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MINUTES of the Meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE, held in RICKARDS HALL on Monday 28 September 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllrs A Baker, S Compton, A Damadoran (non-committee member), V Jennings, A Layland (Chairman), N Lloyd, M McArthur, S McGregor, A Read, and B Todd.

In attendance: Planning and Administration Officer, eight members of the public and no members of the press.

Meeting commenced 19:00.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllr Aldridge.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

None.

Meeting closed 19.03

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

A member of the public, a resident of Cedar Drive, stated that this new application was using This application is using a mixture of old and new documents that are full of outdated photos, inconsistencies, and contradictions. They asked how the applicant was able to review the current situation. Also the member of public commented that there was no need for new houses, and that those on the application did not suit the street scene and were being shoehorned into area between the existing homes and green spaces. The member of the public felt, and by Sevenoaks District Council's own admission, the shop was small and unfit for purpose. The Design and Access statement says - As the only shop located within the estate a larger and better maintained retail unit would be able to provide a far better service to the local community. They felt that it would it be more appropriate to treat the larger and better retail unit as a separate planning application. The parking restrictions on this application will cause a loss of 46 car parking spaces of which 38 are on Cedar Drive alone. They asked why parking restrictions could not have been brought in before. Would residents in Cedar Drive be expected to park elsewhere on the estate? This would make is difficult for young families and the elderly, and compromise the safety of women and the vulnerable, especially during the dark winter nights. Some spaces for the new houses contrary to Kent County Council's interim guidance note 3 have been allocated in the communal car park areas. As well as being contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the plans to build on open spaces and would be detrimental to the area, and would decrease the outside spaces by a third. Going on to refer to the 2019 bio diversity report, the member of public stated all species of life; animals and plants contribute to the economy and health and wellbeing and enriches the lives of residents. The feasibility Sound document for site 10 states that's its microphone damage was probably caused by badgers and foxes, that insect ingress had occurred and that significant birdsong was heard during their visits where would this wildlife go if these green spaces are built on and the trees cut down? The same document state that construction noise from St John's Way affected early measurements, so how will the noise of new house construction, increased disturbance an unacceptable impact on the estate. The estate will be forever changed by this overdevelopment.

A second member of the public spoke with regard to a view point from Greshams Way, stating they were concerned about the removal of trees T24; commenting that the removal of this tree would cause over shadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy and claimed that the very high elasticity of the soil would also cause structural issue with the houses in Greshams Way which was already a problem with the houses in Greshams Way due to the shrinkage and heave cause by another oak tree. The

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member of the public also stated that trees T15, T16, T21 were also being removed although all the trees mentioned had previously been assessed as having an estimated remaining 40 years life expectancy. Going on, the member of the public stated that the loss of open spaces would be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of children and adults living in the house with small gardens, and that the works would cause reduction in highways safety, and that the density of the additional houses would add to the parking issues on the estate and also commented that the safety of diagonal spaces had been questioned during the consultation and that it was hard to justify concern where numerous diagonal bays on the High Street are used with no issues in a busy 30 mph zone. They also commented that site 10 was a sensitive natural environment and provided a habitat for bats, owls, hedgehogs and many wild birds.

A third member of public stated that they were disappointed that in this new application the plans had not changed, except for the size of the shop. They stated that once the green spaces are all blocked off there would be nowhere to park. The area is always very flooded and would only leave a couple of spaces on site, at most 15 to 20 spaces. They stated that the green spaces should be left for the babies and children and that double yellow lines would rule out any advantage of the extra parking and they were disappointed, saying that the public had not been listened to in the consultation. They also asked whether Sevenoaks District Council future plans also include regeneration of Pine Grove and extra parking for Pine Grove and Park View.

Meeting opened 19.15

4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2021

Resolved: that the minutes of the Planning and Transportation Committee held on 20 September 2021 be duly signed by the Committee Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages xxxx to xxxx.

5. MATTERS NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

None.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

6.1. File No: [21/02825/FUL](#)

Site: **Tonys Corner Shop 18 Cedar Drive Edenbridge KENT TN8 5JL**

Description: Creation of seven off-street car parks; the erection of 13 dwellings; an extended replacement to the existing shop and associated landscaping improvements.

Recommendation: *Members objected to this application*

Members object to this application.

- *Parking - insufficient provision. There are also disparities in the application documentation. The Parking Note (PN) states 79 new communal spaces will be created, but the Design and Access statements states 71 new spaces. The PN (p5) alludes to the current parking capacity on the estate of 278 spaces, but uses a lower figure of 253 in its calculation for the average parking demand, together with an average of 49 cars parked inappropriately.*

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- *Poor Design. The drawings provided did not give sufficient information, giving the impression of being out of character with the existing setting.*
- *Site 10 would overlook Gresham Way exacerbated with the loss of the proposed tree removal.*
- *Overdevelopment of the site resulting in the loss of its green and open spaces. The size of the plot/estate already has more than sufficient housing on it. Adding more dwellings will constitute overdevelopment of the site and intensify the existing problems.*
- *Drainage and flooding issues. Whilst it is recognised that there is now a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) it is not clear if and how the recommendations will be implemented. The FRA confirms the site does lie within the Flood Zone 1. (The D&A says it is not in the flood zone.) There is also still no surface water policy.*
- *Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) points. In view of the net-zero policy by 2030, 6 EVCs does not seem sufficient for the size of the estate.*

Meeting Closed 19.21

A STATEMENT FROM A RESIDENT READ BY CLLR LAYLAND

I'd like to discuss the proposed developments at Stangrove Estate. A number of residents have been liaising with Sevenoaks District Council since 2018, when the original consultation took place. We also spoke with members of the Town Council in 2019 to express our concerns.

It is therefore unfortunate that, despite having been promised another consultation prior to a planning application being submitted, we have very limited time to respond. Less than half of the properties on Stangrove Estate have received consultation letters, and just a handful of site notices were placed, yet the development will affect all who live here.

While I'm grateful that some feedback has been taken into account from the initial consultation in respect to site 6 at Park View Close, this does not mitigate the 11 new dwellings planned for our open spaces. The overdevelopment of these recreational areas will mean the loss of a vital community asset.

Paragraph 97 of The National Policy Planning Framework states existing open space should not be built on unless the land has been shown to be surplus to requirements, or the loss would be replaced by a better provision. Unfortunately the planting of wildflowers and grass cannot compensate for this loss.

The plans also contradict SDC's Open Spaces Study (June 2018), which states there is a deficit of open space in the Sevenoaks District for children and young people. In addition, the amount of recreational space here is already below the recommendations outlined in the study.

There are inconsistencies in the cost schedule for the proposed developments. The cost to build 6 houses at Park View Close is £1.289 million but the cost for 5 units at Cedar Drive is £1.303 million. The average cost per parking space is vastly exaggerated, and the financial viability assessment states SDC is due to make a profit of over £495,000 on the scheme, yet the planning and access document states it is purely self-funding.

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The redevelopment of the shop is not only running at a loss for a retailer that receives minimum footfall due to its location – as outlined in the FVA – but it's also not architecturally in keeping with the estate. The design also infringes on the privacy of neighbouring properties.

There are also inconsistencies in the car parking audit and the number of new spaces offered. It is also based on outdated information which states a 3-bedroom house requires on average 1.5 parking spaces. First-hand evidence suggests a minimum of two spaces is required, with many homes on Stangrove Estate in possession of three or four cars.

The loss of open space on the estate is contrary to national planning policy, and SDC has not provided enough justification to demonstrate why an exception should be made. The proposed allocation has been driven by housing numbers and financial gains and is not based on sound planning merits. In addition, no cost-effective alternatives to the parking issues have been explored. Building more dwellings will compound these problems.

A STATEMENT FROM CLLR ALDRIDGE CLLR LAYLAND READ

Regarding the Stangrove Estate plans, my first thought is to make the same comment as I did to their previous incarnation: that I find it incredible that SDC submit plans to create 102 car parking spaces with only 6 electrical charging points between them (based on Rory Davis email 23 September), particularly given SDC's claim of a net-zero goal, and current national targets that are to have ceased sale of new petrol/diesel cars in under a decade.

The other thing that I've spotted is section 5.6.7 and 5.6.8 of which have been added in Revision A of the Design and Access Statement, and the drawing titled 21_02825_FUL-PARKING_NOTE-2772388, both of which I've attached to save you from having to find them on the SDC site.

They mentioned in passing that parking controls should be introduced along Cedar Drive with ... the loss of 38 spaces along Cedar Drive: Improving the traffic flow around Cedar Drive and making it safer would be a good result, but this slashes the total number of new parking spaces to just 33. Seen from the perspective of a resident on Cedar Drive, it results in the net loss of 8 parking spaces from their local vicinity.

The actual advice from KCC doesn't seem to have been included in the application, so it's not possible to understand whether this is something that must happen anyway, or something that is needed to facilitate the Site-10 development.

Meeting opened 19.30

- 6.2 File No:** [21/02936/FUL](#)
Site: Shefts Croft Mill Hill Edenbridge KENT TN8 5DB
Description: Two storey extension to existing building, known as The Stables, with conversion into a "Cat Clinic" for ancillary use to the main Veterinary Practice. Roof and fenestration alterations.

Recommendation: *Members supported this application.*

7. INFORMATION

7.1 – Noted

8. SDC PLANNING DECISIONS

Received and noted – items 8.1 to 8.3.

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9. OTHER PLANNING BUSINESS

None

10. PRESS RELEASE – None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 11 October 2021

Meeting closed 20.00