

PLANNING COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Thursday 12th June 2014

Time: 10.00-11.15am

Place: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillors B Ashwood, Sir P Brown (substituting for K Reynolds), D Connor (Vice Chairman), D Jenkins, S Kindersley, A Lay, M Loynes (substituting for W Hunt) M Mason, J Reynolds (Chairman), J Scutt and M Smith

Apologies: Councillors B Hunt (Councillor Loynes substituting) and K Reynolds (Cllr Sir P Brown substituting)

66. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillors Hunt and K Reynolds. There were no declarations of interest.

67. MINUTES – 15 MAY 2014

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 15th May 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

68. SINGLE-STOREY EXTENSION AND PROVISION OF TWO ENCLOSED WALKWAYS, NEW PLAYGROUND AND EXTENSION TO CAR PARK AT: CAVALRY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CAVALRY DRIVE, MARCH PE15 9EQ FOR: CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LPA REF: F/2002/14/CC

The Committee considered an application for the erection of a five classroom single-storey extension, with new enclosed walkways on the existing buildings, new playground and car park extension. The outcome of consultations, planning policies, planning history and land use planning considerations were all taken into account. Plans and photos were shown, illustrating the location of the site, and the traffic issues on the roads adjacent to the school.

The Planning Officer advised Members that whilst the proposal was for a five classroom extension, there would only really be an increase in capacity of one classroom, as mobile classrooms were being removed. The only objections received were from two neighbours about traffic and parking on adjacent roads, specifically staff parking all day and parents parking inconsiderately when dropping off and picking up their children. The school car park for staff was already full utilised, but part of the proposal presented was to extend the school car park by eight places. It was clarified that the Fenland Local Plan did not contain any specific parking standards for schools. It was judged unlikely that the small increase in the capacity of the school would affect the number of vehicles parking on neighbouring roads.

Lisa Skinner, the applicant's agent, spoke in support of the application. She advised that:

- the school was increasing to meet the need for places from the area;
- the proposals also included a new hard surface play area and parking;

- there had been an extensive consultation exercise with the local community, and most of the feedback had been positive, especially around the playground;
- concerns had been expressed regarding the impact of additional staff on parking, but there would be no additional staff employed if the application was approved, but the proposals did include an additional eight staff parking spaces on site;
- the school had an up to date travel plan, and actively encouraged parents and children to walk or cycle to school;
- the feasibility of an additional access point to the school site was being investigated but this did not form part of this application.

In response to a Member question, the speaker reiterated that the proposal for the additional access point had emerged during the consultation, but this did not form part of the current application.

One Member commented that the roads adjacent to the school were already busy and congested at drop off and pick up times. Another Member pointed out that congestion and parking around schools at drop off and pick up times was regrettably a problem common to all schools, and not unique to this application.

At Members' request, the Education Officer - Policy, Planning and Review, spoke on future primary school provision in March. He confirmed that the schools were under pressure for more primary places, given development in and around the town, and increasing pupil numbers. However, if this application was approved, the authority did not see any further development taking place at Cavalry Primary School, as there was no scope to develop or expand the School further. It was likely that the sizable Hatchwood Park development planned for the south west of the town would warrant a new primary school, and the authority accepted this point.

The Committee resolved unanimously to approve the planning permission, subject to the conditions set out in **Appendix 1** to these minutes.

**69. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION SCHEME REQUIRED BY CONDITION 23 (ARCHAEOLOGY) OF PLANNING PERMISSION F/2010/05/CM – PROPOSAL BY HANSON BUILDING PRODUCTS TO CONTINUE THE IN-SITU PRESERVATION OF THE BURIED TIMBER PLATFORM SITE
LAND AT: MUST FARM QUARRY AND KING'S DYKE, PETERBOROUGH ROAD, WHITTLESEY
LPA REF: F/2010/005/CM**

The Committee considered a proposal by Hanson Building Services to supplement and continue with the mitigation strategy aimed at the preservation in situ of the preserved occupation deposits of a nationally important Late Bronze Age piled timber settlement platform at Must Farm Quarry.

