

**SHOREHAM
PARISH
COUNCIL**

Parish Clerk: Sarah Moon
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PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

18th July 2018 at Shoreham Village Hall from 7:30pm

Present: R Blamey (in the Chair)
A Hibbins, J Histed, B Jeffery and N McDonnell

Also Present: District Councillor John Edwards-Winser
5 Members of the Public

Clerk: Sarah Moon

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Parkes.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th July 2018 (copy circulated separately) were approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. Cllr Histed declared that he was a neighbour of Little Record, Church Street, Shoreham.
4. The following applications were considered:
 - a) SE/18/01944/LDCEX – Little Record, Church Street, Shoreham
Development : Single storey oak framed two bay gable ended barn used for log store, garage and store.
Comments due by 20th July 2018.
RESOLVED that Sevenoaks District Council be informed that Shoreham Parish Council supports this application as this 'like for like' replacement will continue to enhance the street scene as the original building succeeded in doing so well.
 - b) SE/18/02118/HOUSE – Lemongrass and Limes, 5 Forge Way, Shoreham
Development : The erection of a single storey rear extension with three roof lights and a loft conversion with rear dormer window.
Comments due by 27th July 2018.
RESOLVED that Sevenoaks District Council be informed that Shoreham Parish Council supports this application as it does not detract from the street scene and complies with planning regulations.
 - c) SE/18/02162/HOUSE – 2 Hoptarden Cottages, Filston Lane, Shoreham
Development : Erection of two storey rear extension single storey side extension incorporating roof light and outbuilding (store/plant room) to the side. Loft conversion to habitable space including the construction of rear dormer window with glass Juliet balcony and roof light to the side. Alterations to fenestration.
RESOLVED that Sevenoaks District Council be informed that Shoreham Parish Council supports this application as it does not detract from the street scene and complies with planning regulations.
 - d) SE/18/02029/FUL – Land Forming Part of Timberden Farm, Shacklands Road

Development : Change of use and conversion of 2no. agricultural buildings to 2 no. residential dwelling with parking access and landscaping including the demolition of the 'Dutch Barn' and ancillary agricultural structures.

Comments due by 20th July 2018.

RESOLVED that Sevenoaks District Council be informed that Shoreham Parish Council objects to this development for the reasons included in the report shown in Appendix A.

5. Correspondence/Information

- a) SE/18/01585/HOUSE – The Old Dairy, Shoreham Place, Shoreham
Development : Demolition of rear extension and front dormer. Erection of two storey rear extension, first floor extension to the front and rear. Garage conversion into living accommodation. Remodelling of the dwelling, roof alterations to include sedum and associated landscaping works.
GRANTED
- b) SE/18/01247/HOUSE – Barnfield House, Romney Street, Knatts Valley
Development : Demolition of existing porch and cellar hatch. Erection of a new front porch and alterations to fenestration.
APPLICATION INVALID due to 'Evidence demonstrating red line boundary does not match Land Registry documents, as raised by a neighbour's public comment.'

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

KCC Members Panel Committee – voted in favour of the diversion of Footpath SR22 in spite of objections by the Parish Council and other KCC officers.

Public Question Time

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 1st August 2018 at Shoreham Village Hall**

Sarah Moon, Clerk to Shoreham Parish Council

Appendix A

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Reference	SE/18/2029/FUL
Site	Land forming part of Timberden Farm, Shacklands Road, Shoreham, Kent TN14 7TX
Proposal	Change of use and conversion of 2 no. agricultural buildings to 2 no. residential dwellings with parking, access and landscaping including the demolition of the “Dutch Barn” and ancillary agricultural structures
Support	X
Objection and reasons	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Shoreham Parish Council objects to this development for the following reasons:</p> <p>1. The proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it requires major reconstruction of the two existing farm buildings to make them suitable for residential use.</p> <p>The proposal contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, policies L01 and LO8 of the Core Strategy (2011); policies EN5 and GB7 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and the Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (2015)</p> <p>There are no very special circumstances in this case which would justify development of the reconstructed dwellings for residential use in this Green Belt location.</p> <p>The application site is in open countryside, forming part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, approximately 1 km north-west of the village of Shoreham. It fronts onto Shacklands Road, a narrow lane which links Shoreham to the west with Badger’s Mount and Halstead.</p> <p>Within Green Belt, it is both national and local planning policy to strictly control inappropriate development in order to preserve its essential characteristics of openness and permanence.</p>

