

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING 31st August 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs K Woodrow (in the Chair), Mr A Hall, Mrs K Overbury and Mr A Varley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Johnson and Mr S Ahmed.

1. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A list of planning applications received since the previous Committee meeting had been circulated.

Councillor A Varley declared an interest on application 21/03156/FUL 90 Errington Road, Darras Hall, Ponteland NE20 9LA. Proposed reconstruction of residential house by adding an upper floor. Councillor Varley did not take part in any discussions about this application.

1.1 Application No: 21/02437/OUT, Location: Land North West of Farm acres, Western Way, Darras Hall Ponteland NE20. Proposal: Outline Application for construction of up to 65 affordable dwellings comprising a mix of family homes, starter homes, bungalows and retirement living apartments; creation of new access and associated landscaping works – details of access, layout, scale and landscaping submitted at this stage with details of appearance reserved for later approval.

Objection: Ponteland Town Council object to the proposed development.

Planning law requires that decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The primacy of the development plan is reaffirmed in paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The policies within the statutory development plan that are relevant to the consideration of this application are contained within the:

- Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan (2017- PNP); and
- Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003 - CMDLP).

The NPPF and the emerging Northumberland Local Plan (NLP), as well as its evidence base, are material planning considerations.

It is noted that the applicant has not submitted a planning statement or draft heads of terms for a section 106 agreement, to confirm that the affordable housing will be retained in perpetuity. These are both requirements of the county council's validation checklist. The application should not have been validated without these documents.

Principle of development

The application site lies within the Green Belt and outside the Ponteland settlement boundary. As criterion 'f' of policy C17 of the CMDLP only allows for limited affordable housing for local community needs within existing settlements, it is out of date as it does not accord with the NPPF. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF does not require affordable housing for local community needs to be within existing settlements. However, it is clear from the provisions of the NPPF and the CMDLP that the affordable housing on sites within the Green Belt must be limited. The NPPF explains that affordable housing in the Green Belt includes rural exception sites.

Rural exception sites are defined within the NPPF as small sites. Whilst 'small' is not specifically defined, major development is identified as comprising ten or more homes or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. It is therefore submitted that the proposed development of 65 homes on a 2.34-hectare site cannot be considered limited affordable housing or a rural exception site. It is therefore inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF is clear that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be allowed except in very special circumstances. The applicant has not sought to define very special circumstances, the proposal is therefore contrary to the requirement of 147 of the NPPF.

Policy HOU7 of the emerging NLP includes several criteria that must be met for the development of small rural exception sites, which are adjacent or well related to an existing settlement, to be supported. These criteria are:

- a. The local need for affordable housing is clearly justified and evidenced in an up-to-date local housing needs assessment or other evidence of local housing needs verified by the Council as being necessary to meet local community needs for households who are either current local residents or have an existing family or employment connection to the particular area in which the development is proposed to take place;
- b. The affordable housing is secured in perpetuity through a Section 106 agreement;
- c. The development is well-related to local services and facilities, including those outside the settlement where the development is proposed to be located; and
- d. The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the settlement in which it takes place and does not unjustifiably adversely impact on the natural, built and historic environment.

PTC believe that the proposed development does not accord with the requirements of policy HOU7 for several reasons.

The proposal is not for the development of a small rural exception site:

Paragraph 7.45 of the NLP explains that rural exception sites seek to help address pressing affordable housing needs of rural communities, by enabling the release for development of small sites that would not normally be used for housing. It is stated that in the context of the NPPF, small sites are those less than 0.5 hectares in size or comprise less than 10 dwellings. As above, given the size of the site and the scale of the development, the proposal does not meet the definition of a small rural exception site.

The local need for affordable housing is not justified:

An interim housing needs assessment report, prepared by Arc4, dated May 2021, accompanies the planning application. Whilst the report provides information on house types, prices and income levels it presents very little information on genuine local housing need.

Paragraph 4.6 states that housing registers are likely to under-estimate the level of local need. This is a completely opposed view to the statement of the same consultants, within the Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (2018). Paragraph B3 of appendix B states: 'Housing Register data and data on affordable housing lettings provides an appropriate source of data from which a robust assessment of need can be calculated'.

PTC consider that all the information provided within the interim report is based on Arc4 estimates rather than robust evidence of need. Policy HOU7, criterion '2a' has therefore not been met.

No clear evidence that the affordable housing will be secured in perpetuity:

Criterion '2b' requires that affordable housing must be secured in perpetuity through a section 106 agreement, no details have been provided as part of the application submission

that this will be the case. Therefore, the proposed development does not accord with this requirement.

Not well related to local services and facilities:

Whilst Ponteland is identified as a main town within the NLP, it is acknowledged that it does not have as wide a range of services as other main towns within Northumberland. The application site is on the most southerly edge of Ponteland. Most services and facilities are located within the village centre, this is 4.2km to the north. There are a limited number of services and facilities located within the Darras Hall Local Centre. The submitted transport statement highlights that Darras Hall Primary School, GP surgery, dentist, pharmacy, convenience store and post office are between 1.8km and 2km from the application site.

It is suggested within the transport statement that future residents would walk to access these services and facilities. Given the distance involved, this is strongly disputed by PTC. Furthermore, whilst there are bus stops close to the application site, the services provided are very limited.

Inappropriate scale of development:

Criterion '2d' of policy HOU7 requires the development to be in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the settlement. PTC believe that the density of the development is too great and that this, alongside the proposed site layout does not reflect that of adjacent properties. This inappropriate scale and layout of development also conflicts with the requirements of neighbourhood plan policy PNP2.

PTC therefore submit that the principle of the proposed development is in clear conflict with the requirements of both the NPPF and the NLP.

Other matters

Green approach:

The PNP identifies several green approaches to the village, these are an important characteristic that contribute to local distinctiveness. The east of the application site, on Western Way, as well as to the south, on Stamfordham Road, are identified as green approaches. Policy PNP12 supports development which would not significantly adversely affect the character and amenity created by the grass verges, trees and hedgerows in these areas.

PTC note that very limited landscaping is proposed as part of the development. It is therefore considered that this, alongside the scale and layout of the development, would significantly adversely affect the character and amenity of the green approaches along both Western Way and Stamfordham Road, conflicting with policy PNP12.

Highway impact:

PTC note the information provided within the submitted transport statement. However, it is considered that because of the scale of the development, the number of cars that would result and limited access to public transport, the development is likely to have severe impacts on traffic flows. This would be contrary to the requirements of neighbourhood plan policy PNP 29, paragraph 111 of the NPPF and NLP policy TRA2.

PTC are therefore opposed to the proposed development because of its conflict with the development plan and other material considerations. The application should therefore be refused.

1.2 Application No: 21/03154/FUL, Location: Lakeside House, Ponteland Newcastle upon Tyne NE20 9HP Proposal: alterations to dwelling house to include:

1. Removal of existing bay windows to south elevation and construction of two-storey entrance lobby.
2. Creation of double-height entrance hall and associated internal alterations.
3. Amendments to window positions, replacement of rotten window frames with high-performance powder-coated metal-framed windows.
4. Repositioning of existing and introduction of new projecting eaves-style dormer windows with stone mullions and traditional rolled lead roofs.
5. Conversion of existing garage to create much-needed utility, laundry and boot rooms including in-filling of void to swimming pool below.
6. Construction of single-storey kitchen extension of circa 23sqm.
7. Alterations to existing stairwell, removal of catslide roof and construction of flat roof with roof light with stone parapet to perimeter to improve head-height and natural light in stairwell.
8. Introduction of through-colour render to courtyard internal elevations.
9. Construction of new garage block, formation of parking courtyard to obscure cars and construction of stone connection building.
10. Demolition of existing timber outbuildings to facilitate construction of new equipment/tractor sheds due north of existing.
11. Alterations to driveway where it reaches house to create improved arrival sequence and guest parking.

Comment: The Planning Committee would like to comment on this application and would like the concerns of the neighbours noted regarding the access road. The Committee is also hopeful that the small bridge over the river Pont will be strong enough to handle the additional weight and traffic this development will bring.

1.3 Application No: 21/02706/FUL Location: Land east of Abbotswood, Ponteland Northumberland. Proposal: Proposed erection of 4 birth garage and accommodation for season workers.

Objection: Ponteland Planning Committee object this is planning application as it is contrary to the NPPF policy 13. Protecting Green Belt land.

147. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

148. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

149. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

(a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

The Committee believes that a substantial two-storey seasonal workers dwelling that will only be used for a few weeks per year is not acceptable in this case and is not classed as “very special circumstances”

Morpeth district local plan Policy C17 development involving the construction of new buildings in the green belt will not be permitted, other than for the following purposes: a) agriculture and forestry.

The Committee believes that a substantial two-storey seasonal worker dwelling that will only be for a few weeks per year is not acceptable in this case.

The Planning Committee have concerns that the proposed dwelling might not be solely used for seasonal workers. A building of this size and style could easily be converted into, and used as, a holiday let. These premises are prominently in the Green Belt and, therefore, subject to extra planning restrictions. Ponteland Town Council will aim to protect the Greenbelt wherever possible.

The Committee feel that the accommodation “Abbotswood Lodge” would have the potential for use for seasonal workers, with the appropriate permissions, if accommodation is necessary. The Committee feel that the need for further, substantial accommodation to be built in the Greenbelt has not been proved.

The Planning Committee also seek clarity concerning the nature of this business as the application form states it is used as a paddock and then unknown. However, neighbours believe it is a fruit growing business.

The Committee believes that the applicant should provide further information about the work of the seasonal workers and why four garages would be required.

The concern for flooding is also an issue on this application and The Planning Committee would like this referred to the LLFA for their expertise and consultation.

Ponteland Town Council would like to see this application REFUSED.

1.4 Application No: 21/03134/FUL, Location: The Farmhouse, Callerton Grange farm Stamfordham Road NE15 9RD. Proposal: Erection of dwelling house (retrospective).

The Planning Committee have requested an extension on this application and deferred it to the next meeting on the 14th September 2021.

1.5 Application No: 21/03165/FUL, Location: 9 The Rise, Darras Hall, Ponteland NE20 9LJ Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension; porch; various internal alterations; attic conversion with dormer window.

The Planning Committee have deferred this application to the next meeting on the 14th September 2021.

1.6 Application No: 21/03256/FUL, Location: The Dairy, High Callerton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE20 9TT. Proposal: Proposed home office/studio to first floor area of existing garage.

The Planning Committee have deferred this application to the next meeting on the 14th September 2021.

The Committee made no comments about the other 8 applications considered.

2. DECISIONS: APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS; WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

2.1 DECISION: 21/02155/FUL, 5 Eastern Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9PE.

Proposed partial demolition of existing garage and extension to provide double garage.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 17th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.2 DECISION: 21/02210/FUL, 23 Ryehaugh, Ponteland NE20 9BA. Proposed construction of a two-storey side extension, two storey rear extension and single storey extension to front elevation.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 18th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.3 DECISION: 21/00763/FUL, 14a Hawthorn Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20.

Proposed two storey front extension, external alterations to windows and forming of rear patio door.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 18th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.4 DECISION: 21/01705/FUL, Kildale, Medburn, Ponteland, NE20 0JE. Proposed replacement of existing dwelling with two detached dwellings and associated garaging (renewal of consent 13/03840/FUL and previously renewed consent 17/01089/FUL.

Permission **REFUSED** under delegated powers on 19th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.5 DECISION: 21/01332/FUL, 21 The Rise, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9LH. Proposed conversion of dormer bungalow to two-storey dwelling house, including raising of roof and construction of rear extension. Addition of a stone chimney with the house finished in

a white render and a slate roof. Removal of garage pitched roof and replaced with a flat roof and lantern window and erection of a greenhouse (amended description 11.06.21)

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 23rd August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.6 DECISION: 21/02143/FUL, 20a North Road, Ponteland, NE20 9UH. Proposed single storey rear extension.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 23rd August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.7 DECISION: 21/01972/ADE, Ponteland War Memorial Hall, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9NX. Proposed advertisement consent for full colour digital graphic screen with external display.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 24th August 2021. The Committee had made an objection about this application.

Objection: The Planning Committee objects to this application as it is contrary to the NHP policy PNP 1 (d) Have regard to protecting or enhancing the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

Policy PNP 7: Heritage Assets and Advertisements Applications for advertisements affecting heritage assets or their settings will be supported where their size, scale, proportions, design, colour, position, number, materials and illumination do not detract, either individually or cumulatively, from the significance of the heritage asset or its setting.

Policy PNP 9: Canopies and Awnings Proposals for the installation of canopies and awnings will be supported where they would not have a significant adverse impact on the general nature and character of the locality and the appearance of the building and the street scene, especially where the building or area is a heritage asset.

The Planning Committee feels that the plan would not be in-keeping with the area and inappropriate as it is in front of a war memorial, which is a place for peace and reflection and where Memorial services are held. The committee feels that a full colour, digital graphic display would be disrespectful and a dangerous distraction to drivers on the very busy Darras Road, in an area well-used by pedestrians, given its proximity to Ponteland Park, Main Street and the shops. The Planning Committee would like to see this application refused.

2.8 DECISION: 21/01925/FUL, 91 Errington Road, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9LA. Proposed extension to tiled roof (in place of existing flat roof) canopy and garden structure.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 25th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.9 DECISION: 21/02185/FUL, 26 Willow Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9RF. Proposed single storey extension.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 26th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.10 DECISION: 21/01135/FUL, Plot 5 land of North East of Haven Lodge, The Avenue Medburn Ponteland, NE20. Proposed detached dwelling and detached garage (as amended 04/06/2021)

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 27th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.11 DECISION: 21/01950/FUL, Plots 2 and 3 Land North of Haven Lodge, Prospect Farm, The Avenue Medburn Ponteland, NE20 0JD. Proposed detached dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping (plots 2 & 3)

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 27th August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

2.12 DECISION: 21/01723/FUL, 6 The Crescent, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9AL. Proposed conversion of existing car port into bedroom and ensuite. Construction of a new car port.

Permission **granted** under delegated powers on 31st August 2021. The Committee had made no comment about this application.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 It was decided that Councillor K Overbury and A Hall would attend the Licence hearing from the Rialtos application on separate days. A letter of attendance has been sent to Northumberland County Council and an information pack sent to both Councillors.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 14th September 2021