Members received a presentation from the County's Senior Archaeologist, explaining the background to the proposal. The Committee noted that there were two usual approaches to dealing archaeological remains that came to light in the process of minerals extraction:

- preservation in situ - if the archaeology was highly significant, the preferred option was to preserve it in situ where it was possible to do so. This often had the effect of sterilising part of the development site, so the location of such preservation schemes requires considerable thought as they can sometimes make a development scheme unviable;

- preservation by record – whereby archaeological remains are investigated, recorded and analysed, with items displayed or archived for future research use, and the site results presented in technical reports and through publication. All archaeological needs having been met, site areas are then handed back for development which, in quarries, fully destroys any remaining elements that have been omitted from the focus of excavation.

Must Farm Quarry is situated on the Whittlesey fen edge, and is an active brick quarry, where brick clay, sand and gravel are extracted. The site is owned by Hanson Building Products Ltd (Hanson). In 2006 an archaeological site of national (and potentially international) importance was uncovered. The Timber Platform Site is just 300 metres from where eight Bronze Age log boats in an amazing state of preservation had been uncovered, and only 2 kilometres from the well-known contemporary archaeological site of Flag Fen.

The first part of the site to be discovered were the ash stakes which formed the top of the palisaded fence around an elevated settlement platform built on 3-4m long oak and ash piles. This settlement had caught fire in around 870BC, and the burning timbers and other fragile contents had fallen into the river beneath where they had quenched. Owing both to the fire charring many of the remains and the preserving qualities of the river silts into which remains fell, along with later sedimentation sealing the site, it was remarkably well preserved. Finds at the site included basketwork and other woven bast fibre items, glass beads, domestic metal artefacts and tools, rare textiles of international importance, pottery (some with vitrified food remains) and eel traps. The site was on the edge of a quarry that had been excavated in the 1960s, whose water filled pit had served as an abstraction reservoir used by local businesses and farms.

Members noted that since excavation and reburial of the site in 2007, a variety of problems had arisen which had threatened the integrity of the site, including:

- an extension of the site's clay bund, without archaeological agreement or acknowledgement, in order to build a haul road for internal transportation;
- changes to the hydrological and geochemical conditions on site, which risk the organic remains degrading at an elevated rate;
- a number of collapses and slippages along the unstable pit edge;
- the quality of ponded water from numerous unknown sources.

Hanson had proposed a test excavation and re-wetting strategy to preserve the site's contents and organic deposits, but consultation with English Heritage, the County Archaeologist and the University of Cambridge suggested that the proposed scheme was inappropriate (test excavation) and inadequate (re-wetting) and could not guarantee the long term preservation of the site owing to unfavourable preserving conditions demonstrated as present through hydrological and geochemical monitoring between the years 2007-2011. Interpretational disputes over the monitoring data led to the MPA commissioning independent advice from specialists from the National Museum of Denmark, authorities in this area of archaeological preservation, had also concluded that the recorded conditions existing within the cultural horizon in the past were not conducive to effective preservation in situ in this period. On receipt of this advice, English Heritage had advised that due to the unsustainable location and the condition of the site in the years 2007-2011 that the cultural horizon should be excavated to conserve the significance of these deposits.

The Mineral Planning Authority had received a letter from Hanson on 11th June, advising that they intended to withdraw this version of the "preservation in situ" archaeological mitigation scheme (i.e. the trial excavation and re-wetting scheme) and to present an amended strategy. This would be for a monitored re-wetting strategy without the test excavation. Hanson was also considering an alternative scheme on the basis of preservation by record,

given the difficulties of sustaining long-term preservation in situ, and this would be discussed further with key stakeholders at the Must Farm Review Panel meeting on 19th June.

Given the receipt of the letter from Hanson on 11th June, revised recommendations were tabled. Despite the withdrawal of the proposed amendment, in view of the national importance of the site, it was still considered appropriate for the Committee to express a view back to the applicant. It was noted that English Heritage had suggested that they may be able to offer a grant to the applicant owing to the exceptional circumstances of the site. Such an offer of financial support was unusual, and reflected the significance of deposits.

