing was however welcomed. Some concern was expressed that a highways officer was not able to attend the meeting, for which reasons were provided, and this would be reported back to the department. Following this it was put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that authority be given to the Head of Development Services to GRANT conditional permission subject to the comments of the County Archaeologist and subject to the completion of a Section 106 planning obligation to secure the proposed housing as affordable.

94. (6.58pm: Councillors A Dale and A Reid then returned to the meeting.)

12/03280/FUL - Construction of a new two storey dwelling with garage to replace the existing out buildings: Orchard House West, Slaley

Ms Melanie Francis, Planning Officer, introduced the application by firstly giving an update to clarify that Slaley Parish Council had confirmed they supported the application. It was also explained that the applicant’s agent had submitted a further representation in support of the proposal and which sought to correct or counter elements of the report. This had been considered but did not change the recommendation set out. Ms Francis continued introducing the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Mr Jack Chown then spoke in support of the application. His key points were:

- the development was in a suitable location and met the demand for modest sized properties
- it would have no adverse effect on neighbours, no consultees had objected and it was supported by Slaley Parish Council. The only objections were from the Conservation Officer about it being considered as a heritage asset and issues regarding contributions to open space
- it would have little impact on the listed building and wider streetscene
- the ridgeline would be lower than neighbouring houses and be set back
- the family at Orchard House considered the buildings currently unusable
due to their poor condition.

In response to a question, members were advised that buildings could be considered a heritage asset if they had no formal protection but had historic value. National policy set out the process for submitting heritage statements to justify such buildings’ removal. The buildings proposed to be demolished were considered to be made of good vernacular materials and showed the history of the area.

Councillor Dale then moved that a site visit be arranged, to assess the impact of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent listed building and on the appearance of the area. This was seconded by Councillor Armstrong. It was then put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that the application be DEFERRED for a site visit to assess the impact of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent listed building and on the appearance of the area, to take place on Monday 9 December at 10am.

13/01571/OUT - Erection of four 3 bedroom bungalows, new access road, parking and turning areas: Phase 3 Land North East Of Briar Hill, Briar Hill, Bellingham, Northumberland: Phase III, Briar Hill, Bellingham

Mr Robbie introduced the application by firstly providing an update. Members were reminded that they had previously considered this application at the Area Planning Committee West meeting in August 2013. It had been resolved to approve the application subject to completion of a section 106 planning obligation to secure, amongst other matters, contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision. During discussions to this end, the requirement for affordable housing provision was queried as the site was below the relevant threshold for such provision. Additional correspondence had been provided giving evidence of discussions between the applicant and adjoining landowner about the purchase of a triangular piece of land which affected the affordable housing element of the scheme. This had been subject to significant discussions with the adjoining landowner. Mr Robbie continued with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams, and details of why the application had been brought back to the committee after the original consideration in August as affordable housing was no longer required as the site area was confirmed to be less than 0.2 hectares.

Mr Neil Morton then spoke in support of the application. His key points were:

- the application was amended when the applicant realised there was no requirement for affordable housing as the site was under 0.2 hectares
- the landowner had agreed to sell the parcel of land in question and this was confirmed from evidence of correspondence dating from 23 June 2013
- the proposal would deliver new housing in a sustainable village, was needed as there was not a five year housing supply, and should be approved subject to the Section 106 agreement.

Councillor Hutchinson moved that the application be approved. This was
seconded by Councillor Riddle. It was then put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that authority be given to the Head of Development Services to GRANT conditional outline planning permission, subject to completion of a section 106 planning obligation to secure a commuted payment towards sport and play provision, and subject to conditions, as set out in the report.

96. 13/01990/VARYCO - Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 12/01002/FUL: Roebuck House, Greencroft Avenue, Corbridge

Ms Tamsin Wood introduced the application firstly with an update. A neighbouring resident had been in contact to confirm that she had no objection to the application but supported it. Ms Wood continued with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Mr Richard Hart-Jackson then spoke in objection to the application. His key points were:

- the applicant had not met his obligations following the original application being granted in 2012
- he would have accepted the original plans, which seemed modest and would’ve matched his property’s proportions, but the resulting build was 1m higher at the eaves and the whole structure was two feet higher. The proximity of the building overlooked his house and affected his privacy
- the applicant had backfilled at the east side leading to the height differences
- would the committee have agree the original application if it had been based instead on these new plans?
- the application would be improved if it had a hipped roof instead.