National guidance in NPPF paragraph 87 is that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”. The construction of new dwellings is identified as inappropriate in the Green Belt, although construction of buildings for agriculture and forestry is identified as being an exception in paragraph 89. Paragraph 90 also allows an exception for the re-use of buildings, provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

National policy is elaborated further in local planning policy, in particular policy GB7 of Sevenoaks District Council’s (SDC) “Allocations and Development Management Plan” and the accompanying “Development in the Green Belt SPD”, both adopted in 2015. Policy GB7 states that proposals for re-use of a building in the green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

Policy GB7 - Re-use of a Building within the Green Belt

Proposals for the re-use of a building in the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

a) the proposed new use, along with any associated use of land surrounding the building, will not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt or harm the existing character of the area; and

b) the applicant can demonstrate through a detailed structural survey and method statement that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete re-construction that would detract from their original character.

Where a proposal seeks the re-use of an agricultural building constructed within the last 10 years, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that there is no longer an agricultural need for the building, or that the building is no longer fit for its agricultural purpose.

Where it is accepted that there is no future agricultural need for the building, the Council will resist future proposals for new agricultural buildings, unless it is apparent that they are of a different type and nature than that previously identified as being surplus to requirements.

Supporting text for policy GB7 states in paragraph 7.44 that:

Where the proposed conversion relates to an agricultural building, the applicant should demonstrate that the building is no longer required for agricultural purposes. Where it is demonstrated and accepted that there is

no longer an agricultural need for the building, the Council will not permit the future construction of new agricultural buildings of the same type and nature unless it is satisfied that circumstances have significantly changed that would warrant allowing the proposal

1.6 Local planning policy is further elaborated in the “Development in the Green Belt SPD” where paragraphs 4.4 and 4.9 state:

Conversion of a building that requires substantial rebuilding in order to make it suitable for re-use will not be permitted. As a starting point when determining whether a proposal constitutes substantial new rebuilding, the Council will wish to see at least 75% of the original structure maintained to protect its character. However, the Council recognise that in some instances proposals may be able to protect the character of the existing building with a lesser proportion of the original structure being retained

Where the conversion of existing buildings would lead directly to a need for a replacement building and this could have a significant detrimental effect on the Green Belt, the Council will not generally permit the future construction of new agricultural buildings of the same type and nature and will consider the need to attach a condition to the permission removing permitted development rights for the erection of new buildings. The purpose of this control is to ensure that new agricultural buildings in the Green Belt are not permitted solely for the intention of subsequent conversion

On the basis of national and local planning policy, the key issues are :

- whether the buildings proposed for residential use are no longer required for agricultural purposes
- the impact of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt
- whether the proposed works to enable residential use of the buildings represent “re-use” or whether they involve major reconstruction
- on the basis of the above matters , whether the proposals are, or are not, inappropriate development in the Green Belt

(a) whether the buildings proposed for residential use are no longer required for agricultural purposes

It is understood that the buildings subject of this application were built in the 1950s or 1960s. They are utilitarian agricultural buildings of the type frequently seen in the Kent countryside. Whilst they have no intrinsic architectural merit, they have been part of the rural scene at Timberden for more than fifty years. It is understood that they were in active agricultural use up until a few years ago. Although the current owners (SDC) do not appear to have undertaken even basic maintenance, for example on gutters and downpipes and prevention of water ingress, they could be put to continued agricultural use with very modest investment.

The agricultural buildings were artificially separated from the rest of the farm unit in late 2015 and retained in SDC's ownership. The rest of the farm unit was sold to a private owner and maintained in agricultural use for raising beef cattle. The new owner is understood to have expressed an interest in acquiring the barns for use in connection with his farm as he has an operational need for more covered space. Indeed, he has twice applied for new agricultural buildings nearby under the prior notification procedure (Ref: SE/17/01237/AGRNOT and SE/17/01619/AGRNOT). This issue is inextricably linked to the current proposals.

