

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held virtually
on **Tuesday 7 July 2020** at **4.00 pm**.

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Armstrong E	Reid J
Bowman L	Renner-Thompson G
Dodd R	Robinson M
Flux B	Stewart G
Foster J	Swithenbank ICF
Gibson RM	Thorne T
Hepple A	Webb G
Lang J	

OFFICERS

Bowers H	Democratic Services Officer
Blyth K	Principal Planning Officer
Campbell R	Planning Officer
Dixon L	Democratic Services Apprentice
Little L	Democratic Services Officer
Marron H	Senior Planning Officer
Masson N	Principal Solicitor
More T	IT Support Officer
Murfin R	Director of Planning
Murphy J	Principal Planning Officer
Patrick M	Principal Highways Development Management Officer
Sinnamon E	Senior Planning Manager

ALSO PRESENT

Hutchinson I	Ward Councillor
Lawrie R	Ward Councillor
Riddle J	Ward Councillor

87. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT A VIRTUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chair outlined the procedure which would be followed at the virtual meeting and of the changes to the public speaking protocol. He also advised Members that if their connection was lost during consideration of an application and it was not possible for a short recap to be provided then the Member would not be allowed to vote on the application.

88. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Committee to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. Members were reminded of the principles which should govern their consideration of the applications, the procedure for handling representations, the requirement of conditions and the need for justifiable reasons for the granting of permission or refusal of planning applications.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

89. 19/03962/CCD

**Construction of new salt barn to replace existing open bulk road salt storage bay. Demolition of existing vehicle garage block.
Northumberland County Council, Highways Depot, Otterburn, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, NE19 1HA**

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

R Campbell, Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a slide presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

A statement in objection to the application from E Anderson on behalf of residents was read out by J Murphy, Principal Planning Officer and would be attached to the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

Councillor J Riddle then addressed the Committee speaking as the local Ward Councillor. His comments included the following:-

- He fully understood the need to cover salt to prevent leaching; to address concerns from the Environment Agency and allow the easier spreading of salt. This application however was for a salt dome of 45ft in height and 49ft in width within a large village which had expanded greatly over the years.

- The application site was in an area of high landscape value and within the impact risk zone of the SSSI and was also very close to the registered battlefield site of the Battle of Otterburn and was being promoted by the Wild Redesdale Group for tourism.
- He understood that there was no sequential test required but he had in the past requested that the Council investigate the use of sites away from villages as he believed there was no longer a need for Council depots to be sited within villages to be within walking distance for workers and that he received continuous complaints regarding noise and traffic from other such depots. He realised that this was not a planning issue but it did impact on residential amenity.
- The site was in a built up area, the commercial building to the north was previously a small engineering works but was now an army supplies store which did not create any noise.
- The proposed salt burn was actually higher than that previously proposed by approximately 10ft and he did not think that this proposal would be the best solution for this site. The use of a silage pit type with concrete walls and a roll back cover which wouldn't be as high or intrusive was suggested.
- He could not believe that there was no alternative location outside the village that could be used on MOD land or old silage pit.
- The scale of the development was unacceptable in that location and there would be an impact on the visual amenity.
- The officer's report stated that there would be some harm from the proposal however the amount was a matter of judgement and if you lived right beside the depot the harm was greater than if you lived at the other end of the village, it was proportional.
- He could not support this application, but fully understood the need for salt barns.

J Murphy, Principal Planning Officer read out a statement on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. The statement would be attached to the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

16:40 The meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes at this point due to technical difficulties.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee the following information was provided:-

- The salt burn at Allendale was a similar height but was constructed from different materials with a black roof and concrete panels, the proposed salt burn at Otterburn would have timber cladding and a green roof along with landscaping. Additional information provided as part of the application had stated that alternative locations had been explored, however that was not a requirement of this application and the Committee must determine the application as submitted for this location.

