

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning and Traffic Committee** held on **20 March 2012** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.00pm.

Present: Mr C Snowling (Chairman)
Mr A Gomme (Vice Chairman)
Mr M Amor
Mr W Blunden
Mrs M Hersey
Mr S Hodgson

Also Present: MSDC Cllr Mr C Hersey and 11 members of the public

In Attendance: Mr P Hemsley

136 WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

136.1 The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

137. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

137.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Chatfield and Upton and the reasons accepted.

138. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

138.1 Cllr Hersey stated that she reserved the right to express a different opinion from that given at this meeting, when present at meetings of the Mid Sussex District Council's (MSDC's) Central Area Planning Committee (CAPC) or at any other meeting which subsequently considered any matter discussed at the present meeting, having seen the Officers' reports and heard representations from members of the public and fellow members.

Cllr Snowling stated that he reserved the right to express a different opinion from that given at this meeting, when present at meetings of the MSDC's CAPC or at any other meeting which subsequently considered any matter discussed at the present meeting, having seen the Officers' reports and heard representations from members of the public and the views of fellow members.

Cllr Gomme stated that, as he was a close neighbour, he had a prejudicial interest in both Items 4ii) and 4vi), Planning Applications at 28 and 38 Finches Park Road respectively; he would absent himself from the meeting during discussion of these matters.

139. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2012

139.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 28 February 2012. It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

140. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS REFERRED TO THE PARISH COUNCIL BY MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION

140.1 For each application, the observations of the members who had specifically studied the plans were read out before any public comments and discussion by the Committee.

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140.2 12/00443/FUL – 1 DUKES ROAD

PROPOSED NEW SINGLE STOREY UTILITY ROOM EXTENSION. PROPOSED NEW SINGLE GARAGE.

Mr Martin Higgins, resident of 39 Dukes Road immediately opposite No. 1, said that he had already submitted a letter of objection to the DC (copied to the PC) and the PC comments supported his views.

Mr John Jesson, Lindfield Preservation Society (LPS), said that it was the garage which was the issue for the Society. It would be very prominent, harmful and unsympathetic. Moreover, the property was visible from the Conservation Area (CA) in Brushes Lane and the proposal was not sympathetic to the CA. The garage would be at odds with the line of properties on the same side as it would be built out significantly in front of the building line, much further forward than others and also than those on the other side of the road. He said it should be Refused on the grounds that it was contrary to Local Plan Policies B1, B6 and B15.

The applicant, Mr Roy Robinson, said that it was a pretty house in a very attractive area and he planned to build the garage to blend as far as possible. It would be parallel to the road and as far back as practical into the back garden. It was away from the neighbours' boundary. There was currently a fence in this position which was at the end of its life; the new scheme would see the fence line broken up with a tile hung garage and a panel fence at each end. In response to objections, he said that he could grow a hedge right along the front as a screen. He concluded that he had studied others in Dukes Road and his proposal was at least the equal of those.

Cllr Blunden said that he agreed with Mr Robinson about the garage but it was in the wrong place. He said he believed he spoke for Mrs Upton when he said that their views would not change.

Cllr Amor said that perhaps the garage could be hidden with screening.

Cllr Blunden said that the roof would still be visible and the feature would not complement the street scene in this pleasant part of the village.

Cllr Blunden proposed and Cllr Gomme seconded the comments as drafted, with the addition of the LPS observations regarding Local Plan Policies: agreed unanimously.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection, subject to materials matching existing, for the side extension. We do, however, object to the new single garage as this would have an adverse effect on the street scene at odds with Local Plan Policies B1 and B6. Moreover, the proposal would be visible from the adjacent Conservation Area of Brushes Lane contrary to Local Plan Policy B15."

140.3 Five members of the public left, 7 remained.

140.4 12/00581/TCA – MARLOW HOUSE, 107 HIGH STREET

SYCAMORE – REDUCE CANOPY BY UP TO 3 METRES AND RE-SHAPE.

Mr Jesson, LPS, said that the canopy of this tree had been raised in 2011 and it was now proposed to reduce it such that little would remain.

The Deputy Clerk read the comments of the Tree Warden, Mrs Jane Donald, which were very similar.

