

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on
Tuesday 19th February 2019 in the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at **20.00**

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr R Plass (Vice-Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Committee and acting Chairman for this meeting)
Mr I Wilson
Mrs V Upton
Mr W Blunden
Mrs M Hersey (joined at item 568 vii)

Also present:

39 members of the public
Mr G Kennedy, Lindfield Preservation Society (LPS)
Cllr Andrew Lea, District Councillor Mid Sussex and West Sussex

In attendance:

Mr D Parsons (Deputy Parish Clerk)

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

565. Apologies

565.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Snowling and Hersey and the reasons accepted.

566. Declarations of Interest

566.1 None

567. Approval of Minutes

567.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 29th January 2019. It was **agreed** to **approve** the Minutes, and the Chairman **signed** the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

568. Planning Applications and other matters referred to the Parish Council by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for consideration

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.

i. DM/19/0260 – Tavistock And Summerhill School, Summerhill Lane

Proposed erection of 38 residential dwellings comprising 4 houses and 34 flats with associated internal access, surface-level car parking, landscaping with other infrastructure.

LPS provided the Deputy Parish Clerk with their views (see Appendix One) which were read to the meeting.

Mr Jonathan Allen and Mr David Metcalfe read out comments (see Appendix Two) on behalf of the Friends of Summerhill Lane Area of Townscape Character which comprises 50 households living nearby the site.

Mr Steven Horsfield advised that he saw the proposal as an unprofessional, speculative approach driven by profit over all else. He considered that nothing had materially changed since the previous application for three storey flats, other than unsuitable flat roofs having been incorporated. It remained an inappropriate overdevelopment disregarding the area, its setting, nearby residents, resulting in increased traffic and noise in a country lane, showing complete disregard to TPOs. He asked whether more flats were needed in the Haywards Heath area, recalling a previous presentation he had attended which suggested that Haywards Heath had more flats than any other town. He saw the planning applications as a war of attrition by the builder when what was needed

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was a sympathetic design, appropriate to its location. Cllr Andrew Lea advised the attendees that he was at the meeting to ensure that he had a understanding of resident's views.

Cllr Upton stated that she could not support the proposals and was concerned at the impact on local infrastructure, particularly the Medical Centre which was already under severe strain. Cllr Wilson considered the proposal to resemble a dreadful 60's campus, noted the difference in parking space numbers on the plan compared with descriptions elsewhere in the application, further that the treatment of TPO protected trees was awful and worst of all, that the scheme incorporated no affordable housing. Cllr Blunden advised that he was totally opposed to the proposed overdevelopment of the site and agreed with the thrust of Haywards Heath Town Council's objections already submitted to MSDC. He considered that these alongside LPS's comments should be used in formulating LPC's response. The Chairman agreed that many salient points had been made and sought Committee's agreement that he and the Deputy Parish Clerk should formulate the wording of the Council's response accordingly. This was **agreed** by all members.

Cllr Blunden expressed his disappointment that no paper plans are made available by MSDC for such a controversial application and Committee **agreed** that the Parish Office should write to MSDC accordingly.

Lindfield Parish Council strongly objects to this application which, despite a reduction in the number of dwellings proposed compared to the previous application, remains totally unsuited to its location and contrary to the approved District and Neighbourhood Plans. LPC's full response can be seen at Appendix Three.

Following this item most members of the Public and Cllr Andrew Lea left the meeting, leaving 3 members of the public and LPS present.

- ii. DM/19/0270 - Rosemary House, Hickmans Lane
Proposed two storey side extension.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application

- iii. DM/19/369 – 84 Meadow Drive
Alder – repollard Willow trees (x7) - Reduce to 3 metres

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application

- iv. DM/18/4855 – 14 Meadow Drive
Proposed single storey side and rear extension. (Amended plans received 01.02.2019)

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application providing matching materials are used.

- v. DM/19/0216 – Linden, 9 Summerhill Drive
Proposed side and rear extensions and new porch

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application providing matching materials are used.