- The first application in 2016 for the rectangular shape was 300sqm bigger in terms of floor space but was 3m lower than this proposal, now the footprint was smaller but it was higher. The proposed barn had been moved within the site in order to allow more distance between it and residential properties.
- The applicant had advised that both the MOD and Forestry Commission had been approached regarding the use of their land for an alternative site for the salt barn however no sites had been identified due to a number of reasons.
- There were standard design types of domes, however this was an alternative style which was now able to be used. Officers had questioned the proximity to residential properties and the size and height of the barn, however the applicant had stated that this was the height and size required in order to allow the quantity of salt to be stored and provide vehicular access. This was the application that was put before Members and the Committee must make a decision based on the facts before them.
- No sequential test was necessary in respect of this application but due to the concerns from members of the public in respect of the siting of the barn on the existing Council's highways depot site, the applicant had been requested to look at different options, however development outside of the village settlement fell foul of a number of Planning Policies. There was a nationwide approach for the replacement of salt storage and this application had been considered from a variety of perspectives. To allow the building to be moved further away from residential properties a standard design was looked at but it was required to be slightly higher. Following consideration of the application it was concluded that the location was satisfactory and whilst it would not be without impact, with landscaping it was thought the application was acceptable.
- A new style condition would be attached to any permission granted with a landscaping plan to be submitted and agreed by the Planning Authority which also now included maintenance of the scheme for 5 years. The tree planting would reduce noise from the site; obscure the building from neighbouring properties and blend into the surroundings. Details of the types of trees to be included would be provided as part of the condition and the use of evergreen trees would be considered.

Councillor Horncastle proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with conditions as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

In discussing the application, a number of Members stated that the main issue was around the height of the building and it was recognised that the use of an alternative location was not a planning issue. The existing depot had been in that location for a long time and had been surrounded by residential creep. It was thought that there would be less light pollution and as more vehicle movements would be inside the building it would therefore reduce noise levels from the depot. This was a strategic location close to both the A696 and A68.

Councillor Robinson suggested that slides should be shown to the Committee with the images of proposed buildings superimposed on them as it was hard to imagine how

they would actually look when built onto the landscape. He did not consider that enough thought had gone into looking at alternative designs which could have mitigated problems with the height of the proposed building.

A vote was taken as follows:- FOR 15; AGAINST 1; ABSTENTION 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

90. 20/00118/FUL

Construction of new porch to entrance area of the property, with oak posts, no doors or windows.

Ashcroft Guest House , Lantys Lonnen, Haltwhistle, NE49 0DA

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

K Blyth, Principal Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a slide presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

Councillor I Hutchinson addressed the Committee speaking as the local Ward Councillor. His comments included the following:-

- He had been disappointed with the site visit videos stating that they had been very short and had not shown views from the old Haltwhistle By-Pass or from Lanty's Lonnen looking into the site.
- The application was finely balanced and it had received no objections from the Town Council or residents with the only objection received from the Conservation Officer. It was about whether Members felt it was finely balanced enough to approve or to refuse. The Conservation Officer stated it would cause less than substantial harm to the building and how much weight Members put on this.
- It had been a guest house for a number of years and had just won an award as the second best guest house in Northumberland.
- He did not consider that it would cause harm as it was more an open shelter rather than an enclosed porch and would ensure guests did not get wet whilst waiting for someone to answer the door. Whilst the shelter would not enhance the building it certainly would not harm the building. It had been carefully thought out and would be constructed of oak with a matching slate roof. It was a privately owned guest house which was very well maintained.
- He asked the Committee to approve the application stating that it was just in the conservation area and the nearest listed building was 100m away and this building was not listed. He requested that the Committee support the application.

H Bowers, Democratic Services Officer read out a statement from Susie White, agent on behalf of the applicant, in support of the application. The statement would be attached to the signed minutes and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee the following information was provided:-

- This was not a listed building and should be considered as a non designated heritage site as it made a local contribution to the conservation area. No further detail was known regarding the application for the illuminated sign. Permission would be required for a change of use to residential dwelling and it was not possible to say if the porch would be removed if this was the case.
- In a conservation area there was a test to be undertaken in respect of maintaining the attractiveness of the area. Small changes might seem inconsequential however if there were lots of small changes then this could cause damage to the character of the area. From a policy perspective the question needed to be, does it enhance or improve the conservation area, and this did not. Members could however consider that, was the harm of such an inconsequential nature that it would not cause substantial harm. The advice of Officers must be that the proposal would have a minor impact and was not of benefit to the built form of the area, however Members could ask what harm or benefit would there be in the context of allowing the business to develop.
- The building was on the edge of a conservation area and therefore a duty was placed on the local planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Even though the building itself was non designated it still was an important building within the conservation area.
- When considering applications regarding listed buildings or within conservation areas a consistent approach was required. Officers could not state that this type of development would preserve or enhance the vernacular of the building, but it would be for the Committee to decide if there were any other reasons why the application could be approved or if it considered that the harm was so low that they would set this aside.
- It was a fully designated conservation area, however this did not mean freezing an area and stopping all development in the area it was about retaining and enhancing the area.

Councillor Flux proposed approval of the application as he considered that the development would be inconsequential and would not lead to an incremental effect on the conservation area. This was seconded by Councillor Reid.