Cllr Blunden said that sycamores were very hardy but, although he and Cllr Upton had had no objection, they were willing to be overruled. Cllr Gomme lent his support to the tree warden; he proposed and Cllr Hersey seconded that the comments be those of the tree warden: agreed unanimously.

AGREED RESPONSE: "After the crown was lifted last year (11/01249/TCA), we would not wish to see a reduction in the canopy of this tree as the result would be quite unsightly - like a lollipop on a stick."

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140.5 12/00563/FUL – MARLOW HOUSE, 107 HIGH STREET PROPOSED NEW SINGLE STOREY TWO BEDROOM DWELLING.

Mrs Elaine Higgins, resident of 109 High Street and immediate neighbour of the applicant, said she spoke for her husband also when she said that this was the third planning application to build such a dwelling to which they had objected. Both previous applications had been Refused and this should be also. It would be inappropriate infill to try to shoehorn it into a cramped site in the Conservation Area (CA), where it would be totally out of place. The proposals would be contrary to Local Plan Policies B1, B3, B12 and H3; they would neither preserve nor enhance the CA. The dwelling would destroy the linearity of properties and set an unwelcome precedent which would fundamentally change 105 and 109, both Listed Buildings and again at odds with B12. Similarly, there would be a loss of amenity for residents at 105 and 109. In 2010, MSDC had rejected an earlier proposal (LF/09/01761/FUL) concluding that development at the rear of 107 was too large and out of character. Mrs Higgins proposed that the CA should be protected in full.

Mr Kevin Clarke, resident of 111 High Street, said that he and his wife congratulated the Cllrs on their concise comments. His main objections were that the proposal would set a precedent at the heart of the historic High Street where many properties had large gardens. There would be destruction of ancient trees including a magnolia which, although not protected, he said did not mean it was not worthy of protection. He added that the egress/ingress to the site from Hickmans Lane had led to the neighbours' hedge being cut in 2010. The new bungalow would resemble a portakabin alongside a house dating from 1485. He concluded by emphasising that the 1990 Planning Act had defined the CA as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Mr Jesson said that in the interests of brevity he would underscore all that had already been said. He reminded the meeting that the second application was appealed and had been dismissed. The Planning Inspector (PI) had raised a number of points which Mr Jesson suggested should be added to the PC response. Since the Dismissal, the Lindfield Village Design Statement had been issued and there were additional reasons within it for objecting. The LPS had two further concerns: first, the proposal would not be compliant with Local Plan Policy B5 regarding disabled access; second, they regarded the permeable paving as inadequate to prevent flooding. He added that, should the application be approved, an archaeological survey should be undertaken prior to building.

Cllrs then discussed the application. Cllr Gomme said that the comments made had reinforced his view that this proposal would destroy a part of the CA. Cllr Hersey said that the response should include appropriate text from the PI's dismissal.

In summary, given the potentially extensive remarks that it might be appropriate to add, the Chairman asked Cllrs Gomme and Amor to liaise with the Deputy Clerk to identify text from the PI report to include in the PC's response.

AGREED RESPONSE: "We consider that, although this new application seeks to reduce the height of the new building by sinking it into the ground, the application is still objectionable as it fails to preserve the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area (CA) under Plan Policy B12, specifically the section, '*Circumstances may arise where the importance of an open space, including private gardens, is such that development upon it will be resisted in the overall interest of the CA*'. We are also concerned about drainage and sewerage disposal, issues that arise due to the sinking of the new house below ground level.

We believe it pertinent to recall the words of the Planning Inspector (PI) who, on 15 July 2010, dismissed the Appeal by the applicant following refusal by the DC of the previous, similar application (09/01761/FUL), where the main issues were:

- *"The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area including the wellbeing of protected trees; and,*
- *The effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers with particular regard to outlook."*

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We do not believe the applicant has paid sufficient attention in the new application to points raised by the PI. For example, on the first issue, he commented upon the 'long rear open spaces ... a distinctive feature of the area.' Further, '...the siting of the building would be visually divorced from both the frontage buildings and those of Shenstone. This open gap is important ... to the historic layout of the settlement, separating the earlier frontage along the High Street from the later development in depth .. and would undermine that important contribution to the character and appearance of the area.' Moreover, '...there is a sycamore that is protected in its own right .. a substantial tree whose canopy would be close to overhanging the proposed building and to represent a looming presence that could appear as a threat to the wellbeing of the dwelling and its occupants. .. This possibility adds weight to my view that the development is unacceptable in this location.' On the second issue, he concluded that, 'the proposal would have an adverse impact on the outlook of the neighbouring occupiers'. In sum, we object most strongly to this application and ask that the DC refuse it robustly, giving its reasons to include the points raised above."