Members made the following comments:

- thanked the Senior Archaeologist for her fascinating presentation;
- noted the circumstances that had led to the potential degradation of the deposits, and whilst noting that some of these were beyond the control of the applicant, urged that developments with the archaeological strategy should continue to be closely monitored by the Committee, and a timely solution found;
- welcomed English Heritage's offer of financial support to the applicant;
- stressed the national and international importance of this site, and encouraged continued discussions between the applicant and other interested parties, such as English Heritage.

Councillor Kindersley moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Connor, that the Committee, having considered the matter, write to the applicant and advise that they were broadly supportive of excavation of the cultural horizon.

The Committee resolved unanimously to:

- (i) note and welcome the formal withdrawal of the revised re-wetting strategy submitted on 6th June 2013 and the intention of the applicant to consider alternative approaches in consultation with key stakeholders prior to submission of a revised scheme to the Mineral Planning Authority;
- (ii) agree that the applicant be advised that in considering the content of a future submission then they should give considerable weight to formally stated views of English Heritage on this matter;
- (iii) agree that in view of the importance the Council attached to the archaeology of the Timber Platform Site that the formal submission of an amended or alternative scheme be submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority and determined by the Planning Committee following consultation with key stakeholders and informed by a specialist third party as necessary;
- (iv) agree that Officers include an update report on the progress made with the preparation of an alternative scheme in three months' time as part of the regular Monitoring and Enforcement Update report to Committee;
- (v) write to the applicant to advise that having considered the matter, the Committee was broadly supportive of excavation of the cultural horizon of national importance at this site.

70. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 17th July at 10:00am

The Committee discussed the potential for a site visit to Must Farm and Flag Fen, and nearby waste facility sites.

Chairman

Planning Conditions for F/2002/14/CC

1. Expiration Date

The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Approved Plans and Documents

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents and drawings received 22 April 2014:

- Planning Statement
- Site Location Plan (received: 01 May 2014)
- Proposed Site Plan
- Constructors Site Set-Up Plan (received: 30 April 2014)
- Construction Method Statement
- Proposed Ground Floor GA Plan
- Proposed Roof Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Landscaping
- Proposed Landscaping Notes and Detail
- Soft Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan
- Site Biodiversity Strategy (received: 29/05/2014)

Reason: To define the site and protect the character and appearance of the locality in accordance with policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

3. Protection of breeding birds during construction

No removal of hedgerows or trees shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the county planning authority prior to any removal of vegetation.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and landscape protection in accordance with policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

4. Protection of trees during construction

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents and plans received 22 April 2014:

- Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment Preliminary Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan In Accordance with BS 5837:2012
- Tree Survey & Arboriculture Impact Assessment Plan– 3955-D

The protection and any other works to the trees shall be carried out in accordance with these approved details.

Reason: In the interests of landscape protection in accordance with policies LP16 and LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

5. Construction Hours

No construction work or demolition shall be carried out other than between 0800 hours to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, 0800 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

6. Construction Delivery Hours

No collection or deliveries to the site shall occur during the construction stages other than between 0700 hrs and 1900 hrs on Monday – Saturday and there should be no collections or deliveries on Sundays, Bank or public holidays.

During term time no collection or deliveries to the site shall occur between 0810 hrs and 0920 hrs and 1450 hrs and 1540 hrs Monday to Friday.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

7. Hard-Play Games Court

Prior to the construction of the building extension hereby permitted the proposed hard play area shall be marked out with the games court as indicated on the Proposed Site Plan (000-PE-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0004) and maintained as such.

Reason: To ensure the hard play area provides formal sports facilities to compensate for the loss of playing field, in accordance with policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

8. Playing Field Sports Pitch

Prior to the construction of the building extension hereby permitted the remaining playing field shall be marked out with a mini-soccer pitch measuring 60 yards x 40 yards (54.5m x 36.6m) and maintained as such (apart from during the summer term).

Reason: To provide a permanent sports pitch on the site, in order to compensate for the net loss of playing field provision on this site, in accordance with policy LP2 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.