Whilst discussing the application, the majority of Members considered that this was an imposing building with nice features however it did overlook an industrial estate, the railway line and the new by-pass and was not in a particularly picturesque setting. They did not consider that the addition of the porch would detract from the building but would provide shelter for guests and highlighted the double garage which had already

been added to the building. The detail of the proposed porch was well thought out and would attract rather than detract from the building and would assist in the operation of the business. Councillor Bowman advised that he considered that the impact of many small changes would impact on the character of Haltwhistle and that the addition of the porch would hide the beautiful stonework of the entrance to the building and would destroy the character of the stonework.

A vote was taken on the proposal to grant permission for the reason as outlined above with delegated powers to be granted to the Director of Planning to add conditions to any approval as follows:- FOR 13; AGAINST 3; ABSTENTIONS 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** as the development would be inconsequential and would not lead to an incremental effect on the conservation area and delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning to add conditions to the permission,

**91. 19/02150/FUL
Proposed demolition of former public house and erection of 2no.
dwellinghouses.
Black Bull Inn Bowsden Berwick-Upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2TN**

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

H Marron, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a slide presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

L Little, Democratic Services Officer read out a statement submitted by Bowsden Parish Council. The statement would be attached to the signed minutes of the meeting and uploaded to the Council's website.

Councillor R Lawrie addressed the Committee speaking as the Local Ward Councillor. He advised that he wished to reinforce the comments made by the Parish Council. He highlighted that there was a pavement between the property and the road and therefore there was no reason why the front of the new development could not face onto the road. He considered it was wrong for a 200 year old pub to be flattened /demolished in a lovely little village. The two new houses would be tiny and would bring no benefit to anyone but he could see the loss to the village. There had been some interest shown at some point for a cafe or pub to be run from the building but this did not seem to have been taken up.

H Bowers read out a statement submitted by Ferguson Planning on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. The statement would be attached to the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee the following information was noted:-

- The proposal was acceptable in terms of density with the site able to comfortably accommodate two detached dwellings with plot ratio, car parking standards and separation distances all taken into account.
- The privacy distances were, northwards to the properties opposite it was 22m; to the east it was gable to gable arrangement of 14m; and to the south it was 15m at its closest point increasing to 18m. It was important to note that Berwick Local Plan did not stipulate a policy of what the separation distances should be. The judgement was what was appropriate for the site, but industry distances had been used to compare in this instance and these were found to be acceptable. The objection from the Parish Council highlighted three ground floor windows at Berrywell which were a kitchen, dining room and lounge windows. The lounge and kitchen were secondary windows, however the dining room window was missed at the point of site inspection for which the Officer offered her apologies. This did not change the recommendation as the distances were acceptable and there was also a mature hedgerow between the site.
- The loss of the public house was an important consideration in this application and a significant objection was raised in respect of the loss of the community asset and the NPPF stated this loss must be assessed by the local planning authority. A viability appraisal had been submitted with information to support the application and this had been referred to an external consultant who had advised that the loss of the public house was acceptable and that a public house was unviable in this location. The conclusion was that the loss of the public house was acceptable. There was a typographical error in the conclusion and the overall conclusion was that the loss of the public house was acceptable and the building felt significantly short of the type of building you would take steps to protect and therefore there was no need for it to be saved from demolition and the proposal was acceptable.
- In discussing the application with the applicant, concerns over the scale/height and massing were raised as potential issues and it had been explained that the orientation of the dwellings followed that of the original building, where the main entrance was from the rear. It was recognised that no other properties backed onto the main road, however the Officer had judged that this proposal was acceptable.
- If a building in community use was to be removed the public had an opportunity to make a submission to have it defined as an asset of community value. This was not something undertaken proactively by the local planning authority, it would be for the local community to come forward with proposals and this would have been taken into consideration. The information on the viability of the public house was some way from being finely balanced and it was not a viable business in its current format.
- If it was accepted that the public house was not viable and that the building did not meet the criteria for being retained, then Members must consider whether the site would be suitable for development. Following that they must look at the proposed design and officers' advice was that this was an acceptable proposal.

Councillor Stewart proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Flux.

In discussing the application Councillor Thorne advised that he felt that the application for the two dwellings in terms of massing, density and orientation did not fit in with the vernacular of the area and would stand out. Whilst some other Members agreed that it might have been better if the proposal was for one dwelling or facing onto the road, they did not consider there were sufficient reasons to refuse the application. It was recognised that the public house had not been opened for 23 years and this proposal would prevent the building becoming derelict.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR 15; AGAINST 1; ABSTENTION 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

92. PLANNING APPEALS

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The virtual meeting closed at 6.40 pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____