

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 7 December 2022

**Present: Councillor Trevor Poile (Chair)**

**Councillors Atwood, Bailey, Britcher-Allan, Bland, Dawlings, Fitzsimmons, Le Page, Moon, Neville, Patterson and Pope**

**Officers in Attendance:** Richard Hazelgrove (Principal Planning Officer), Peter Hockney (Development Manager), Tracey Wagstaff (Senior Lawyer Mid Kent Legal Services) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors

**CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

PLA68/22 The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced Committee members and officers in attendance, and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

**APOLOGIES**

PLA69/22 Apologies were received from Councillors Johnson and Wakeman.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

PLA70/22 No declarations of interest were made.

**DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS TAKING PART IN THE PLANNING PROCESS, PART 5, SECTION 5.11, PARAGRAPH 6.6)**

PLA71/22 Councillors Atwood, Bailey, Le Page, Moon, Neville, Patterson, Pope and Poile advised that they had been lobbied by objectors on application PLA75/22 Hermes House 155 - 157 St Johns Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent.

**SITE INSPECTIONS**

PLA72/22 Members had not undertaken any site visits.

**TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 16 NOVEMBER 2022**

PLA73/22 It was noted that Councillor Dawlings was in attendance at the previous meeting of the Planning Committee on 16 November 2022.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 16 November 2022 be recorded as a correct record.

**REPORTS OF HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES (ATTACHED)**

PLA74/22

**APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 22/01409/FULL HERMES HOUSE 155 - 157 ST**

## JOHNS ROAD ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT

PLA75/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA75/22 Hermes House 155 - 157 St Johns Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Mr Richard Hazelgrove Principal Planning Officer and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

**Updates and additional representation** – Since publication of the agenda the Officer reported:

### **Amendment to Condition 17:**

- Prior to the first occupation of flats 13, 16, 24, 28, 35, 36 and 39, details of measures to mitigate overlooking towards the existing dwellings to the south of the site from the balconies and outdoor amenity areas (which shall include screening at 1.7m high from the adjacent floor level) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and such measures shall be installed and thereafter retained in strict accordance with the approved details. ~~The approved measures shall thereafter be retained~~

**Reason:** In the interests of the residential amenity of nearby dwellings.

**Registered Speakers** – There were 5 speakers that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

### **Objectors:**

- Mr Lawrie Holmes, a local resident.
- Mr Richard Douglas, a local resident.

### **Supporters:**

- Mr David Wells, Logistics UK.

### **Borough Councillors not on the Committee:**

- Councillor Mark Ellis, St Johns.
- Councillor Peter Lidstone, St Johns.

### **Matters of Clarification by Officers and Committee Members' Questions to Officers included:**

- i. It was advised that the Environmental Health Officer recommendation was that they didn't raise objections on air quality grounds and paragraph 7.33 of the report addressed that.
- ii. The word 'either' in paragraph 7.29 of the report was a typing error.
- iii. The recommendation was for a standard condition to address air quality matters that was highlighted in condition 22.
- iv. National and local policy allowed - where it was not sufficiently viable for affordable housing (AH) not to be provided as part of a scheme and the report set out in great detail the reasons that AH was not provided. It was advised that failure to provide AH (or the full amount required by policy) happened on a regular basis on brown field sites that were expensive to develop.
- v. Section(S) 106 contributions were calculated by a pre-set formula

