

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th December 2019

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Present: | Cindy Creasy | Parish Council Chair |
| | David Butler | Parish Council Vice-Chair |
| | Clare Bamforth | Councillor |
| | Dean Cowley | Councillor |
| | Nick Jones | Councillor (for part of meeting) |
| | Steve Rawlings | Councillor |
| | Anne Swift | Councillor |
| | Neil Worthington | Clerk |

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Nick Jones who advised that he would not be available for the first part of the meeting but would attend as soon as he was able.

2. Declarations of Interest and the granting of dispensations.

Councillors were reminded of the Code for Conduct and the need to declare any interest relating to the items on the Agenda. None were declared.

3. Planning

Notice of Appeal following the refusal of Planning Application no. 19/03278/FUL.

Erection of a 5 bed, two storey dwelling (alterations to part of an existing consent for a 5 bedroom, one and half storey dwelling under applications 16/11051/FUL and 17/03881/LBC formerly known as Plot 3, now renamed as Plot 7).

Cindy Creasy opened the meeting with a review of the current situation. Following the decision of Wiltshire Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to refuse planning application no 19/03278/FUL for the revised design of the large house at the rear of the Church Farm site the applicants had lodged an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. This would be decided by the Inspector on the basis of the written representations procedure. The Inspector would have all documents, correspondence and submissions made in relation to the application so it is not necessary to repeat the Parish Council's reasons for objecting to this application but to focus on the reasons that the applicant has given for the appeal.

The appeal is based on the following :-

The height and scale of the design which the LPA stated was in conflict with Core Strategy has only been marginally changed from the previously consented house and the floor area has in fact been reduced.

The elevational design and materials which the LPA stated was conflict with the Core Strategy did in fact respect the vernacular materials as evidenced by the examples shown in Appendix 1

The LPA stated view that the new design conflicts with the Core Strategy requirement to be sympathetic to the historical environment is challenged and they

argue that the new design would be less prominent than the consented design and would have “little or no impact” on the Conservation Area.

Comments from Councillors and the residents present were invited on the Appeal case were as follows:-

1. The planning history summary provided by the appellants makes no mention of the fact that the original planning application and eventual subsequent consent was for the whole site. It also makes no reference to the process of negotiated changes to the original application which took place during consideration of application no 16/11051/FUL. The original application included a house similar in scale/elevation and design to what is now being requested but which was eventually altered to the consented barn like house with agreement and input from the Architect, LPA, Conservation Officer, North Wessex Downs AONB and Parish Council. Of key importance has always been how the whole site works, including the adjacent Church farmhouse, with the location of a larger property at the rear of the site the most contentious.
2. The planning history also makes no reference to the fact that the size of the house and its location did not comply with the Core Strategy or Neighbourhood Plan and was only reluctantly permitted, as the Case Officers report on application 16/11051/FUL states, ‘to make the scheme more (financially) viable’.
3. The Appeal treats plot 7 as an isolated dwelling and does not take into account the whole site as a historic environment – this old farm already has the original farmhouse and should not have another one at the rear of the site. As Appendix 1 of the Appeal shows there are no disused or current farms in the parish which have two large farmhouses.
4. The Appeal states that Wootton Rivers is a linear development with groups of development in depth and that this development continues as part of this pattern. However, the Neighbourhood Plan specifically expressed the desire to protect the linearity of the village and not create new development behind the existing buildings. The existing groups of in-depth development are generally modern exceptions which have been unsuccessful additions to the village and should not be used as precedence.
5. The Appeal argument is that the re-design is only 0.5m higher than the consented barn and less bulky and that therefore the height and scale will be an improvement. This does not take into account the two substantial chimneys which project approximately 2m above the ridge line. The argument is also made that the gross external floor area is now significantly smaller but the areas given in the chart show that on their figures the footprint of the building is only 4m² smaller and does not take into account that a garage is included in the consented figures which is not shown in the redesigned building (although one will undoubtedly be required and presumably added in in a later application).). The increased height of the new design will make this building the highest on the site and, as it forms part of the setting of the whole

site, will draw focus to the rear of the site instead of blending into the background and the countryside immediately behind it and complementing the other barns on the site.

6. The Appeal argues that the treatment of the elevations and materials being proposed is more honest than the barn like house. We would argue that creating a faux manor farmhouse building at the rear of the site is architecturally dishonest as this type of house would never have existed in this location on this site.
7. The Appeal argues that there would be little impact on nearby historic assets as it is at the rear of the historic core – in actual fact it will be prominent when viewed from the main village street as well as the surrounding countryside as being part of the historic core of the site. It would create a new inter-visibility, damaging the setting of the Grade II Church Farmhouse and distinctive Grade II Wootton House and the historic barn settings. It was suggested that it would be helpful to prepare visualisations of the proposed house to show the effect from various viewpoints.
8. The appeal argues that the change in design will have little to no impact on the Conservation Area but the revised design will be more prominent due to the increase in wall height and the change in material. It should be remembered that this is one site, despite the attempts to distract from this by separating out and incrementally changing the planning applications.
9. The access shown to the house is in conflict to the proposals shown in application no 19/04526/FUL which have been approved – the access shown in this application now has consent to be blocked up and the alternative access further south is to be amended. The access shown in this application will therefore not exist once this permission is enacted. This is as a consequence of the applicants splitting up what was originally considered to be one site into different applications.
10. No new NWDAONB consultation has taken place in support of this change – the previous AONB recommendation for application 16/11051/FUL opposed the large house and suggested the one and half storey barn style building.

The above points were discussed in detail together and the following motions were proposed by the Chair, Cindy Creasy.

That the Parish Council should submit a response to the Planning Inspectorate stating that:-

1. the Parish Council stand by the reasons for our original objections to the proposals. Anne Swift seconded the motion which was unanimously supported.
2. the Parish Council fully support the arguments made by the Local Planning Authority in their rejection of the application. Steve Rawlings seconded the motion which was unanimously supported.

3. the Parish Council object to the grounds for the Appeal and that the Clerk and Chair should prepare a full response to the inspector stating the reasons why the appeal should not be granted. David Butler seconded the motion which was unanimously supported.

It was agreed that the Parish Council response should be circulated by email and via the notice boards inviting parishioners also to submit their personal response to the appeal.

4. Date of the next meeting – 13th January 2020 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.