
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at Land adjacent to Westfield Cottages, Breach Lane, Lower Halstow, Kent ME9 7DD on Tuesday, 1 November 2022 from 10.00 am - 10.20 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Richard Darby, Tim Gibson (Chair), James Hunt, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Ken Rowles and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Andy Byrne and Rebecca Corrigan.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney, Oliver Eakin, James Hall, Carole Jackson and Ben J Martin.

403 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

404 **ITEM 3.3 22/502340/OUT LAND ADJACENT, WESTFIELD COTTAGES, BREACH LANE, LOWER HALSTOW, KENT, ME9 7DD**

The Chair welcomed the applicant, local residents and Members to the meeting.

The Area Planning Officer introduced the application which sought planning permission for the erection of a single detached self-build dwellinghouse and carport/garage. He reminded Members that the site was located outside the built-up area of Lower Halstow and the site was classed as being within the open countryside. He referred to the previous planning application on the site for 10 dwellings which had been dismissed at appeal by the Planning Inspector due to the site being a distance from Lower Halstow, which had limited services and facilities, and the effect the development would have on that side of Breach Lane and the rural and open landscape character of the area.

The Area Planning Officer presented Members with a revised site location plan as since the last planning meeting the applicant had made some alterations to make the application site smaller.

The applicant was invited to speak and made the following points:

- The site was previously a brownfield site;
- the land had been overgrown for a number of years; and
- an assessment on the land had been conducted which concluded that the land was only suited to development, so the applicant did not know what else to do with the land.

Representatives from Lower Halstow Parish Council were invited to speak and made the following points:

- The Parish Council had no objections to the development;

- considered it was good to see development in the village;
- the village needed more homes for local people to live in;
- Breach Lane was a popular road used in the village;
- the site was very close to the village facilities; and
- the application met the criteria of the Planning Strategy.

A Ward Member was present and was invited to speak and made the following points:

- Felt that the application site was not harmful to the area;
- the applicant had tidied-up the site and placing a new home on the land would visually make the area more appealing; and
- the applicant had already changed the size of the development so he could develop on the land.

In response, the Area Planning Officer clarified that the Parish Council Planning Strategy was a useful document for Parish Councils but the document was not adopted by Swale Borough Council and ultimately decisions needed to be made in accordance with the Local Plan (2017), when determining planning applications. It was clear that the previous Planning Inspector had found the development of the site to be unacceptable and that should be given material weight.

The Area Planning Officer was asked about the effect of the site being previously developed land. He clarified that the site was in part previously developed but that the building was a modest structure and the hard surface had largely blended into the site and that did not negate the hard surface identified. The previous Planning Inspector did not consider that weighted heavily in favour of development of the site.

Members viewed the application site with officers.

Chair

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