In these circumstances, there is still an agricultural need for the buildings, even though the applicants have artificially separated them from their "parent" farm unit and have not maintained them in good condition over the last thirty years or so.

(b) the impact of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt

The application proposals will not extend the building footprint of the Grain Store and the Cattle Barn buildings and will result in the demolition and removal of the Dutch Barn and some small ancillary agricultural structures. On this basis, the applicants claim that the proposals will increase the openness of this part of the Green Belt.

However, set against that, the proposals will take an area of 0.76 hectares (or 1.88 acres) out of agricultural use and into residential curtilages. This would introduce a range of domestic paraphernalia which will fundamentally change the openness of the Green Belt . These changes will include two driveways and hardstanding areas for 4 vehicles and could also include sheds, lighting, washing lines, waste bins, children's play equipment and other items which are permitted development and notoriously difficult to control ,even if planning conditions are imposed. The impact will also be apparent at night when the light spillage from two large new residential properties with extensive glazing (necessary to bring natural light into the buildings) will be very apparent to travellers along Shacklands Road.

If the existing buildings are all redundant in terms of agricultural use and there is a risk of their becoming a visual eyesore, as claimed by the applicants' agents in paragraph 5.2.3 of their planning statement, the alternatives would be maintain them properly and make them available to a working farm, or to demolish them and completely restore the site to rural uses. The latter would fully restore the openness of this Green Belt site.

The applicants' agent's reference to "viability" in paragraph 5.2.4 of their planning statement , as a justification for the proposal, is not understood and does not justify the speculative residential development in this application. "Viability" is not material to whether a proposal is, or is not, inappropriate development in the

Green Belt.

(c) whether the proposed works to enable residential use of the buildings represent “re-use” or whether they involve substantial reconstruction

The Structural Engineer’s report, and the Design and Access Statement describe the current condition of the Grain Store and Cattle Barn buildings (the two buildings proposed for residential use) and the range of works that will be necessary for residential use.

The Parish Council do not have an independent structural survey , so have to rely on that prepared by the applicant’s engineers. Both buildings are concrete frame structures with some blockwork walls at lower levels and lightweight cladding above and lightweight roof cladding. They are boxlike structures with no window openings, although the western side of the Cattle Barn is open to the air and the Grain Store has a large door.

(i) The Grain Store

Whilst the engineers conclude that the structural condition of the Grain Store is “in a reasonable condition for its age”, a number of structural works are recommended:

- The existing concrete frame is retained and the frame treated re concrete repair / corrosion etc.; the existing connections are to be checked and strengthened as necessary
- Some reasonably extensive concrete repair / member replacement is needed on the concrete members within the lean-to. (along gridline 1 in particular)
- New concrete floor slab
- New perimeter and internal load bearing walls with new foundations

(These conclusions were based on a survey in 2016 so ,with the passage of time, further structural work might also be necessary)

In addition to these structural works, residential use of the Grain Store would require wholesale changes to the building elevations, re-roofing and insertion of a new floor and internal walls within the building. The elevational changes would require completely new cladding to most of the building and insertion of a large number of windows and several roof lights.

Whilst the Building Regulations are not a planning matter , they do bear on the issue of how much building and reconstruction work will be required in terms of matters such as provision of cavity walls and appropriate insulation to meet national energy efficiency standards

(ii) The Cattle Barn

The applicants' structural engineers conclude that the Cattle Barn" is in poor structural condition", but that the roof structure was in "fair" condition. The main issues are reasonably extensive rebar corrosion in some of the concrete frame legs, and edge concrete beams and poor condition in the block walls.

In the proposal, they say that the structural engineering strategy is to retain as much existing structure as possible and the engineers recommend:

- The existing concrete frame is retained and the frame treated re concrete repair / corrosion etc. The existing connections are to be checked and strengthened as necessary
- Some more extensive concrete repair / member replacement is needed on the more seriously corroded concrete members; mainly along gridline A
- Add ply sheeting / bed joint rebar in walls etc. to improve robustness of the concrete frame.
- New perimeter and internal load bearing walls with new foundations.
- New concrete floor slab is also to be constructed. (There is currently just an earth surface within the building).

In addition to these structural works, residential use of the Cattle Barn would also require wholesale changes to the building elevations, re-roofing and insertion of internal walls within the building. The elevational changes would require completely new cladding to most of the building, insertion of a large number of windows and creation of a new covered patio area.

