



Church Stretton

Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 18th July 2023 in the Silvester Horne Institute.

Present: Cllr J Luck, Cllr J Burns, Cllr M Morris, Cllr A Munro, Cllr A Williams

In attendance: Mrs H Merrett (Committees and Finance)

Members of the Public: 5

PC.008 Election of Chair

Cllr Munro nominated Cllr Luck, seconded by Cllr Morris. There being no further nominations it was **PC 23/24 002 RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Luck as Chair of the Planning Committee for the year to May 2024.

PC.009 Apologies

Received and accepted from Cllr C Carson.

PC.010 Disclosable Interests

None declared

It was proposed by Cllr Burns, seconded by Cllr Williams and **23/24 003 unanimously RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable members of the public to take part in the discussion of 23/02414/FUL Hilbre, 17 Watling Street South planning application which is the first item on the planning applications review below.

Cllr Luck left the meeting to collect a memory stick with planning details on.

PC.011 Questions From Members Of The Public

See section above on suspension of standing orders

PC.012 Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Morris, seconded by Cllr Williams and **23/24 004 unanimously RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held 13th June 2023.
The Chair signed the minutes at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Luck returned to the meeting at 6.45 pm

PC.013 Planning Applications Review

i. Current List

23/02414/FUL Hilbre, 17 Watling Street South, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 7BG.

Erection of one new dwelling and creation of one new vehicular access point. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Munro, seconded by Cllr Williams and **PC 23/24 005 RESOLVED** to object to this application with comment:

The Town Council Objects to this application for the following reasons.

- Planning Application and associated papers are riddled with incongruous statements.
- Contrary to National and Local policy
- Overshadowing
- Highway issues
- Adverse impact on nature conservation interests and biodiversity opportunities
- Effect on Conservation Area
- Layout and density of building design.

Planning Application and associated papers are riddled with incongruous statements. The application notice sent to the Town Council and listed on the Shropshire Council Planning Portal describe the location as, "Proposed dwelling to the North of Hazler Crescent" the impact of describing the location as such is that the Planning Portal shows no related cases. We note that the agent has described the location correctly as "Hilbre" 17 Watling St. South. We are unsure as to why the location was entered onto the Portal as it was, but the impact is that it makes the searching for the development more difficult than it should and on first glance fails to mention that this is the fourth application to carry out an "infill development" within the garden at "Hilbre".

On checking the publicly available documentation that has been uploaded to the Planning Portal it becomes apparent there are inconsistencies with the application. The application itself indicates that this development is for a four bedroomed property, yet the plans show a three bedroomed property.

The application states that Pre-application advice (21/00022) was taken in respect of this application. The Agent has recorded that the comment in the Preapp was "... (generally positive with Plot 2). It appears that the Agent has been confused about which application the PreApp was applied for.

The Planning and Heritage statement states that 7 new trees are to be planted as part of the development (This includes some onto the existing "Hilbre" site and not 7 trees into the new development. On checking the Tree Survey a different story is told. Annex B gives the impression that only 4 new trees are to be planted and that 3 of these will be in alongside Watling Street South, thus denuding the tree cover on the land to be developed. We also note that the Tree Report is from 2021, some 18 months ago.

Contrary to National and Local Policy

Much is made of compliance with National and Local Policy in connection with the application and the Agent states that this is a "Fairly straight forward request to build in an existing large garden."

The application references both Local and National Planning Policy.

The application cites a number of these policies to support the application including:

Sections 5 & 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021). (NPPF)

Section 5 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Authority to ensure that it has a sufficient land supply for development. The recently published "Five Year Housing Land Supply

Statement" (Shropshire Council February 2022 (HLSS) indicates that overall, the Council can demonstrate more than a five-year supply overall. There would appear therefore from a strategic perspective, there is no pressure on Shropshire Council to approve unwarranted developments without brown field sites.

Section 12 of the NPPF is in respect of "Achieving well designed Places". It is interesting to note that the title of the section deliberately uses the word "Places" and not "Properties". Clearly placing great importance on the green spaces surrounding developments.

The Shropshire's Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) 2015 is still current but is reaching the end of its life and was based on data from an even earlier period. Policy MD2 is of interest in this case especially the sub-sections which require development to contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character. It goes on to say that developments should respond appropriately to form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement.

Church Stretton has a conservation Area Design Guide the 7 objectives of which are set out on page 5.