Ms Nicola Allan then spoke in favour of the application. Her key points were:

- the house level had been set out with advice of the Building Control officer, to avoid further engineering works in connection with the foundations of the building. The plans had been checked, drawn by an engineer and reflected what was built on the site
- as soon as the problem had been identified, no further building work, other than on the ground floor, had continued until this committee took a decision
- the eaves were actually 0.6m higher, and the ridges 0.15cm/6 inches, not 1m. There was no uniformity in roofs or ground levels in the area
- the house was actually on the edge of, not in the conservation area
- there was no evidence for loss of light or privacy; the scaffolding currently on site could be factor. There was not a view into the sun room or garden from the house, and therefore no potential for overlooking.

In response to questions from members, officers responded that:

- the property was not in the conservation area
- factors could come up in the construction process, but the height difference
was not 1m. Either non-material minor amendments could be agreed if any changes to a build were minor in nature or a variation of a condition if changes were more significant. The ridges were however still only 15cm higher than the original approved scheme but in this instance a variation of condition was considered to be appropriate

- members had to consider what material impact the changes would have on neighbours, and it was not considered to constitute harm to neighbouring amenities
- the fenestration details would be the same, but the windows would be 40cm higher as per the differing ground floor level
- apart from work to the ground level, work had generally ceased since these issues were raised; if approved these new plans would be those which the building would be built in accordance with
- the difference in height should not have a significant impact; light was not considered to be an issue
- dampproof course had been put in but problems but then the building had to be raised and problems with water pooling had followed, which might have not come to light until the building was inspected.

Councillor Hutchinson then moved that the application be granted. This was seconded by Councillor Dale.

Reference was made to some local concerns about the development and how a second application had come to be necessary. Summing up, Councillor Hutchinson stressed that the committee had to consider the application as it stood and did not think it should be refused even if had been a new application. It was then put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that authority be given to the Head of Development Services to GRANT conditional planning permission subject to no new material planning issues being raised within the consultation and notification period, and subject to the conditions set out in the report.

13/02748/FUL - Construction of supplementary fish pass at Hexham Bridge Weir: Land South East Of Hexham Bridge, Tyne Mills, Hexham

Mr Robbie introduced the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Ms Susan Mackirdy then spoke in favour of the application. Her key points were:

- the proposal had been planned to help mitigate the effect on the river from the building of the second Tyne tunnel
- Hexham bridge’s footings affected most fish at some flows and all fish at others
- it was the Environment Agency’s most high priority fish pass in England
- it was important for ecological reasons, including Salmon returning to the Tyne, assisting the European Eel return, and the barriers caused an issue for fish spawning
an improved fish pass would assist tourism and attract anglers.

In response to a question, members were advised that a discussion could take place with the applicant about placing an interpretation board at the site, but it would not be reasonable to require this as a condition.

Councillor Hutchinson then moved the recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Fearon, who then spoke in favour of the application. It was put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that Conditional Permission be GRANTED, subject to the conditions set out in the report.

98. 13/02412/FUL - Conversion of dwelling into two 2 bed apartments, located at first and second floor, extension of former ground floor café into one of the existing front shop units, and new fire escape door to serve the associated basement area and provision of new car parking area and bin store at rear of the garden, as amended: Gresham House, Watling Street, Corbridge

Mr Robbie firstly provided an update; the Trees and Woodlands Officer had commented with reference to the tree by the garage. He had no objections but had commented about the surface materials around the base of the tree and garage area, following which a condition had been added to secure the submission and agreement of the surface materials to be used near the garage. The recommendation needed to be revised to remove the reference to receiving comments from the Trees and Woodlands Officer. Mr Robbie continued introducing the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

Councillor Fearon moved the recommendation to grant, to include the additional condition requested by the Trees and Woodlands Officer. This was seconded by Councillor Hutchinson. Councillor Fearon welcomed the application including the additional car parking proposed at the bottom of the rear garden. It was then put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that authority be given to the Head of Development Services to GRANT conditional permission subject to conditions and subject to the completion of a section 106 planning obligation to secure a contribution towards off-site sports and play provision, as set in the report.

99. 13/02484/RENE - Proposed free standing 10kw photovoltaic cell panels, approx 54sq metres in adjacent field: Chesterwood Villa, Haydon Bridge

Mr Robbie introduced the application with the aid of maps, photographs and diagrams.

In response to questions Mr Robbie advised that:

- the application was primarily a domestic rather than a commercial scheme
- the panels would be blue, in black frames; the application set out details of the justification of the size of the scheme with its kilowatt output.
Councillor A Reid moved that the application be granted, which was seconded by Councillor Dale. It was then put to the vote and:

RESOLVED – that Conditional Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions, as set out in the report.

REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES

100. Appeals Update

Members received a report on the progress of planning appeals for their information.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.36pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATE