

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held in the East Dean and Friston Village (Small) Hall, Village Green Lane, East Dean, BN20 0DR on Tuesday 20 February 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr G Fowler (Chairman), Cllr T Bryant, Cllr P Hill, Cllr H Milligan, Cllr P Seeley and Cllr D White

In attendance: K Larkin (Deputy Clerk)

There were three members of the public present

Public Session

Highlands, 2A Warren Lane – two residents from neighbouring properties outlined their objections to this retrospective application for permission to build two single storey rear extensions. Highlands occupies a corner plot bounded to the north-west by Warren Lane and to the north east by Hillside, with two neighbours: No. 2 Warren Lane to the south west, and No.23 Hillside to the south east (rear boundary).

The resident of No.23 Hillside stated that Highlands is a large house on a small and steeply terraced site, standing as its name suggests on the highest point of a ridge, above its neighbours. It is occasionally used as a Buddhist retreat, even though no change of use has been permitted since the property was extended in 2019. There has been no prior consultation with neighbours over the extension now partly constructed, and the plans submitted with the retrospective application do not entirely agree with the structure as built. Similarly, some of the answers given on the Baseline Assessment Checklist are incorrect. Due to the slope of the site, the proposed ground floor 'conservatory' is in fact a first floor viewing platform extension on a promontory, which would produce considerable light spill effect and strongly affect the neighbour at No.2 Warren Lane in particular. But Highlands is also highly visible for miles around and should not be permitted to set a very undesirable precedent. A question was raised as to whether there was any current access to the flat roof of the 2019 extension: it was thought not.

The resident of No.2 Warren Lane stated that he had three main concerns, namely:

- Loss of privacy – the partially built extension was barely a foot from the boundary and for anyone standing in it there would be a completely unobstructed view into the next garden, with the top of the six foot boundary fence coming just above their knees (Proposed Elevation EE). Before work started, all the screening that previously existed on the Highlands side of the boundary had been removed, plus some – without permission – on the neighbour's side. The statement made in the application that there

were no trees significantly close to the extension was incorrect: there was a tree remaining on the neighbour's side, just beyond the corner of the extension. Photos were supplied to the committee.

- Light pollution – in addition to existing exterior lights the extension would be walled with glass on three sides, the end wall being 3m wide, and appeared to have an electrical supply. The neighbouring garden would be flooded with light, to the detriment of its occupants, as well as the wildlife, and in contravention of the Dark Skies policy. Even a brick wall would be better.
- Visual effect on the surrounding area – the house sits on a prominent plot, as previously stated, and is highly visible to the community. Originally built in the Scandinavian style with dark wood for cladding, balcony and windows, it is apparently proposed that the new windows should be UPVC, which would be conspicuous and unsympathetic.

The objectors both stated that they would also submit their objections to the South Downs National Park Authority.

The Chair closed the Public Session and opened the meeting

P.577 Apologies for absence – Cllr M Bustard and Cllr C Lees

P.578 Declarations of Interest: - None

P.579 Minutes of previous meeting - The Minutes of the planning committee meeting held on 19 December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

P.580 NEW APPLICATIONS

SDNP/23/04920/HOUS - Highlands 2A Warren Lane, Friston, BN20 0HD

Retrospective application for 2 x single storey rear extensions

In discussion, members were critical of the plans and other documentation accompanying the application, which were felt to be minimal and sometimes disingenuous. For example, there was no specification or sections for the flat roofs, and in the Baseline Assessment Checklist a number of 'no' responses were agreed to be incorrect e.g. the topography of the site, the existence of trees, the effect on long views, should all have been declared as material considerations. The documentation did not deal with the Dark Skies policy or light pollution generally.

Members were concerned that the partially built extension would not be good for the well-being of neighbours and should therefore be unacceptable. A further concern was the possibility that one of the extensions approved in 2019 might be in use for commercial purposes, which – if correct - would be in breach of the planning conditions imposed at that time.

Regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy, it was noted that the form accompanying the application had been left blank, and that the extensions under discussion might be too small to incur the levy. However, the development of the property had occurred piecemeal and should be aggregated for a proper CIL assessment to be made.

RESOLVED - That the parish council objects strongly to the application as an intrusive overdevelopment, but that IF the South Downs National Park Authority has a presumption in favour of consenting the application in order to regularise the situation, then (1) the parish council requests that it be determined by the SDNPA Planning Committee, and (2) the parish council urges the planning authority to regard the following conditions as essential:

- The amount of glazing should be restricted and whatever is allowed should be fitted with automatic blinds. No external lighting should be permitted. **The fulfilment of this condition should be subject to signing-off by the planners.** There are several reasons for this: prevention of gross intrusion into the privacy of neighbours; prevention of the structure looking like a hilltop beacon, preservation of local amenities and long views; and mitigation of light pollution to satisfy the Dark Skies policy.
- There should be no commercial use of the premises. This is already a planning condition imposed on the 2019 extensions, which might be in breach.
- The extension should be in the sole beneficial use of the owner as a single dwelling
- There should be no use of any extension roofs as balconies either now or in the future.

SDNP/24/00296/HOUS - 15 Hillside Friston East Sussex BN20 0HE

Re-configuration of infill between house and garage, reposition front entrance, external alterations, lowering of rear dormer

The committee took note of this well-documented application and agreed that its implementation would improve the appearance of the property and would not adversely impact any views or local amenities.

RESOLVED – That the application be approved

The committee took note that the following application had been submitted by the parish council, and should be determined by 28 February 2024:

SDNP/24/00013/TPO Land at Michel Dene Road East Dean East Sussex - Acacia (T1-7 inclusive) - Reduce crowns by 20-30%, remove all deadwood and raise crowns over buildings to ensure a 2m clearance and statutory heights over highway. Beech (T8 & 9) - Raise crowns to statutory heights over highway

P.581 DECISION NOTICES

The committee took note of the following applications approved, the parish council having recommended approval:

SDNP/23/04432/HOUS - 40 Peakdean Lane, East Dean, East Sussex BN20 0JE

Rear extension, rooflights, replacement windows, external alterations, installation of photovoltaic panels on main roof and on detached garage and erection of rear glass canopy over patio

SDNP/23/03624/HOUS - Little Hill, The Green, East Dean, BN20 0BY

Proposed detached storage building and replacement garage

SDNP/23/04850/HOUS - 31 Peakdean Lane, East Dean, BN20 0JE

Erection of a single-storey extension to the rear, garage conversion and alterations, and erection of carport to the side

SDNP/23/04055/FUL - Birling Manor, Gilberts Drive, East Dean, BN20 0AA

Installation of a 20.8kW ground mounted Solar Photovoltaic System

SDNP/23/04873/HOUS - 50 Michel Dene Road, East Dean, BN20 0JU

Erection of a single storey side extension, conversion of roof space, including front and rear dormers, works to driveway to front and enlargement of decking to rear

The committee took note of the following application approved, the parish council having recommended approval subject to conditions:

SDNP/23/03928/FUL - Land to The rear of Maryland and Little Beeches Gilberts Drive East Dean East Sussex

Erection of 2no detached 3 bedroom dwellings with 1no detached double garage. External parking spaces and landscaping

The Delegated Decision report indicated that the comments submitted on behalf of the neighbouring occupier would be addressed by the amendments required to the plans. The planning consent contained a number of conditions to that effect, including prior approval of a landscape management plan and a construction management plan by the planning authority.

The committee took note of the following application approved, the parish council having recommended refusal:

SDNP/23/04739/HOUS - 14 Summerdown Lane, East Dean, BN20 0LF

Erection of a two storey side and rear extension, including balcony to the rear

The parish council had been concerned that the proposed extension would constitute over-development, would come too close to the boundary with No.12 Summerdown Lane, and would close off long views. The Delegated Decision report included some mitigation measures to the glazing of the balcony and concluded that the proposed

extension and balcony would have no significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. It did not address the question of preservation of long views. The committee agreed to request that the SDNPA reintroduce the practice whereby planning officers would clarify their reasoning to the parish council in cases where their decisions went against the recommendation of the council. **ACTION: KL to request this.**

P.582 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The committee took note that Cllr Bustard, Cllr White and Cllr Seeley would meet to give preliminary consideration to any infrastructure proposals arising from the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group would give a presentation on progress at the Annual Village Meeting on 12 April 2024, and would mount an exhibition in the Small Hall on that date. The level of engagement with the emerging plan was currently low, and special attention was being given to communication strategies.

A substantial report on Biodiversity in the parish, authored by Jonathan Timberlake, a Steering Group member, was now complete and would be put in the public domain for use not only in the Neighbourhood Plan but also as a valuable resource for general use.

P.583 WEALDEN DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

The committee took note that a draft Local Plan for the Wealden District had been approved by Wealden District Council to go out for consultation, which should begin in March 2024.

P.584 ENFORCEMENT

The committee took note that one enforcement matter currently remained outstanding, namely at Land adjacent to Long View, where roadside hoardings were still in place. There was no update on this matter.

P.585 CORRESPONDENCE

The committee took note of the following correspondence:

- Land to the rear of Maryland and Little Beeches – during construction work, damage had been caused to the boundary of Little Beeches, and the owners were in contact with the contractor to have this rectified. It should be covered by the construction management plan
- Land behind The Fridays – a potential resident of The Fridays had enquired whether there were any proposals to develop the land behind the existing houses. There were no known plans, nor any current housing need assessed for the area, but the possibility of a change in the future could not be ruled out.

P.586 URGENT ITEMS – None

P.587 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - Tuesday 19 March 2024 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, starting at 7.30 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.47 pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....