To ensure that new developments preserve and where possible enhance the town's conservation areas.

To offer advice on aspects of design

To highlight the importance of the context and setting of buildings and open spaces

To raise the general design standard

To encourage the preservation of healthy mature trees as well as other tree cover . which contribute to the setting of the historic settlement.

To retain and enhance the landscape as well as improving open spaces and vistas

To encourage the use and re-use of buildings.

The guide acknowledges that Conservation areas are not museums and that they must evolve over time but does stress that any new buildings make a positive contribution to the distinctive character of an area.

Infilling of gardens has become more prevalent of late and is seen as a way of managing large estates. Indeed, there are some large "Estates" where garden infilling can be considered appropriate, but on awkward sites with a centrally located dwelling and wraparound gardens this is unlikely to meet the objectives on page 5 of the guide.

The Church Stretton Town Design Statement says. "Any building permitted by sub-division of larger plots must be at a density which will ensure that the natural landscape continues to dominate the area." Unfortunately, by virtue of the original setting of "Hilbre" the proposal can only function when placed as close to the boundary and exterior of "The Corner" as possible and consequently on the beginning of the rise in the landscape. It will likely overshadow and most certainly dominate its smaller neighbour.

Overshadowing

The application envisages a 3- or 4-bedroom property being shoehorned into the eastern side "Hilbre". The elevations tend to show a tall structure with an equally tall roof line that will dominate the upper portion of the current garden. Despite the diagram showing 9m distance from the edge of the new building and the Dormer bungalow, "The Corner" it is clear from the comments and pictures submitted that the measurements on the plans leave a lot to be desired. The proposed dwelling has no windows on the eastern and western sides and is akin to a mid-terraced property. There is no doubt that this is deliberate to ensure privacy is maintained but will give the impression of a monolith and cannot but overshadow the "The Corner".

Highway Issues.

Shropshire Highways have stated in their submission that the addition of the extra vehicular access onto the development meets the requirements around splay lines. Hazler Crescent was built before the advent of mass motor car ownership and off-street parking is limited. Access onto the proposed site will be very close to a blind bend and once cars are parked sight lines may be adversely affected. There is already an access for "Hilbre" from Watling St. South which leads directly to the garage that will be re-allocated within the proposal and it would seem relatively straightforward to utilise this for the new property and so negate the need to install the new access point onto Hazler Crescent with its potential for pedestrian safety and its accepted impact on the hedges and trees at this part of Hazler Crescent as acknowledged within the Tree report.

Adverse impact on nature conservation interests and biodiversity opportunities

"Hilbre" is screened from Watling St. South and Hazler Crescent by a mature hedge and large trees with the only break being the vehicular access from Watling St. South and a pedestrian gate at south-eastern edge of the plot.

The proposal requires the removal of a number of trees and the loss of a substantial portion of the hedge that currently screens "Hilbre". This hedge has been an element of the local street scene for many years and completely screens the ground floor of the current building giving a sense of intrigue & mystery to the property. The hedge which according to an earlier arboriculturist report is described as groups of trees originally planted as a hedge but due to a lack of management reverted back to a line of trees provides a rich environment to many species of wildlife and contributes considerably to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area and may benefit from the protection of a TPO such is its contribution.

Effect on Conservation Area

The effect on the Conservation area is the thread that weaves its way throughout this objection. The Town Council is not against new development especially on brown field sites but is very sensitive to new builds within the Conservation area that have a negative impact. New homes are needed as evidence in the recent Church Stretton Housing Needs Survey. I have summarised that part of the foreword to this document that has a relevance to this application:

"The survey draws some powerful and important conclusions.

Firstly, the town has made it abundantly clear that future need is to build new one and two-bedroom homes, and that these are wanted by both new households (including first time buyers) and also by residents who want to downsize. There is a strong feeling against building any more new detached homes. Residents feel that the town has plenty of detached homes, and that a reasonable supply will continue to become available through the existing resale market. This supply will increase if existing residents have an opportunity to downsize and remain within the community.

Secondly, the town believes that the "countryside" outside of the town's development boundary should continue to be protected, and work to assess the supply of new one and two-bedroomed homes demonstrates that the number of homes needed can be built on brown field sites within the existing development boundary.

The forward goes on to say. "Over the next few years these provisions will be incorporated into a new Neighbourhood Plan which will provide legal force as part of the overall planning system".

Layout and density of building design.