- vi. DM/19/0372 – Strathearn, 12 Oak Bank
Single storey rear extension to lounge and garage, front porch and garage conversion.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application

- vii. DM/19/0404 – High Trees, 41 Hickmans Lane
Partial demolition of existing detached house. Proposed single and two storey extensions to the front, side and rear elevations and associated alterations

LPS advised that that their objections had been added to MSDC's Planning Portal on 11/2/19 and read the first paragraph to the meeting "This new application replaces DM/18/3656 which was rejected as being an "unneighbourly and overbearing development, with significantly adverse impact to the residential amenities of 43 Hickmans Lane". The Society has scrutinised the new

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plans submitted, particularly amendments “D” and “E” which are technical adjustments. There appears to be no significant changes to the size and scale of the original plans submitted and therefore the Society wishes to register their objections to the new application DM/19/0404”

Mr Malcolm Smith, a nearby neighbour, supported LPS’ comments and considered that nothing material has changed in the latest proposal and therefore he continues to object very strongly.

Lindfield Parish Council strongly objects to this application in view of its bulk, particularly recognising its location in an Area of Townscape Character. It considers the proposed development to be overbearing, unneighbourly and detrimental to the existing street scene, contrary to Policy DP 26 (Character and Design) of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-31.

Cllr Hersey noted that as this application was refused by MSDC Planning Committee previously it is likely to be referred to committee again but if that was not the case, she intended to ask for it to be called in.

- viii. DM/19/0478 - Tentersmead / 18 High Street
Sycamore - Re-pollard

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application

- ix. DM/19/0458 – 44 Meadow Lane
Proposed demolition of garage, erection of two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and loft conversion with dormer window to the rear.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objection to this application providing matching materials are used.

569. To receive reports on any significant planning decisions or issues made by MSDC and the Planning Inspectorate and to agree any further action which may need to be taken before the next meeting.

569.1 The Deputy Parish Clerk advised the following:

- i. DM/18/3841 – 43 West Common – P&TC had objected to the proposed garage in front of the established building line. MSDC advised that the application had been withdrawn 31/1/19.
- ii. DM/18/4387 – The Coach House, Black Hill – P&TC had objected to the proposed garage in front of the established building line. MSDC gave Permission 11/2/19

569.2 **Committee noted** these decisions.

570. Matters Arising

570.1 The Deputy Parish Clerk advised Committee that it was understood that some officers at MSDC considered that the Tavistock & Summerhill School Site was suited to “flatted development” and that the Parish Office planned to write a letter to MSDC to seek to clarify matters. Committee **noted** this.

The meeting concluded at 20.32

APPENDIX ONE
Lindfield Preservation Society
DM/19/0260 – Tavistock And Summerhill School, Summerhill Lane

The Society objects to this slightly modified second attempt at urbanising Lindfield. The subtraction of ten housing units does not materially improve the original, withdrawn proposal (DM/18/0733). Neither does the replacement of a monotonous, off-the-shelf "traditional style" design with a monotonous, off-the-shelf "contemporary style" design. An array of blocks of flats, in of all places a designated Area of Township Character, remains an alien, urban design concept that is entirely out of keeping with the rest of Lindfield's built environment. The application therefore contravenes Neighbourhood Plan policy 7 and Village Design Statement section 4, both of which require development to respect the character and appearance of the area. It also violates District Plan policy 26, which requires that all developments "reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside".

Moreover, the bulk, scale and mass of three-storey blocks situated on high ground will necessarily overlook surrounding houses, creating an overbearing impact and loss of privacy. This effect would be exacerbated by the many balconies proposed. Tellingly, the application's supporting documentation is full of internal views, but includes none that show the impact on neighbours. The application therefore contravenes another clause of District Plan policy 26, which requires that development "does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents... including taking account of the impact on privacy".

The absence of any affordable housing is unacceptable and indeed shameful. Considerably smaller developments, for example down the road at Sunte House, have included affordable housing while presumably still turning a profit for developers. The attempt to escape this requirement contravenes both District and National policy on affordable housing and is in itself sufficient reason for refusal of permission.

It is also notable that objections to this scheme have come from the MSDC Housing Officer and the Planning Officer for Habitats Regulations Assessment, as well as from WSCC Highways and Sussex Police. The applicants have clearly not learned the lessons of their first, failed proposal. This scheme should fare no better.

