

Runnymede Borough Council

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 7.00 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors S Whyte (Chair), T Gates (Vice-Chair), V Cunningham, C Howorth, A King, S Lewis, C Mann, P Mehta, I Mullens, C Parry, K Rowsell, P Snow and M Williams.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors L Gillham and M Nuti.

41 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership

There were no changes to Committee membership.

42 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

43 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L. Gillham and Cllr M. Nuti.

44 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

45 RU.24/1044 - 16-18 Victoria Street, Englefield Green, Surrey, TW20 0QY

Proposal: Retrospective alterations for changes in the window and door arrangement to include sash windows, glazed door and blocking up of existing windows.

This item was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

46 RU.23/1313 - The White House, 53-55 High Street, Egham, TW20 9EX

A Committee member queried why a number of habitable rooms that fell below the minimum recommendations for daylight/sunlight guidelines.

The Head of Planning advised that this was a matter of guidance and planning judgement. When dealing with a listed building there will often be a need to balance the desire to maintain fabric against the correct level of residential amenity. It was considered that bringing a heritage asset into proper and long-term residential use was a significant benefit. A solution had been negotiated with the Heritage advisor that struck the correct balance.

Furthermore, any proposal to reduce the number of units was likely to affect the viability of the scheme, and officers had therefore concluded that it would be more harmful to have additional windows in the building than to have a degree of shortfall on natural daylight.

In responding to a question on likely energy usage of the development, officers confirmed that energy efficiency ratings was not a planning consideration, and the scheme was too low for triggers for having onsite renewable energy. Whilst this would increase the reliance on artificial light, all properties on the scheme did have a good degree of outlook.

When asked about increasing the number of bike spaces on the development, it was confirmed that one bike space per flat was the RBC guidance, and whilst it would not be appropriate to include a condition beyond Council standards, the case officer would advise the developer of the Committee's desire to see the bike space provision increased. It was added that the location was within arguably one of the most sustainable parts of the borough, with a balanced package of walking, cycling and rail access and facilities very close by such as shops and schools.

It was resolved that –

The Head of Planning was authorised to grant planning permission subject to:

- **Planning conditions 1-13**
- **Informatives 1-6**

47 **Thorpe Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan - formal consultation request**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 required Councils to determine which parts of their borough were of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it was desirable to preserve and enhance and designate as Conservation Areas, and to review these existing designations accordingly. This is also reflected in the Council's adopted Runnymede 2030 Local Plan Policy, which makes a clear commitment to reviewing the Borough's Conservation Areas, in accordance with its legislative duty.

The Council had been reviewing a number of Conservation Areas in the Borough since 2018, and Thorpe was one of the few remaining areas without a recently updated appraisal, and following an extensive review a number of areas had been proposed to be added and removed from the conservation area boundary.

Following an informal consultation featuring a range of stakeholders and peer review by Surrey County Council's Historic Environment Planning Service, officers sought Committee's permission to undertake a full public consultation from Friday 10 January 2025 for a period of six weeks.

Responding to a member question asking for the issues and opportunities to be elaborated on, officers advised that when proposals were put forward applicants could be encouraged to develop their proposals to improve the appearance of buildings close to the conservation area, however this would be in the form of guidance rather than being compulsory.

The balance between the importance of maintaining heritage assets against the ongoing battle to ensure their energy efficiency was debated by the Committee, and it was discussed that there were potential policy options to deal with this in the next local plan.

It was agreed that officers would provide an additional positive entry in the next iteration of the document around retrofits that may simultaneously improve the quality of the building and the energy efficiency. The Committee asked for this to be provided in the post-consultation draft that returns to Committee for approval rather than included in the consultation material.

It was resolved that –

Committee approved the draft Thorpe Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, including the proposed boundary review, for public consultation for a period of six weeks between Friday 10 January and Friday 21 February 2025.

48 **Planning Committee Proposed Fees and Charges 2025/26**

The Head of Planning advised that the majority of fees were set by statute, and a proposal of a 5% increase on general discretionary planning fees and 2% on Building Control had been proposed.

The Head of Planning agreed to circulate some more information to Committee on national planning application fees.

It was noted that a paper setting out revisions to pre-application charges would be considered at a future committee meeting.

It was resolved that –

The proposed fees and charges were approved to be effective from the dates within Appendix A or as soon as practical thereafter.

49 **Review of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in Englefield Green and proposed additions to the Runnymede Local List. Formal consultation request**

[This item was considered prior to agenda item 48 – Planning Committee Proposed Fees and Charges 2025/26]

The Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted on 31 January 2024 and as part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Englefield Green Neighbourhood Forum undertook a survey of Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs), with the view to seeking to designate them as such.

The Council undertook an initial desk-top review of the proposed list of Non-Designated Heritage Assets, and following a more in-depth review by the Council's heritage consultants, a proposed eighty additional entries (covering 129 additional assets) in the Neighbourhood Area as Non-Designated Heritage Assets had been suggested as being added to the Runnymede Local List. Officers sought Committee approval to undertake public consultation on the proposed additions.

During the debate a Committee member acknowledged the role that Neighbourhood Forums play in shaping the areas that they represent, but in their desire to designate as many assets as possible called for a more strategic overview for decision-makers to assist in determining an appropriate balance between the environmental and cosmetic aspects against the need for housing. Officers advised that the list provided by the Neighbourhood Forum had been assessed against Heritage England guidance to come up with a proportionate list, whilst policies in the Local Plan set out what could be done with those locally listed buildings around maintaining its distinctive features whilst allowing it to evolve. Furthermore the NPPF required the Council to keep an accurate record of historic assets in the area.

It was further clarified that this work was looking at a far wider area than the review Englefield Green Conservation Area boundary, which went to Committee in June 2023 and had significantly different designations and approaches, and an area removed from the Conservation Area could still be in the list of heritage assets.

Several Members acknowledged the work officers had put into the documents, however a member felt that some of the buildings listed were not unique, had limited heritage value and could be made unviable when energy running costs were factored in if policies stood in the way of them being upgraded. The member felt that the document should solely focus on buildings of significant importance.

Officers clarified that the list had been assessed under Heritage England criteria the bar for amendments to locally listed buildings was lower than that of nationally listed buildings. Furthermore the list was not designed to recognise exceptional buildings, but rather those with local historic links to make them good enough for a form of recognition, whilst maintaining just a small number of buildings could be sufficient to form a significant part of the backdrop of the fabric of a location.

It was resolved that –

Committee approved the list of 80 additional entries (covering 129 Non-Designated Heritage Assets assets) for potential addition onto the Runnymede Local List for public consultation for a period of six weeks between Friday 10 January to Friday 21 February 2025.

(The meeting ended at 7.58 pm.)

Chair