The design as submitted is as stated previously for a 3- or 4-bedroom detached market value property. There appears to be no windows on the eastern or western elevations. This type of windowless elevations is more typical in a mid-terraced property not a detached property within the Conservation area. Based on this alone it can hardly be said that the design will enhance the area within it sits and by limiting the amount of fenestration in order to give privacy to both neighbouring properties will make the property less desirable. A likely consequence is that the Town Council would expect a variation to be applied for at some point or if not, for another application in future.

The siting of the development to the east of the original dwelling on the smaller of the two options available compromises both the design of the intended development and impinges on both "Hilbre" which would be a separate dwelling under the terms of the application and its very near neighbour "The Corner".

There is no doubt that "Hilbre" sits in a larger than average plot, but due to the siting of this large, detached dwelling there is little opportunity to build an additional acceptable dwelling either side of it.

The Town Council accepts that there is a "Presumption of development" placed upon Shropshire Council but is strongly of the opinion that to grant this application would be to site the wrong property in the wrong location.

Conclusion

The Town Council appreciate that since 2009 the current occupiers of "Hilbre" have had 2 applications to build a property within their garden refused and a further application withdrawn. The applicants clearly have a strong desire to reduce the size of their garden and construct an open market property.

At the Town Council Planning Committee last night, we discussed options that could meet the desire of Mr Ridge, and which would mitigate some of the issues raised. It appeared to us that to utilise the existing driveway and to build the new property in a different location on the site may be less unacceptable to us and objectors. We would welcome further discussion with the applicant or his Agent on this matter.

If the Planning Authority decide that this application should be supported, then we would request that a Section 106 agreement be entered into to ensure that there will be no further developments allowed at either "Hilbre" 17 Watling Street South or the new development proposed in this application. We would also ask that consideration be given to not allowing any variations to the agreed plans.

Members of the public left the meeting

Standing orders were reinstated.

23/02495/FUL The Priory, 39 Church Street, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6DQ.

Replacement of 5 x 20th Century windows to the south and west elevations. Replacement of one 'original' arched window on the west elevation.

23/02496/LBC The Priory, 39 Church Street, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6DQ

Replacement of 5 x 20th Century windows to the south and west elevations. Replacement of one 'original' arched window on the west elevation.

Cllrs agreed to support these applications with comment:

The applications seek to remove the PVCu windows that had been installed and replace with oak windows which is to be welcomed. We felt that the Design access and heritage statement was of an exceptional quality, The photographs and information provided was a benchmark that others should aspire to.

23/02612/FUL 50 Sandford Avenue, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6AZ

Installation of plant to the right 8 side elevation with acoustic barrier fence, and new entrance doors to the right side and rear elevations

Cllrs agreed to support this application with comment:

We were particularly impressed with the acoustic report and can see that the changes proposed will make access for deliveries and staff much simpler. We could not see where the Post Office counter would be located and resolved to make enquiries outside of the meeting.

23/02821/FUL 2 The Meadows, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 7EG

Erection of 1No garden shed, 1No greenhouse and replacement front door

Cllrs agreed to support this application with comment:

The Meadows is a small modern “executive” development by “Shropshire Homes” included within the Church Stretton Conservation Area. The application for the shed and greenhouse would, if it were not for the location being included within the conservation area had been subject to the GDPO. The front doors proposed are in keeping with the surrounding properties. It was also pleasing to hear that the neighbours had been consulted on the plans beforehand.

ii. Unitary Decisions

Councillors noted the decisions made by Shropshire Council.

iii. Appeals

Councillors noted that no new appeals had been made.

iv. Enforcements

Councillors noted that no new enforcements have been made.

PC.014 Estate agents advertising boards

Cllrs noted a paper by Cllr. Andrew Williams giving the exceptions to the requirement for Planning Permission in respect of Estate Agents advertising boards.

PC.015 Correspondence

Cllrs noted Hilbre Consultation Extension by Shropshire Council Planning & Hilbre Letter from Resident

It was proposed by Cllr Morris, seconded by Cllr Munro and **23/24 003**
unanimously RESOLVED to suspend standing orders at 8.25 pm

PC.015 Next Meeting

Councillors noted the date of the next meeting as being Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 6.30 pm. Any planning applications which become due before then will be emailed out to the committee members by Cllr Luck as there is no planning meeting in August.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Signed byDate 12th September 2023

As a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Approved