140.6 12/00720/FUL – 21 SUNTE AVENUE
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION TO SIDE AND REAR.

Mr Roger Willmott, resident of 23 Sunte Avenue, said that the Cllrs' comments reiterated the points he had made to the DC and PC. In short, he felt that the proposals would impact on the styles of the semi-detached houses (ie, 19/21).

Mr Jesson said that this was a Turner semi-detached house and the proposals were sympathetic to that architecture. However, he did have concern about the side window overlooking the property to the left (No 23). Although there was already a window on that face, the proposal would bring that much closer to the boundary.

Cllr Hodgson said that, given the issues of overlooking, he and Cllr Snowling had been careful to examine where the windows would be sited. The Chairman summarised by saying that the response would include reference to overlooking from the upstairs windows.

AGREED RESPONSE: "We are concerned that the bulk and height of the proposed extension would adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring property, No. 23, in that there would be a loss of light and potential overlooking of the neighbour's patio area from the proposed windows upstairs, which would lie much closer to the boundary than the existing."

140.7 Four members of the public left, 3 remained.

140.8 Cllr Gomme left the room.

140.9 12/00523/FUL – 28 FINCHES PARK ROAD
TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION ABOVE EXISTING GROUND FLOOR EXTENSIONS.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection, subject to materials matching existing."

140.10 12/00597/FUL – 38 FINCHES PARK ROAD
EXTENDING MAIN ROOF OVER EXISTING SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION AND ADDING HUNG TILES TO ELEVATIONS.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

140.11 Cllr Gomme returned.

140.12 12/00638/FUL – 14 BECKWORTH LANE
SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO FRONT OF PROPERTY. CONSERVATORY EXTENSION TO REAR OF PROPERTY. **AMENDED PLANS RECEIVED 05.03.12 SHOWING AMENDMENT TO ROOF SLOPE ON FRONT ELEVATION.**

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AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

- 140.13 12/00631/LDC – 23 FIELDWAY
PROPOSED LOFT CONVERSION WITH REAR DORMER.

AGREED RESPONSE: "As this is a request for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed development, there are no reasons for legal, valid objections, as far as we are aware."

- 140.14 12/00809/TREE – 9 HICKMANS CLOSE
BEECH (T1 AND T2) – LIFT CROWNS TO 2.5 METRES TO CLEAR DRIVEWAY. REDUCE CROWNS BY UP TO 2 METRES AND RESHAPE. REMOVE IVY.

The Deputy Clerk read out the comments of the Tree Warden, Mrs Jane Donald, who felt that the lower branches were well clear of the applicant's driveway and consequently the crown should not be lifted; however, she was in favour of reducing the crown by 2 metres and re-shaping.

Cllr Snowling said that these were not specimens of great beauty; Cllr Hodgson added that they had got out of control.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

- 141. TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON ANY SIGNIFICANT PLANNING DECISIONS MADE BY MSDC AND THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE AND TO AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTION WHICH MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

- 141.1 The Deputy Clerk reported that the Case Officer for planning application 12/00299/LBC, Mrs Deborah Lynn, had advised that the proposal for solar panels at St Ann's – to which the Committee at their meeting on 28 February 2012 had had objections – had been withdrawn and the application would now proceed with proposals for an extension to the garage only.

- 142. TO CONSIDER ACTIVITY ON THE LIMES DEVELOPMENT, ANY DOCUMENTS RELATING THERETO AND AGREE ANY ACTION WHICH MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

- 142.1 The Deputy Clerk advised that he had no matters to report.

- 143. TO REPORT FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN JOINT WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2012**

- 143.1 As he would give a full report on the matter at the Full Council meeting to be held on 22 March 2012, the Chairman declined to make a report on this occasion to the P&TC.

- 144. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 144.1 There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 8.39pm.