

Runnymede Borough Council**Planning Committee****Wednesday, 15 February 2023 at 6.30 pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Willingale (Chairman), P Snow (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, J Broadhead, R Bromley, V Cunningham, L Gillham (Substitute, in place of E Gill), C Howorth, A King, I Mullens, M Nuti, S Ringham, S Whyte and J Wilson.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor C Mann.

In attendance: Councillors S Jenkins and S Williams.

508 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

509 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C Mann.

510 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

511 Planning Applications

The planning applications listed below were considered by the Committee. All representations received on the applications were reported and copies had been made available for inspection by Members before the meeting. The Addendum had also been published on the Council's website on the day of the meeting. Objectors and applicants and /or their agents addressed the Committee on the applications specified.

RESOLVED that –

the following applications be determined as indicated.

512 RU.22/1206 - Barons Court, 22 The Avenue, Egham, TW20 9AB

Proposal: Change of use from Offices (Class E) into a mixed use of; offices, a Place of Worship, meeting area and non-residential education and training (Sui Generis).

Several Members acknowledged concerns about the impact of parking in the area, particularly from residents who did not have on-street parking available, however officers indicated to the Committee that the application was consistent with the Council's parking policies, and that planning was about balanced decisions, that conditions were recommended to help manage parking demand and the site was in a sustainable location. Members were encouraged by the applicant's intention to both work with local residents to overcome concerns and encourage their worshippers to use the nearby car parks in Waspe Farm and Hummer Road.

The provision of a car park management plan was also welcomed by Committee, many of

whom welcomed the presence of a mosque to meet a longstanding need for such a facility and to help breakdown potential prejudices from a small minority in the area.

The Committee chair sought to clarify the opening hours as the timings in the addendum had been recommended to change from the original recommendation in the committee report. Following significant debate a number of members indicated that they were not supportive of restrictions on opening hours at all. By majority the Committee voted to abolish any restriction of hours, stating reasons that many other religious buildings having no such restrictions, and the only impact on the area being the comings and goings rather than amplified music or speeches.

It was added that comings and goings in the context of the site's current use as an office block would take place during office hours, having a negative impact on traffic in the area this use was likely to be more distributed across the day. Whilst there might be a heavy peak at Friday lunch time any disturbance and inconvenience would be outweighed by the community benefits in delivering the facility.

Several members of the committee highlighted their support for the application, noting that there were some five places of worship for Christians in the nearby area, and other faiths would benefit from having a local place of worship.

The Development Manager advised Committee that cycle parking (condition 6) would be updated to secure updated cycle parking facilities.

Resolved that –

The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to:

- a) Planning conditions 1-8 (including updated planning condition 6)**
- b) Informative 1**
- c) The removal of any restriction of hours**
- d) An additional informative to provide EV charging points**

513 **RU.21/0983 - Field Cottage, Land Adjacent, 4 The Lane, Virginia Water, GU25 4BX**

Proposal: Retrospective application for the siting of a shipping container

Several Committee Members were keen to ensure that approval of the application would not have any impact on other activity on the site, including the potential storage of non-building waste. The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control confirmed that the application was only subject to what it related to, and any future applications at the location would be judged on their own merits.

Resolved that –

The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to planning condition 1 and informatives 1-2.

514 **RU.22/1838 - 51 Egham Hill, Egham, TW20 0ER**

Proposal: Construction of a detached dwelling with associated amenity following the demolition of the existing detached bungalow.

A Member asked for clarification about the number of bedrooms in the current dwelling. The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control advised confusion had arisen with the application due to being a two-bedroom property on construction, but two additional bedrooms had lawfully been added since, this had been confirmed by the

site visit of the case officer where 4 bedrooms were observed. The property was therefore lawfully a four-bedroom house and the application should be considered as such, with an existing four bedroom dwelling effectively making a lawful fallback position.

This would be a key point in the determination of the application due to objections primarily being around the number of parking spaces. The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control advised that parking standards for four and five bedroom properties were the same, resulting in the impact of the fallback position being the same. It was clear that the current arrangement was not a satisfactory one, however in planning terms this proposal did not make this situation worse. Planning applications are not expected to solve existing issues (though if they can then obviously that is a benefit). No material increase in harm could be demonstrated and as such it would be unreasonable to refuse the application on the grounds of insufficient parking.

Significant concern was raised by the Committee about the parking situation, and the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control agreed that if the application was being submitted as a fresh site it would be at odds with the recently adopted parking standards SPD and therefore would be unlikely to secure permission, but the fallback position was so compelling that no harm could be demonstrated in planning terms and a reason for refusal could not be justified.

Concern was also raised about how the proposed dwelling would accept deliveries due to the lack of parking options for a delivery vehicle, and whilst the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control agreed with the concern, it was advised that this was an existing problem and so due regard once again had to be given to the fallback position (i.e. the current dwelling would no doubt receive deliveries and as such this is an existing problem). The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control added that the Highway Authority had not objected to the application.

Concern was also raised on the impact of traffic during the construction phase. This would be managed through a construction transport management plan. The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control agreed that as members had been particularly concerned about this issue the details of the construction management plan would be circulated to the committee on receipt, however it would need to be determined in line with normal processes. It was added that the time limited inconvenience caused by construction were not sufficient grounds to reject a transport management plan.

Resolved that –

The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to planning conditions 1-11.

515 **RU.22/1569 - Grange Farm, Pycroft Road, Chertsey, KT16 9EP**

Proposal: Erection of 69 dwellings including demolition of existing buildings, associated parking, landscaping, open space and infrastructure works.

A Committee Member was keen to establish the proposed route for construction traffic, stating a strong preference for utilising the existing access road rather than the road alongside the residential care home. Whilst the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control agreed that the access road would be the most appropriate and preferred route it was not something the Council could be bound to at this time.

There was disappointment from several Committee Members that gas boilers rather than air source heat pumps were being used by the developer, and whilst the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control advised this was likely to be a commercial

decision, the case officer would raise these member concerns with the agent of the scheme.

In response to concerns from several Members about the impact of the scheme on existing infrastructure, it was advised that the site had already been allocated for development of this quantum as part of Runnymede's 2030 Local Plan.

The Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control confirmed that 10% of the development's energy needs from would be obtained from renewable and/or low carbon technologies, which was the minimum threshold. Anything in excess of 10% would be considered a windfall.

Resolved that –

- i) The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a section 106 legal agreement and compliance with conditions 1-21 and informatives 1-20**
- ii) The CHDMBC to refuse planning permission should the section 106 legal agreement not progress to his satisfaction or any other material matters arise ahead of the issuing of the decision that in his opinion warrant the refusal of planning permission.**

516 RU.22/1471 - Runnymede Hotel and Spa, Windsor Road, Old Windsor, Egham, TW20 0AG

Proposal: External alterations and extensions to existing hotel building, construction of new ancillary buildings/structures, provision of new car parking, landscaping and other incidental works.

It was noted that the scheme was located within the green belt. The previous planning permission granted in 2020 to a previous operator was also noted.

A number of Committee Members were pleased to see the levels of investment put forward by the hotel and the economic benefits that they were likely to bring, particularly noting that the hotel was an established local business and a significant employer of local residents.

In response to a query about the impact of bike storage impeding the storage of water, the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control advised that the volumetric impact was relatively low and offset by the overall additional compensatory volume on the site, whilst the Environment Agency had raised no objections.

The Case Officer confirmed to Members that the planning conditions limited the use to sport activities at the archery range.

The hotel's pre-submission consultation with local residents was also praised by some members.

A Committee Member asked about the possibility of supplying more electric charging points. Whilst the developer had been policy compliant, the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control felt that this was an emerging expectation and was likely to be driven by customer needs and as such the developer may well over provide, however the Council could only require that its policies were met.

The committee were supportive of the plans for the hotel and the potential benefits that they would bring and as such were satisfied that very special circumstances had been demonstrated.

Resolved that –

The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to:

- a) The completion of a legal agreement to not implement planning permission RU.19/1659.**
- b) Planning conditions 1-17**
- c) Additional planning condition 18 in the addendum**
- d) Informatives 1-8**

517 **RU.22/1678 - St Georges College, Weybridge Road, Addlestone, KT15 2QS**

Proposal: Erection of new teaching building three storeys in height with associated landscaping playground area and demolition the three existing teaching buildings

The energy strategy of the scheme was praised by several Members in the context of demolishing three existing buildings and creating one more sustainable and energy efficient building. When asked about scrutiny of the delivery of a zero-carbon strategy, the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control confirmed that a condition bound the applicant to comply with the proposed energy strategy, which met and in some areas exceeded the Council's standards.

Though supportive of the scheme a Member highlighted several other large applications nearby going through the planning process and was keen to ensure that the traffic plans on the applications were interlinked and not operating in isolation. It was confirmed that Surrey CC as County Highway Authority had been consulted on these schemes and took into account cumulative impacts and risks.

In response to questioning about the weighting of the very special circumstances, the Corporate Head of Development Management and Building Control advised that government had placed significant weight on the provision of education facilities, along with the business need to improve educational facilities. However, it was ultimately for the decision maker to assess the very special circumstances, which in this case was the Planning Committee.

Resolved that –

The CHDMBC was authorised to grant planning permission subject to planning conditions 1-12 and informatives 1-2.

(The meeting ended at 9.02 pm.)

Chairman