- requested from Kent County Council (KCC) towards education, libraries etc. and the amounts were required to be paid whether or not there was AH on the site.
- vi. Although overlooking from the existing office building was raised as a negative feature, it was not the sole reason that the building was considered to be unlikely to attract future employers.
  - vii. Information related to non designated heritage assets was discussed.
  - viii. Review mechanisms were addressed on pages 41 to 43 of the report.
  - ix. It was not possible to add a condition to limit the amount of parking spaces per person.
  - x. It was confirmed that there were currently 90 parking spaces for 150 workers.
  - xi. it was advised that it was not possible to restrict or control how people used their parking space.
  - xii. A suggestion was made to amend condition 17 so that it that it stated that the screens on the balconies had to be a minimum of 1.7 metres to avoid overlooking, this was permitted.
  - xiii. It was not possible to control how lease holders use their flats, nor require flats to be rented or not, nor or the nature of their tenancies.
  - xiv. The emerging standards for parking of residents was based on the most up to date evidence available.
  - xv. Officers considered the benefits of the development outweighed the non-designated heritage asset on site.
  - xvi. Pages 37 and 38 of the report addressed the KCC Kent Design Guide parking standards that the development adhered to which met the emerging standards.
  - xvii. The applicants transport assessment worked on daily visits and that was not discounted over weekend days.
  - xviii. Officers and Members discussed the Section 106 contributions in detail to gain clarity and understanding of its allocation. Officers explained that NHS and KCC had assessed the needs in the area and had identified funding requirements for S106 and the funds released can only be used for the agreed purpose.

**Committee Member Debate and Officer clarification included:**

- i. Members spoke at length on their disappointment that there was no possibility of affordable housing on the application.
- ii. Concern was raised about overlooking on the site.
- iii. Parking in the area was raised as a concern. However, some Members felt content with the allocation of parking spaces.
- iv. It was suggested that active travel could be encouraged with an 8 minute walk into the town centre.
- v. The huge upfront cost of developing on the land was acknowledged.
- vi. The cycle storage area was welcomed.
- vii. It was felt that the architect made an effort.

**Decision/voting** – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Fitzsimmons seconded by Councillor Bailey and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

Councillor Moon requested that his vote against the application be recorded.

**RESOLVED** – That application PLA75/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report and the amendments to the wording of condition 17 as suggested by Officers during the presentation and the further amendment suggested by Cllr Fitzsimmons.

**APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 22/02998/FULL 8 GROSVENOR ROAD ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT**

PLA76/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA76/22 8 Grosvenor Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Mr Richard Hazelgrove Principal Planning Officer and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

**Updates and additional representation** – None.

**Registered Speakers** – There were no speakers that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

**Matters of clarification by Officers and Committee Members' questions to Officers included:**

- i. Paragraph 2.01 of the report outlined the proposed permitted uses for the property and condition 3 reinforced the restrictions.
- ii. Given that the Council remained the freeholder of the land and the prominent location, it was stated that it would be easy to know if the property was used for any purposes that were excluded from this proposed permission.
- iii. If the building remained in the Council ownership it was advised that any further planning applications in respect of it would come to Planning Committee.
- iv. Under Kent County Council (KCC) Highways recommendations, it was advised that services such as a creche and medical centre were excluded as the location was in an area with traffic restrictions and such uses tend to have a higher degree of pick ups/drop offs.

**Committee Member debate and Officer clarification included:**

- i. An example of a creche in the local area was highlighted that had caused traffic issues in the area.
- ii. It was felt that the restrictions that were put on the uses had been carefully thought through.

**Decision/voting** – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Britcher-Allan and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

**RESOLVED** – That application PLA76/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

**APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 22/03217/LBC TOWN HALL MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT**

PLA77/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA77/22 Town Hall Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Mr Richard Hazelgrove Principal Planning Officer and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

**Updates and additional representation** – None.

**Registered Speakers** – There were no speakers that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

**Matters of clarification by Officers and Committee Members' questions to Officers included:**

- i. The issue of the health and safety came up related to the rail at the top of the stairs at the Town Hall reception. It was agreed this was a matter for the Estates Team and to be dealt with outside of the meeting.

**Committee Member Debate and Officer clarification included:**

- i. The report was taken as read.

**Decision/voting** – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Britcher-Allan, seconded by Councillor Bland and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

**RESOLVED** – That application PLA77/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

## **APPEAL DECISIONS FOR NOTING 8 NOVEMBER 2022 TO 28 NOVEMBER 2022**

PLA78/22 **RESOLVED** – That the list of appeal decisions provided for information, be noted.

## **URGENT BUSINESS**

PLA79/22 There was no urgent business for consideration.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

PLA80/22 The next Planning Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 18 January 2023.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.32 pm.