



Midhurst Town Council

A Meeting of the Planning and Infrastructure Committee took place on
Monday 11th October 2021 at 6.45pm at The Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr D. Coote, Cllr R. Watts, Cllr C. Lintott, Cllr J. Sutton, Cllr G. McAra, Cllr G. Upjohn, and Cllr D. Fraser

Officer: Julian Quail, Assistant Town Clerk

Also Present: Sharon Hurr, Town Clerk and RFO

P/169/21 – Apologies for Absence –Cllr M. Purves.

P/170/21 - Declarations of Interest – None

P/171/21 - To approve Minutes of Meeting Held on 27th September 2021

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Watts, seconded Cllr Sutton, unanimously agreed.

P/172/21 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27th September 2021 - None

P/173/21 - Public Participation Session - There was no public participation. Meeting Reconvened.

Cllr Fraser arrived at 18:55

P/174/21 - Planning Applications

174.1 SDNP/21/04615/FUL

Development of a residential care home (Uses Class C2) and part reconfiguration of the existing car park.

The Grange Development Site Bepton Road Midhurst West Sussex GU29 9HD

Decision: Midhurst Town Council is unable to support this application for the following reasons:

1. The building is of a dominating appearance, with considerable bulk that rests uneasily on this site.
2. The building materials proposed do not reflect those of a market town, in a conservation area, in a National Park. The proposed brick selection is poor and introduces a new and unwanted element to the mainly homogenous appearance of the town centre. The grey pointing is a further step in the wrong direction.
3. The metal cladding is a poor choice in the building's appearance. The similarly clad Grange Centre, adjacent to the proposed building, illustrates how badly metal cladding can deteriorate. Similarly, the cladding is a poor material to withstand knocks, scratches and other treatment. In essence, instead of the building enhancing the town and the National Park over the coming years, it may well have a deteriorating appearance.

4. The possible artificial slate roof, given the sensitivity of its size, is inappropriate. Roofing is important in a market town, with Norman and Tudor precedents, as the National Park discovered with its own roofing problems.
5. The proposed recessed grey aluminium powdered windows and grey doors are a very poor substitute for doors and windows that reflect the location in a conservation area, in a National Park, adjacent to a group of building of architectural interest.
6. The proposed 69 units will place a stress on the water resources and drainage infrastructure. This is unfortunate, at a time when Natural England has essentially asked for a moratorium on planning applications in the Rother/Arun catchment area. The moratorium will allow Natural England to assess the balance of water resources in the area.
7. Despite the suggestion of more parking on the site, the number of the car parking spaces on the applicant's premises (real or implied) may result in less public parking.

General comments

We also focus on two related issues regarding this application.

1. There will be considerable difficulty in attracting the proposed 80 full time staff equivalents, given the major shortage of affordable housing to buy or rent in the area. At best this may mean that the bulk of staff will have to commute, probably long distances, which is not appropriate in this time of major carbon emission reduction. There is also a real danger that staff poaching might result in the closure of two locally based residential homes, which cater for the local market and are currently tight for staff. It would be ironic if a new large care home, selling into the wealthier London and South East market resulted in the loss of long-term local care and residential facilities in the Midhurst area.
2. The nature of the care home use will cause major stress on the medical and support facilities in the area. These are already in a fragile state and given the possible nature of the likely residents, could affect the services to the wider population.

Finally, at one stage in September 2020, according to the Midhurst and Petworth Observer, the applicants had appointed a heritage architect, Yiangou Architects of Cirencester, to design a building worthy of its location. This does not appear to have happened and it is useful to note on the current, Newcastle based architect's web site there are a number of buildings using similar bricks, cladding, colours and recessed windows. Indeed, the application at the Grange appears to be a bit of a cut and paste exercise for a Tyneside residential home currently being built.

Cost and convenience have clearly taken the priority in this planning application and it does nothing to enhance this important site in the South Downs National Park.

P/175/21 – Decisions

These were noted with no comments.

P/176/21 – Actions

The actions were provided to the committee before the meeting. There was one outstanding action and the Assistant Clerk confirmed that he would engage with Tesco's as soon as possible.

P/177/21 - Matters of Report – None

Cllr McAra informed the meeting that he was due to meet with Penny Plant, CDC's Cabinet Member for the Environment, and Barbara Coote from the South Pond Group on Friday 15th October to discuss what could be done to transform South Pond over the next 2-3 years.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.25pm.

Signed: Date:.....

Chairman