APPENDIX TWO
Friends of Summerhill Lane Area of Townscape Character
DM/19/0260 – Tavistock And Summerhill School, Summerhill Lane

I am speaking on behalf of the Friends of Summerhill Lane Area of Townscape Character. 50 households living on Summerhill Lane, Oak Bank and Summerhill Grange. The planning application submitted is for 34 flats and 4 houses.

You responded to the prior planning application with a number of objections. There were also 157 separate representation letters from residents that identified a wide range of problems with the development proposals. Most of these concerns remain unresolved.

The demolition under **Permitted Development**, of the 160 year old Summerhill House, the stables, the walled garden and single storey Lodge **wilfully ignored concerns raised by the Officers of Mid Sussex Council and the local community.**

Quote from a Freedom of information request, of advice given to the developer during pre-planning meetings:

“I object to the loss of the fine Victorian building which contributes significantly and positively to the local environment both in architectural and historical terms being the only building on Summerhill Lane that appears to date back from this period; the exterior is fairly unspoilt and the rear veranda benefits from fine decorative ironwork.” (Will Dorman)

Local planning policy documents described them as “Cherished buildings” and the Lindfield Village Design Statement, stated that the school was a “significant” building that “should be protected”

The developer now appears to believe they can ignore the architectural merits of the former buildings, and expect to develop the site with no reference to what previously existed, or how it complemented the landscape and area of Townscape character.

NOW

- At a meeting of Haywards Heath Town Council, on 11th February, the Council reaffirmed their opposition to this development. The slight reduction in density has no material impact in their view. The developer has ignored the issues they raised. None of their concerns from the prior application have been addressed.

They still consider:

- **“the proposal to represent an opportunistic attempt to overdevelop the site”**. The proposal is 5 times the density of the surrounding properties, and 3 times more dense than the approved GambleMead site in Fox Hill
- **it is “disingenuous and unacceptable that the proposal does not deliver 30% affordable housing”**.
- **The proposal retains three storey flats and** houses with intrusive balconies that overlook current residents’ and affect their privacy. No properties on Summerhill Lane, Summerhill Grange or Oak Bank are three storey.
- Balconies are an incongruous design feature, and have not been permitted on any local property. The flats and houses, will dwarf neighbouring properties, permitting new residents to look directly into the back of existing resident’s properties and gardens.
- **the scale, bulk and massing have not been sufficiently improved by these plans.** The design, does not respect the contours of the site as the properties still create an urban mass in a semi- rural setting overlooking their neighbours. This flies in the face of the Lindfield Village Design statement, the Haywards Heath Town Plan and the District Plan (DP26)
- Flats, particularly in such density, will detract from the village setting and blur the distinction between Haywards Heath Town and Lindfield Village. This site is on the edge of Lindfield Village yet the design is more appropriate to the Station Quarter.
- **the design still fails to adequately reflect the character of the Townscape.** The homogenous design, scale, orientation and spacing of these clustered flats is reminiscent of a university campus, rather than an edge of village development.
- **the architects have failed to respond to the street scene.** They have not provided an impression of the impact of the development on the Townscape character since the sections and elevations only demonstrate partial views of the street scene.

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It is no less dominant or incongruous than the previous design. The site is also less green than the block plan would give the impression, given the large areas of parking necessary for so many flats.

- **The new application still proposes the felling of healthy limes and oaks, that are subject to TPOs.** These trees are an integral part of the natural heritage of the site and, by extension, of Lindfield itself.

- In conclusion:

- We request that Lindfield Parish Council also restate their opposition to the proposal. None of the concerns you raised in your letter of 16th March 2018 to Steven King at Mid Sussex District Council regarding the prior planning application have been addressed.
- The developer has again, wrongly stated this site as being in Haywards Heath when it is in Lindfield and subject to the Lindfield plan and local planning norms.
- All comparison references to Haywards Heath locations are therefore inappropriate and should be disregarded.

In agreement with Haywards Heath Town Council we believe to have any prospect of gaining support, a scheme would have to:

- consist of houses starting with two bedrooms and upwards and **not** flats, and
- be of a lower density than that currently proposed and
- be of high-quality design in keeping with the surrounding Townscape Character of the area.
- Meet the requirements for affordable housing.
 - We hope you will again recommend that Mid Sussex District Council **reject** the application and ask the developer to take account of your prior objections and those in the 157 other letters of representation.

