

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Planning Committee

Monday, 7 December 2020 at 7.30 pm

Councillors Present:

J Purdy (Chair)

R Sharma (Vice-Chair)

L M Ascough, A Belben, I T Irvine, K L Jaggard, M Mwangale, M W Pickett, T Rana and P C Smith

Also in Attendance:

Councillor M Flack and R D Burrett

Officers Present:

Dimitra Angelopoulou	Senior Planning Officer
Simon Bagg	Legal Services Manager
Mez Matthews	Democratic Services Officer
Jean McPherson	Group Manager (Development Management)
Marc Robinson	Principal Planning Officer
Linda Saunders	Planning Solicitor
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Jess Tamplin	Democratic Services Support Officer

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

Councillor Sharma declared that he was the Ward Councillor for Southgate, the location of application CR/2020/0588/OUT (42 & 44 Brighton Road, Southgate, Crawley), but that this did not amount to a personal or prejudicial interest in the application.

2. Lobbying Declarations

The following lobbying declarations were made by Councillors:-

All councillors present had been lobbied regarding application CR/2020/0588/OUT (42 & 44 Brighton Road, Southgate, Crawley).

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Planning Application CR/2019/0646/ADV - The Tree, 103 High Street, Northgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/357a](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Advertisement consent for:

Non-illuminated lettering 'CRAWLEY MUSEUM' on the High Street elevation

1 x non-illuminated entrance fascia sign on the Boulevard elevation.

1 x non-illuminated freestanding welcome sign

(amended description and amended plans received).

Councillors A Belben, Jaggard, Mwangale, Sharma, and P Smith declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought advertisement consent for three signs at Crawley Museum. The signage was considered to reflect the character of the museum and would have an acceptable visual impact on the building.

The Committee then considered the application.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to consent:

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Pickett, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, and P Smith (10).

Against the recommendation to consent:

None.

Abstentions:

None.

RESOLVED

Consent subject to conditions set out in report PES/357a.

5. Planning Application CR/2020/0012/LBC - The Tree, 103 High Street, Northgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/357b](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Listed building consent for:

Non-illuminated lettering 'CRAWLEY MUSEUM' on the on the high street elevation

1 x non-illuminated entrance fascia sign on the boulevard elevation

(amended description and amended plans received).

Councillors A Belben and Jaggard declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought listed building consent for the installation of two signs at Crawley Museum. The Committee heard that the signage was not considered to have a harmful impact on the character or appearance of the building.

The Committee then considered the application. The signage was deemed to be appropriate and attractive.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to consent:

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Pickett, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, and P Smith (10).

Against the recommendation to consent:

None.

Abstentions:

None.

RESOLVED

Consent subject to conditions set out in report PES/357b.

6. Planning Application CR/2020/0462/FUL - Barber Warehouse, Northgate Place, Northgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/357c](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Change of use from office (formerly use class B1) to a kitchen to feed the homeless.

Councillors A Belben, Purdy, Sharma, and P Smith declared they had visited the site.

The Group Manager (Development Management) provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought permission for a change of use of the single storey building. The proposal would alter the floor layout to provide a kitchen and storage space for food and equipment for the preparation of meals. The meals produced would be packaged and transported off the premises for distribution to homeless people at agreed locations in Crawley. The application was to be considered separately and on its own merits following the withdrawal of an earlier application that had proposed the preparation, collection, and consumption of food at the site.

The Committee heard that a small physical change to the building was proposed in the form of a roof-mounted cowl. This was due to the installation of an extraction system to lessen odour from the kitchen during its operational hours of approximately 17:00 to 18:30 daily while food was being prepared.

In line with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, two statements submitted by members of the public in regard to the application were read to the Committee.

A statement from an objector (Masoud Ahary) highlighted matters including:

- Many Northgate residents had concerns regarding the application.
- The proximity of the site to a residential area and a school.
- A suggestion that the site could be relocated to a different area of the town, such as an industrial estate.

A statement from a supporter (the applicant, Giving Back Crawley) highlighted matters including:

- The objections of local residents, of which many suggested that safety issues could be caused by people visiting the site. It was clarified that the kitchen would operate a delivery-only service and only the volunteers working at the kitchen would have access to the premises.
- There would be no noticeable impact on traffic in the area and the existing car parking provision at the site was sufficient for the applicant's one vehicle.
- The applicant's desire to comply with the Council's agreed food distribution locations, planning application conditions, and environment health policies.

The Committee then considered the application. A Committee member recognised the large number of responses from local residents, many of which raised concern about visitors to the building, which formed part of the earlier withdrawn application. It was hoped that these concerns had been allayed, both by the information provided by the applicant and the application conditions, which would limit the scope of use at the premises.

It was noted that Sussex Police had recommended the applicant consider the installation of lighting and an alarm system at the site. Upon queries from Committee members that this could become an application condition, the Planning Officer confirmed a condition was not necessary due to the limited footfall in the area. Lighting and alarms were therefore the responsibility of the applicant.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to permit:
Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwagale, Pickett, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, and P Smith (10).

Against the recommendation to permit:
None.

Abstentions:
None.

RESOLVED

Permit subject to conditions set out in report PES/357c.

7. Planning Application CR/2020/0526/TPO - 5 Dene Tye, Pound Hill, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/357d](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

T1 ash - fell & grind out stumps.

