

LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held in the Abington Institute, Great Abington on Tuesday 3 August 2021 at 6:00pm.

Present Ms Pattinson (Chair), Mr Allum (RA), (VAA), Mrs Bolden (SB) . Mr Brunning (PB), Dr I Smith, Dr R Smith (RS), Mrs Dalton (Clerk).

There were two members of the public present. One in person and the other on Zoom

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Dr Archer.
- 2. Declaration of Interests.** PB and IS live opposite the site of the proposed Bancroft Farm development.

The Chairman agreed to change the agenda order so that application 21/03039/FUL Bancroft Farm, could be taken first.

3. Public Participation.

Bancroft Farm

The Parish Council had received four letters of objection to the application for the former farmyard at Bancroft Farm.

One member of the public presented his concerns about the application to the meeting. He said although he was supportive of the need to develop the site this proposal was not appropriate.

The key points were

- The reasons for refusing the previous planning application had not been fully addressed.
- Despite the revisions the proposed development would still impinge on the Protected Village Amenity site (PVAA)
- Loss of rural quality
- Erosion of the Conservation Area
- Detraction from the rural street scene & character
- Tree removal, risks to biodiversity and environmental damage

He noted several inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the documentation.

Offices on the site would be inconsistent with the character of the area. He queried the need for them given one office site in the village is being converted to housing and other office accommodation in nearby villages is vacant.

There would be a material change to the visual aspect and rural atmosphere. Trees would be removed and the view at the end of West Field would be a wall rather than fencing and trees as at present. Maps going back to 1886 clearly show an avenue of trees so do RAF aerial maps from the 1940s.

Drainage is a major concern that has not been addressed over many years. Flooding in Church Lane after the recent storm clearly demonstrated the need for this to be properly addressed.

IS addressed the meeting.

- She supported the views expressed by the previous speaker.
- Offices would be out of place in this part of the village.

- Parking provision was not adequate.
- Drainage is a significant concern. She also referred to the recent floods. A suitable detailed solution is required. Without it, development on the site with more hard standing would make it worse.

PB addressed the meeting.

- He was concerned about road safety and access particularly for the resident at 40 Church Lane . The corner is very dangerous and there does not seem to be enough space for safe manoeuvring.
- He also mentioned drainage. This is a longstanding issue. He suggested better management of drains and gullies at 43 Church Lane would help.
- Biodiversity - bats are often seen in gardens and around the church. It was a surprise that there was so little evidence in the 2019 survey. Removal of mature trees would destroy habitats and seemed to contradict SCDC's biodiversity priorities. Although a wild meadow was proposed it would need to be managed and it only offered a partial solution.

The representative from Cheffins responded.

- The boundaries of the PVAA had been verified with officers from SCDC.
- The tree survey was being revised.
- Trees and hedgerows could be included in addition to the wild flower meadow.
- Drainage - a water store will be included on the site.

There were no public representations for the other planning applications on the agenda.

PB and IS left the meeting.

Discussion and decision

- It was agreed it would be a pity to lose the visual aspect of a tree lined avenue
- The need and local demand for office space given the vacancy rate of offices nearby was queried. The Parish Council had recently reviewed a planning application to convert an office building to residential use.
- The confusion over the PVAA boundary was unhelpful.
- Concerns about parking arrangements in general, street parking and road safety .
- A tree protection plan is required. It was noted that a tree plan was promised although the application had already been published and was open for consultation.
- Arrangements for a pedestrian footway and access were queried
- The request for an archaeological survey was noted.
- Drainage must be adequately addressed
- The development would destroy the character of this part of Church Lane. The visual aspect to the church would be damaged by the loss of trees and the high wall on plot 6.

Although the Parish Council supported the need to do something with the site which has been neglected for several years it was felt that this proposal was not suitable. In particular it was not in keeping with the rural street scene and the housing opposite the site.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to oppose the application. The response is attached in Appendix 1

Both members of the public left the meeting.
PB and IS re-joined the meeting.

4. 21/03187/HFUL. 1 Ley Rectory Farm Barns, Hildersham Road. CB21 6BP

Conversion of storage barn to habitable rooms.

The Parish Council supported this application

5. 21/03070/HFUL 15 Bourn Bridge Road. CB21 6BJ.

Single storey side and rear extension and attached double garage to the front.

The need for alterations to enable disabled access were noted. There would be minimal impact on the street scene. The Parish Council supported the application.

The meeting closed at 7:10 pm.

Signed

Parish Council Chairman

APPENDIX Response Submitted 12 August 2021.

21/03039/FUL: Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington

Demolition of existing dilapidated agricultural buildings and hardstandings. Erection of five dwellings and the conversion of two redundant barns to form a detached dwelling and an office.

Recommended refusal

Little Abington Parish Council (LAPC) met to discuss this application on Tuesday 3 August 2021. Four letters of objection were received, and one member of a household summarised his objections at the meeting. We understand from the applicant that more information to support the application was being prepared. The Parish Council based its decision on the information that was available.

We welcome the revised layout to avoid infringing the PVAA, but there was a unanimous objection to the proposal for many of the same reasons as we gave in December 2019 and April and October 2020.

We agree that the Bancroft Farm farmyard site, which has been left to fall into disrepair and neglect, should be used for housing that meets the village's needs. Following consultation with residents, the site was identified as a potential small development of up to six dwellings suitable for downsizing. We did not envisage that it would be a mixed development of housing and offices.

Our objections can be summarised as follows:

- **Rural character:** The proposed site remains an overly dominant and prominent form of development in the conservation area where the hardcore appearance of roads, dwellings, carports and pavement and the inevitable loss of trees will detract from the current tree-lined vista towards the church. This was one of the principal reasons that the Planning Committee voted to refuse permission for the previous plans, and the present submission does not address this fundamental objection.

With the current increased emphasis on sustaining and indeed enhancing biodiversity and tree cover the grounds for objection are stronger. The rural character and sense of tranquillity of this Little Abington lane are a priceless asset that should not be destroyed.

- **Offices:** Retaining one barn as an office is unnecessary in the current climate where there is a move towards working from home and where office accommodation on Granta Park and in other villages nearby is unoccupied. Should the offices be occupied, we foresee the parking spaces allocated to office workers not being sufficient, assuming they travel to work by car, resulting in dangerous additional parking along Church Lane and near the blind corner close to the church.
- **Drainage and flooding:** The corner of Church Lane regularly floods after heavy rain (and was almost impassable following the storm on Tuesday 20 July). Despite the promise to include drainage systems on the site, plus dredging and clearing of ditches, we foresee the creation of more hard standing reducing the amount of land available for soakaway and increasing the risk of flooding.

Conditions

When an acceptable proposal has been submitted and approved, the following conditions would need to be included in the approval:

- Working hours restricted, given the proximity to residential property.
- Restricting delivery times given proximity to residential property and concerns about road safety.
- Routes for vehicles to and from the building site to be defined, given the narrow roads into and out of the village and concerns about road and pedestrian safety.
- Arrangements for building site parking because of concerns about parking on footways, parking on narrow roads, access to the church, and road and pedestrian/cyclist safety.
- Keeping the area clean and tidy and any mud and mess on the roads to be dealt with at the end of each working day.
- Arrangements for storing building materials.
- Tree protection for the mature trees that are to be retained – when confirmed.
- Consideration must be given to protecting the PVAA during the building works.
- Making good any damage to road surfaces, kerbs, pavements and verges as a result of the building work and the associated heavy traffic.