

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE held on 2 October 2002 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs P Humphrey  
Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor C Moss  
Councillor Mrs J Young (in the Chair)

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JA Marsden and Mrs JE Storrar.

74 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs J Johnson declared an Interest in item No 5 on the agenda – Planning Decisions as she was the applicant in respect of an application that had been granted for Oak Tree Farm Nurseries (Minute No 77(e) following refers).

75 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2002 be confirmed as a correct record.

76 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

77 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the following planning applications and requested that its comments be passed to Chester City Council, the Planning Authority.

(a) 02/01450/FUL/DJC

RE: Double garage and access.

AT: Ebenezer Cottage, 235 Hermitage Road, Saughall

“No objections so long as the Highway Authority has none.”

(b) 02/01463/FUL/TK

RE: Installation on ATM machine.

AT: Red Ensign Autopoint, Parkgate Road, Saughall

“No objections.”

(c) 02/01464/ADV/TK  
RE: Signage  
AT: Red Ensign Autopoint, Parkgate Road, Saughall

“No objections.”

(d) 02/01496/FUL/KLW  
RE: Extension to provide storage and erection of animal feed tower.  
AT: Red Ash Farm, Parkgate Road, Saughall

“No objections.”

(e) 02/01501/FUL  
RE: Extension to provide dining room and additional bedrooms.  
AT: Lodge Cottage, 3 Shotwick Lane, Woodbank

“No objections.”

(f) 02/01497/FUL  
RE: 20m monopole telecommunications tower and ancillary equipment.  
AT: Wash Hall Farm, Hermitage Road, Saughall

“No objections.”

(g) 02/01445/FUL  
RE: Two/single storey extension and double garage.  
AT: 1 The Green, Lodge Lane, Saughall

“No objections.”

## 78 PLANNING DECISIONS

The Committee noted the following planning decisions made by Chester City Council, the Planning Authority, since the Committee’s meeting on 5 August 2002:

(a) 02/00399/FUL  
Proposal: New cow cubicle building and open silage to replace existing facilities and demolition of disused silage tower.  
Location: Pitts Farm, Woodbank Lane, Woodbank, Two Mills

PERMISSION

(b) 02/00249/FUL  
Proposal: Conservatory.  
Location: 90 Hermitage Road, Saughall

PERMISSION

(c) 02/01192/FUL

Proposal: Extension to shop, installation of 60,000 litre underground diesel tank and relocation of dispensers.

Location: Red Ensign Autopool, Parkgate Road, Saughall

PERMISSION

(d) 02/01216/FUL

Proposal: Conservatory (Plot 4), variation of housing type.

Location: Land to the rear of Sunnybank and Fernlea, Sea Hill Road, Saughall

PERMISSION

(e) 02/00249/FUL

Proposal: New access.

Location: Oak Tree Farm Nurseries, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

PERMISSION

## 79 APPEAL DECISION

Land adjacent to The Beeches, Beeches Lane, Off Hermitage Road, Saughall

The Planning Authority had refused Planning Permission for a detached dwelling. The applicant had subsequently appealed.

The Committee was informed that the main issue in the appeal was whether the proposal constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt and if so, whether there were any special circumstances to outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

The Inspector had concluded that the appeal constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there would be additional harm caused through loss of openness to the Green Belt. She had found no very special circumstances to outweigh the harm that would be caused.

The Inspector's comments were as follows:

### **“Other Harm**

The appeal site comprises a substantial plot of land situated towards the end of Beeches Lane. It is currently overgrown with brambles and shrub. The boundary to the Beeches is marked by a mature deciduous trees and there are further trees defining the boundary with Orchard Cottage. The frontage to Beeches Lane is marked by a close boarded wooden fence and further shrubbery. The land on the opposite side of Beeches Lane is open pastureland up until the point where it meets the heavily wooded boundary to The Beeches. The latter property can only be glimpsed between the canopies of the trees, other than when standing at the access gate, where it becomes more obvious.

The appeal proposal would introduce a substantial detached dwelling onto the plot, which by virtue of its scale and proportions would have a commanding presence, notwithstanding the surrounding vegetation. The overall impression gained at my site

visit, when walking down Beeches Lane, was one of departing the village proper, and the preponderance of trees and open agricultural land on the opposite side, contribute to the semi-rural character of the area. The introduction of a house in these circumstances, would erode the semi-rural feel to the area and suburbanise the immediate surroundings.

Whilst I have no doubt that the majority of the trees to the boundaries could be retained, the formation of a landscaped curtilage area and garage, quite apart from the dwelling itself, would irrevocably change the appearance of the site and undermine its present rural character.

I have all ready identified that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 3.2 of PPG 2 states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Added to that, is the impact of this large building on the openness of the Green Belt. Openness is one of the essential qualities of the Green Belt, and that would be substantially eroded by the proposal.

### **Very Special Circumstances**

Although not articulated as very special circumstances, the appellant has advanced additional points, in favour of the appeal.

The appellant points to a number of other sites believed to be comparable to the appeal site, which have been developed in recent years. However, I do not have details of the circumstances which led to their approval, in order to make any meaningful comparison and in any event, I must consider this appeal on its merits.

The appellant also points out that the existing pond would be retained and managed, as a wildlife resource. A report prepared by a firm of environmental consultants concludes that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the ecology of the site, including the pond. Whilst I am alive to the residents concerns on this issue, I have no evidence to suggest that the proposal would cause undue damage to local wildlife. However, my main concern on this issue does nothing to outweigh my overall conclusion on the main issue in terms of the principle of the development.

### **Other Matters**

Other matters raised, include the condition of Beeches Lane being unsuited to take additional traffic. Beeches Lane is single track with no obvious passing spaces other than in the gateways of existing houses. Visibility at the junction with Hermitage Road is constrained somewhat, by a high wall to the frontage of the house to the left on egress. At present, vehicle movements along Beeches Lane will be commensurate with the limited numbers of dwellings having direct vehicular access. To my mind however, event the addition of a single further dwelling would represent a significant increase. Having regard to its single track nature and less than ideal junction onto Hermitage Road, this increase would add to the hazard and inconvenience experienced by other road users, and this adds to my concerns on the main issue, although it would not represent a compelling reason to dismiss the appeal in its own right.

The design of the dwelling has also been criticised by the residents, who believe it would not be in keeping with other houses in the area. Certainly the drawings depict an imposing residence of some stature. Elements of the detailing bear little or no

resemblance to the surrounding properties. However, were I minded to allow the appeal and having regard to my conclusions relating to the wooded nature of the locality and distance between dwellings, the dwelling would not be read together with others in the locality but would be seen largely in isolation. In these circumstances, I do not consider the design would be inappropriate.”

This harm constituted a strong and clear-cut objection to the proposal, which could not be overcome by the imposition of planning conditions.

For the reasons set out above the Inspector had declined the appeal.

80 2 HERMITAGE ROAD, SAUGHALL

RESOLVED:

That the Committee continue to monitor the development work being carried out at 2 Hermitage Road, Saughall.