Councillor A Belben declared he had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought consent to fell a protected ash tree due to its poor condition. The tree showed signs of ash dieback – branches had fallen from the tree and, if retained, would continue to do so. A silver birch tree was proposed as a replacement.

The Committee then considered the application.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to consent:

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Pickett, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, and P Smith (10).

Against the recommendation to consent:

None.

Abstentions:

None.

RESOLVED

Consent subject to conditions set out in report PES/357d.

8. Planning Application CR/2020/0588/OUT - 42 & 44 Brighton Road, Southgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/357e](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Outline application (access and layout to be determined with appearance, landscaping and scale reserved) for the erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey building comprising of 5 x 1no. bedroom flats and 15 x 2no. bedroom flats, of which 2 no. will be designated as affordable housing, following the demolition of existing semi-detached dwellings, the improvement of an access from Brighton Road, the creation of a new vehicular access from Stonefield Close and associated works and landscaping.

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Jaggard, Mwangale, Purdy, Sharma, and P Smith declared they had visited the site. Councillor Pickett declared he was familiar with the site.

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application. The Committee was reminded that in November 2019 it had voted for the officer's recommendation to refuse a prior application at this site due to the lack of affordable housing provision. It was heard that the current application was identical to the earlier application, but following an appeal, the applicant had now submitted this current application which included the provision of 10% affordable housing. The application sought outline permission for access and layout with other matters reserved. It was heard that access to the development would be from two points – Brighton Road and Stonefield Close.

In line with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, four statements submitted by members of the public in regard to the application were read to the Committee.

Two statements from objectors (Teresa & Peter Guyver and Sarah Oliver) highlighted matters including:

- Stonefield Close residents' concerns that a block of flats would be out of character with the bungalows in the Close due to its height and size, and the detrimental effects of this on light, privacy, and overlooking.
- The application proposed 20 parking spaces for 20 flats/35 rooms, which was considered insufficient considering the possibility that the owners of some dwellings could own more than one car. Parking on Stonefield Close was limited at present and the proposal would put a further strain on this.
- The proposed access via Stonefield Close would cause traffic congestion on what was presently a quiet road. This may lead to further congestion on to Brighton Road.

A statement from the applicant (Turnbull Land) highlighted matters including:

- The proposed development reflected the historical pattern of construction of apartment blocks on Brighton Road, and was therefore of a similar character to the surrounding area.
- The application addressed the prior reason for refusal (lack of provision of affordable housing units). Consultation with the Local Planning Authority had led to the inclusion of 10% affordable housing.
- The site's location, which was in close proximity to the town centre and was said to ease pressure to release greenfield sites for housing development.

A statement from a Ward Councillor for Southgate (Councillor Flack) highlighted matters including:

- That the proposed development was not part of the current or draft Local Plan and was not currently required to meet the town's housing demand.
- The 1:1 ratio of parking bays to flats was unlikely to meet demand and, as the flats' residents would be eligible for parking permits, would lead to parking on Stonefield Close. Existing residents of the Close were concerned this would lead to insufficient parking space in particular for carers attending daily.
- The high density nature of the development, as well as its height and size, contributed to it being out-of-keeping with the surrounding area of Stonefield Close. This would impact both visual amenity and local infrastructure.

Councillor Pickett left the meeting and was not present for the discussion or vote on the item.

The Committee then considered the application.

Committee members recognised that the reason for refusal on the previous application was the lack of provision of affordable housing, and discussed the subsequent appeal which had upheld the decision to refuse permission. Members sought clarification on the details of the appeal and expressed support for the provision of the affordable units.

The Committee discussed the parking area proposed at the site, and residents' concerns regarding the parking provision were noted. The rate of one space to one flat was considered sufficient in comparison to the minimal proposed parking space

ratios at recent, similar developments. The Planning Officer confirmed that a disabled access parking bay was included in the application.

Committee members discussed the concerns of residents of Stonefield Close regarding the size and height of the development, and a question from a Committee member was raised about the use of obscured glass for the windows at the development. It was recognised that both scale and appearance were reserved matters and were not to be considered at this stage. However the Planning Officer clarified that the indicative floorplans showed some obscured glazed windows on the south side of the building and unobscured glazed windows on the east and west sides. It was also confirmed that the distance between the proposed development and the nearest dwelling on Stonefield Close was 29-31.5 metres, which was a sufficient distance to negate the need for obscured glass.

A Committee member raised concerns about overdevelopment of the area and the impact on local amenities caused by a new high density development. It was confirmed that as part of the proposal, the applicant was subject to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment as a contribution to these amenities.

Following a query regarding comments made on the application by West Sussex County Council as the Highways authority, the Planning Officer confirmed that the comments remained the same as those made on the previous application as no changes had been made to the parking and access proposals. The authority had no objection to the proposed accesses – it was predicted that there would be a small increase in vehicle trips around the site, but that these would have a negligible impact on traffic. The authority had also deemed the parking layout of sufficient size for manoeuvring.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to permit:

Councillors A Belben, Irvine, Jaggard, Purdy, Rana, and P Smith (6).

Against the recommendation to permit:

Councillors Ascough, Mwangale, and Sharma (3).

Abstentions:

None.

RESOLVED

Permit subject to the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement to secure two shared ownership units and the financial contributions of up to £23,100 for tree mitigation and £11,575 for open space, and subject to the conditions set out in report PES/357e.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Planning Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.13 pm

J Purdy (Chair)