
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the at the sites listed below on Tuesday, 7 January 2025 from 11.00 am - 2.20 pm.

528 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

529 **24/502378/FULL 34 Key Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 1YS**

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Ann Kavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), Terry Thompson, Karen Watson and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Gambrill, Paul Gregory and Kellie Mackenzie.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Simon Clark, Kieran Golding, James Hunt and Elliott Jayes.

The Chair welcomed the Applicant, members of the public and Members to the meeting.

The Team Leader (Planning Applications) introduced the application for a Section 73 application to vary condition (2) of 21/501143/FULL to allow an increase in the height of the building comprising plots 1, 2 and 3 at the rear of 34 Key Street, Sittingbourne. The Team Leader reported that the Council's planning enforcement team had identified that the two-storey building had not been constructed as per the approved details under application 21/501143/FULL. This had led to this application being submitted seeking planning permission for the as built structure. The Team Leader gave details of the approved building heights and the heights as built and now applied for, as set out in the committee report.

The Team Leader reported that one objection to the application from a resident of Cherryfields had been received, as set out in the report, although they had not objected to the increased height of the building.

The Applicant explained that due to discrepancies in land levels they had to dig down and they had done everything they could to address issues with the land levels.

A local resident raised concerns about the impact the development had on the residential amenity of No. 54 Cherryfields. She said the development had come out too far towards her property and showed Members photographs of the view of the development from her garden and from inside her property.

Members, local residents and the applicant then toured the application site and also viewed the site from No. 54 Cherryfields.

In response to a question from a Member regarding concerns about the guttering overhanging the adjacent care home, the Applicant explained that this was because the Pine Lodge Care Home development projected over their boundary and he had written proof of this. The Team Leader commented that issues regarding boundary disputes were private matters falling outside of the planning process.

530 **20/505877/OUT Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Ospringle, ME13 8XU**

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Ann Kavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), Julien Speed, Terry Thompson and Karen Watson.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Ian Harrison, Kellie Mackenzie and Ben Oates.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Simon Clark, Kieran Golding, James Hunt and Elliott Jayes.

The Chair welcomed the Agent, the Applicants, a representative from Ospringe Parish Council, members of the public and Members to the meeting.

The Planning Consultant introduced the application which sought outline planning permission for a mixed-use development comprising a nursery school, up to five holiday lets and flexible industrial and research and development workshop floorspace with all matters reserved except access from Brogdale Road. The site adjoined a Grade II listed building, Brogdale Farmhouse.

The Applicant's Agent reported that the East Malling Trust had purchased the site in March 2024 and considered the proposal would support the wider site by providing employment, support the local community, tourism and improve the site which was currently overgrown.

A representative from Ospringe Parish Council spoke against the application and raised points which included:

- This was a finely balanced application, but considered the site was unsuitable for the proposal;
- concerned that the highway statistics used were out-of-date and did not take in consideration that the surrounding roads were ancient rural lanes or the housing developments in the area;
- agreed to forward the Speed Watch figures to planning officers which demonstrated that the proposed access would be dangerous;
- the proposed access from the public highway was not fit for purpose;
- the development would have an unacceptable impact on the adjacent listed building;
- needed to scrutinise the viability of the National Fruit Collection; and
- concerned that indicative uses on the site would not be 'managed' given that current uses were not enforced by Swale Borough Council (SBC).

Local residents raised points which included:

- The existing screening at the site should be protected;
- Brogdale Farmhouse had been on the site since circa 1383 and should be protected;
- the application proposed an 'unhappy' mix of uses;
- the application was over-intensively commercial;
- the proposed access would be dangerous and ground levels would make it difficult for suitable sightlines to be installed;
- had applied over a year ago to SBC for trees on the site to have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) but still no response, would they be preserved?;
- the loss of trees on the site would result in increased traffic noise on the site;

- the redundant reservoir was previously a beautiful site but the current owner had allowed it to go into disrepair;
- why was a nursery school being proposed in such a rural area when there were new estates further down the road which would be more appropriate locations?;
- considered there would be safeguarding risks allowing holiday lets so close to a nursery school;
- this was a 'highly unfortunate application', but SBC were charged with looking after the local landscape and ensuring that developments enhanced the area; and
- light industrial use was not acceptable in rural areas.

The Planning Consultant said that he was aware that SBC's Tree Consultant considered there was some merit in the trees being subject to TPOs and clarified that the trees would not be affected by the application. The Chair asked that officer's action the requested TPOs as soon as possible as a year was far too long to have to wait.

The Chair then invited all those in attendance to view the adjacent listed building from the site, the proposed location of: the holiday lets; workshops; nursery; and where the proposed access would be. Those present duly walked through the site and surrounding land, including the public highway, with intermittent stops where comments were made as set out below. The Agent provided the indicative layout drawing for those present.

The Applicant explained that the reservoir would be filled in and the land levels would be as the current levels were around the edges of the reservoir.

In response to points raised, the Planning Consultant reported that the existing tree line around the site would be retained to provide screening as per the Landscaping Assessment. The proposed access would be solely for the proposed mixed uses, and they would not be able to use the existing vehicular access. The Agent clarified that the light industrial use in the workshops would be for rural crafts and light machinery use. The Planning Consultant advised that the use class and hours of use were conditioned as set out in the report.

Local residents said that hours of use on the existing site were regularly flouted and not enforced by SBC. The Chair asked that officers investigated the concerns raised.

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel