

Development Control Committee

Tuesday 11 February 2020

7.00 pm in Council Chamber, The Cube, Corby

Present: Councillor Riley – Chair

Councillors Eyles, Latta, Watt, Brown, Sims, P Beattie, Ferguson, Dady & Addison

44. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

45. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests they may have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate whether this was prejudicial or non-prejudicial, the nature of any interest, and whether they intended participating in the relevant agenda item.

No declarations were made.

46. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Members were requested to approve the minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 16 December 2019, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that:-

The minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 16 December 2019 copies of which had been circulated to Members, be agreed as a correct record

47. Planning Applications

47.1 18/00617/DPA Part change of use of the existing Public House car park to enable the erection of a three bedroom dwelling. Creation of new access from School Lane to serve the dwelling and provision of a pedestrian link from the High Street AT Spread Eagle, 1 High Street, Cottingham.

This application had been to Committee on the 16 December 2019 and deferred subject to a site visit which had taken place today (11 February 2020).

Currently the application site was a Car Park for the Spread Eagle Public, the site was within the Cottingham and Middleton conservation Area.

Relevant policies had been considered, the officer had included an extract from the Cottingham and Middleton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Consultation had taken place with external consultees including Northamptonshire Highways Authority and Cottingham Parish Council, internal consultees included the Environmental Health Officer, Sustainability Officer and Conservation Officer, and all comments were contained within the report.

A site notice had been displayed and published in the Evening Telegraph and 23 neighbour notification letters had been sent with 20 representations being made, comments were included within the report.

The proposed development was considered acceptable in design, size and siting in relation to the site and this particular part of the Cottingham and Middleton Conservation Area. The officer's recommendation was to approve the application.

Mr Davison addressed the Committee giving a brief history of why there had been modifications around the five star junction including why buildings had been demolished to the East side of School Lane making way for a Car Park and the Spread Eagle Public House set back.

Mr Davison pointed out that the Highways Authority had objected and so this could be used to enforce a refusal of the application. At least three times in the last week the car park had been full and there were yellow lines on most areas of the five star junction, it was a fallacy to arrive at an average figure. The bay markings and splays were misleading particularly if large cars or vans were parking.

The only way to see if the car park was full would be to drive in and then have to attempt to turn round to leave if no parking was available, this was far from satisfactory.

Mr Davison had spent time talking to the Conservation Officer who did not object to the car park as such but to the lack of care shown by the owners. A constant theme in the NNJCS in the Corby Local Plan was the need for communities in villages to be understood and facilitated, the shop was about to close in 2018 as sales had dropped, partly due to the car park being closed.

The Committee could consider that it was difficult to justify removal of an amenity, whether in private ownership or not, in a village with severe parking difficulties. No-one had considered joint ownership of the area, Mr Davison had considered this essential to the safety and well-being of the village, and for this reason he asked that the Committee reject the application.

Cllr Thomas-George (Cottingham Parish Council) addressed Committee saying the Parish Council had lodged its main objections and concerns at a previous meeting, these had not changed, the proposed house would reduce parking for a growing business, and people were now coming in from an extended area and needed access to a car park.

Of the 70 or more documents uploaded to this application and it was clear that comments and disapproval outweighed any support. A recent upload was a parking survey which appeared to be carried out at 1am, the result was questionable.

Whilst agreeing with the length of the surrounding roads the width has not been taken into account, an example of this was that School Lane apparently had capacity for 58 parking spaces, parts of the lane were only 2.85m wide with the average width of a car being 1.9m, the users of some of the roads have to reverse to allow oncoming traffic through due to parked cars on the side of the road. The number of parking spaces stated without impact on road safety made the statistics untenable.

Cllr Thomas-George said that had this been in another part of the village the resident's responses would have been completely different. The Spread Eagle banner proudly displayed near the car park says 'Serving the Community', it was a sentiment hopefully reflected by Committee when considering the application.

Mr Trotter addressed Committee informing them he was a Conservation Architect and had taken care to design a scheme that integrated into its setting and addressing two important issues associated with the site.

Firstly the dangerous car park access directly onto a blind corner, the Cross being the convergence of five separate highways with the car park entrance making this six, Highways acknowledged that the removal of the access would be welcomed.

The second was the 'negative' space caused by removal of previous development leaving a large open car park.

Originally bounded on all five sides by roadside development now lost on two sides little had been done to disguise the tarmac.

Today Conservation Officers would not approve of the removal of original buildings or the negative space in the centre of the conservation area, the application would be a positive aspect on the five star crossing.

This was a private car park, the public do make use of the car park and would no doubt continue to use the reduced size car park, the car park was chained off for approximately 5 months before the Public House re-opened in 2018, it is a benefit but not essential. The landlord of the Spread Eagle currently rented the rear part of the car park and there would be no change to the operation of the Public House.

Some concerns had been made regarding the traffic survey but it was not something for laymen to challenge, Highways had accepted the findings. The proposal was within Planning Policy and had the support of the Planning Officers and should be approved.

Councillors questioned the fact the Highways Authority were against the application but had suggested conditions should the application go ahead, what were the benefits of the house to the viability of the Public House, this was a concern and could result in a loss of business.

The Development Management Manager explained that officers had to consider the application on its merits. Highways had not raised a strong objection, officers had to judge weighed against policy.

Councillors said they would like to be assured, the Conservation Officer's comments were an opinion and Councillors felt there would be a detrimental effect. Councillors said that the report suggested that the house would help the viability but that would be the applicants opinion.

The Development Management Manager advised that the viability of the Public House was not a planning consideration, however the site did in the opinion of Highways have some constraints.

Councillors were concerned about the width of the roads and that patrons would miss the entrance to the car park and park on the narrow lanes, concern was also raised about the size of the house proposed.

Councillor Sims proposed that the application be refused and was seconded by Councillor Brown.

The Locum Legal Officer (Planning) advised that there could be implications if Committee chose to go against the Officer's recommendation which could include costs and should there be an appeal hearing the proposer and seconder may have to attend.

RESOLVED that:

The application be refused on the grounds that there would be a significant problem regarding Highways.

- Entrance/exit on to narrow lane
- Reduction in parking spaces
- Surrounding lanes and roads have double yellow lines and are too narrow
- Five star junction would see restricted visibility
- Pedestrian visibility splays not shown
- Structure will be closer than 1m to the rear of the highway boundary in some places

48. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.