By any reasonable assessment, all these changes to the buildings to enable residential use cannot be termed" re-use of existing buildings". They are major reconstruction of these buildings, necessitated by their current very basic structure and utilitarian wall/roofing materials , which were designed to enclose a large space for housing farm animals and storing grain .This large size also makes residential use difficult without large scale reconstruction works to bring in natural light.

(d) on the basis of the above matters , whether the proposals are, or are not, inappropriate development in the Green Belt

Accordingly, we are driven to the conclusion that these proposals clearly amount to major reconstruction of the farm buildings. This means that they constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should be refused planning permission.

Any other decision can only invite further proposals for major reconstruction of similar utilitarian farm buildings for residential use,

to the further detriment of the openness of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks District.

There are no very special circumstances in this case which would justify development of the reconstructed dwellings for residential use in this Green Belt location, which also forms part of the Kent Downs AONB (see below).

- 2. The proposed residential buildings by virtue of their prominent location , size and bulk, and poor quality design would introduce an incongruous and jarring element into the countryside, which would have a harmfully intrusive impact on the Kent Downs AONB landscape and would have a harmful impact on the rural character of the area**

The proposals would therefore be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework; policies SP1 and LO8 of the Core Strategy; and policies EN1 and EN5 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015)

The application site is part of an attractive chalk downland landscape in a dry valley which climbs westwards from Shoreham up the flanks of the Darent Valley towards the M25 motorway. The downland includes blocks of woodland and thick hedgerows, separated by large fields given over to grazing or cereal production. There is very little residential development in the vicinity, although opposite the application site are Hungrydown (a conversion of a traditional farm barn) and the former Timberden farmhouse.

The application site lies within the Kent Downs AONB, a nationally important landscape. National planning policy in NPPF paragraph 115 “gives great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas”

Local planning policy echoes the NPPF with policy EN5 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan stating that the highest standards of protection will be given to the Kent Downs AONB and that proposals there will only be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management plan guidance (in this case the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.)

Given its location in nationally important landscape, and the sensitivity of the site, we are very concerned about the absence of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with the application.

Securing good quality design in all new development is an objective

of both national and local planning policy, as indicated in paragraph 56 of the NPPF and policies SP1, LO8 and EN1 of the SDC Allocations and Development Management Plan.

SP1 states that " *All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated*" and LO8 that " *the visual quality of the landscape requires development to respect the countryside by having no detrimental impact upon landscape character*."

Policy EN1 state, inter alia, that " *proposals should create high quality design*" and meet a number of criteria including " *the form of the proposed development would respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area*".

We do not consider that the application proposals will meet these policy requirements in terms of conserving and enhancing the AONB landscape and providing high quality design which fits into its surroundings.

The application site is in a prominent location alongside a rural lane linking Shoreham with the M25 and settlements to the west. Immediately to the west of the application site is a well-used footpath (SR5) linking over to Shoreham. The roofs of the application buildings are visible at various points as the footpath climbs south up the valley side.

It is hard to see how the design of the proposed dwellings responds to the distinctive local character, or to the AONB landscape. This is because they are reconstructions of large utilitarian buildings and because the design of the dwellings has been driven by two factors wholly unrelated to either achieving good design, or responding to the cues provided by local character. These two factors are:

- (a) The over-riding desire to produce a proposal which is compliant with Green Belt policy over inappropriate development (which we think fails anyway) , which means that the design of the dwellings is highly constrained by the existing buildings

- (b) The existing buildings produce dwellings of a massive size and bulk and difficulties of achieving suitable fenestration and natural lighting. Addressing the latter issue has produced incongruous designs which detract from the character of this sensitive nationally important landscape.

The result is poor quality designs which do not respond to their surroundings, which do not conserve and enhance the AONB landscape, and which would have a harmful impact on the rural character of the area.

For all these reasons, we urge Sevenoaks District Council to withdraw this misconceived and harmful application or - if it is still referred to committee- to refuse it and maintain the integrity of the Green Belt and the AONB in this part of our parish.

No objection /No Comment X	
Further comments	
From Date	Shoreham Parish Council 19 July 2018