 - Thank you for your time and support.

APPENDIX THREE

**Lindfield Parish Council Planning & Traffic Committee Response
DM/19/0260 – Tavistock And Summerhill School, Summerhill Lane**

Lindfield Parish Council strongly objects to this application which, despite a reduction in the number of dwellings proposed compared to the previous application, remains totally unsuited to its location and contrary to the approved District and Neighbourhood Plans.

Mid Sussex District Plan

DP 6 Settlement Hierarchy – “to promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character... To provide the amount and type of housing that meets the needs of all sectors of the community...will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design), and not cause harm to the character...of the settlement.”

DP 26 – Character and Design “All development...will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages... creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings...protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area...protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages...does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents...including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight...incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment...”

DP31 – Affordable Housing “The requirement for the provision of affordable housing applies to all types of residential developments falling within Use Class C3...The Council will seek...a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing...Proposals that do not meet these requirements will be refused...”

Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan

P1 – A spatial Plan for the Parishes – to encourage modest proposals...that can be satisfactorily accommodated without undermining the quality of life for local people.”

P2 – Housing Windfall Sites – “It is important that as many affordable homes are delivered as possible...”

P7 – Areas of Townscape Character – “Development proposals will be supported...provided applicants can demonstrate they have had regard to their impact on the appearance and character of the area and have sought to retain features important to the character of the area, as defined in the Lindfield Village Design Statement.”

Lindfield Village Design Statement

5.1 New Housing – “...must be laid out sensitively in broad form, scale and detailing to respect and avoid harm to its existing structure and existing character areas...”

This latest proposal provides for flats, seemingly designed in a 60/70’s style campus format, which is completely out of place in a location immediately adjacent to an Area of Townscape Character and shows no consideration of the identity and character of the village. The design of the flats is inappropriate in terms of both visual impression and the impact of the detail of the design on nearby properties. The proposed balconies will negatively impact the privacy of existing residents and the bulk of the buildings is detrimental to the outlook, daylight and sunlight currently enjoyed by such properties.

The apparent avoidance of any element of affordable housing, in addition to being contrary to policy, robs the proposal of any potential merit in contributing to support new younger buyers to the village. Notwithstanding S106 contributions, the infrastructure of the village is unable to cope with existing traffic volumes and the proposed density will exacerbate those problems, noting that there is insufficient space to sufficiently modify village roads to accommodate this. Accordingly, a wider, holistic approach needs to be considered by both WSCC Highways and the Planning Authority as to managing such traffic increase, perhaps encompassing sustainable transport methodology.

The Council supports and indeed encourages the appropriate redevelopment of this site and considers that this is likely to be through the development of maximum two storey units, potentially comprising a mix of maisonettes, terraced and semi-detached housing with suitable parking provision and greenspace.

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In terms of the detail of this application several aspects stand out as being improperly addressed or plain wrong:

- Parking spaces – the plan does not seem to tie up with the descriptions.
- Location – reference to Haywards Heath when the site is located within Lindfield Village
- Trees – the proposal seems to make no attempt to preserve the significant trees on this site, nine of which are subject to TPOs, merely seeking to destroy those that are in the way of the unsuitable plans. Any plans for this site should protect and improve the natural street scene.
- Local consultation – the views of two councils, other consultees and residents would seem to suggest that this exercise was at best, perfunctory, and at worst, ignored.
- S106 contributions – in the unfortunate event that this application obtains approval despite failing to meet most, if not all, applicable policies under the respective District and Local Plans, the contributions or ideally physical improvements should be structured to achieve a meaningful improvement in local infrastructure rather than allocated 'in case' an improvement is identified in the future.

It is felt that the applicant employed architects with no feel for the location (hence the references to Haywards Heath and the overbearing nature of the proposals seen to date) and who have produced entirely inappropriate off the shelf plans to address the applicants brief, leading to the proposed overdevelopment of the site.

The Council notes the objections raised by Hayward Heath Town Council which substantially align with its own views and fully recognises HHTC's interest in the site given its proximity to Haywards Heath and the shared impact on local infrastructure of this poorly thought out proposal.