



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### **Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held in the Methodist Church Hall, 17 West End Road, Mortimer RG7 3TB on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 @ 6.30pm**

#### **Present:**

##### **Councillors:**

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. D. Butler, Cllr. M. Dennett, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden and Cllr. J. Wells (arrived 6.40pm)

##### **Public/Press:**

There were three members of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

#### **Part I**

##### **22/0205 Public Session (for agenda items only)**

No discussion took place at this point but would be part of discussion on 23/00072/RESMAJ under item 22/0211 below.

##### **22/0206 Apologies**

None.

##### **22/0207 To receive any declarations of interest**

None.

##### **22/0208 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 were received and APPROVED for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

##### **22/0209 Items to be taken into private session**

None.

##### **22/0210 Current Projects**

The following updates on current projects were received:

**a. Tower House Farm (previously referred to as MOR006: Land south of Tower Gardens) Planning Application**

This was discussed as part of 23/00072/RESMAJ: Land South of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, West Berkshire (below).

**b. Tower House Farm (previously referred to as MOR006: Land south of Tower Gardens) Biodiversity and Green Space**

This was discussed as part of 23/00072/RESMAJ: Land South of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, West Berkshire (below).

**c. Mortimer Station Car Park Planning Application**

Cllr. Geary met with Great Western Railways to move forward on aspects of potential funding and planning pre-conditions. They wanted to meet with Englefield Estate, as the landowners, at a later date to look at any next steps and then report from the meeting and the working party at a future Committee meeting.

## **22/0211 Schedule of Planning Applications**

Cllr. Morsley proposed to move the order of applications as listed on the agenda to facilitate a longer discussion on 23/00072/RESMAJ.

Seconded by Cllr. Hill

**AGREED** unanimously.

The following applications were discussed in this order:

### **23/00245/CERTE: 2 Church Farm Barns, The Street, Mortimer, Reading, RG7 3LQ**

Residential use of an infill extension to connect the main household to the garage.

**SMPC Comments:** No objections.

### **23/00400/HOUSE: 58 The Avenue, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3QX**

Reduction of size and scope on previously granted proposal. Single storey rear extension, first floor extension with car port below and demolition of current garage.

**SMPC Comments:** No objections.

### **23/00390/PASSHE: 16 Windmill Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3RN**

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Larger Home Extension; Construction of a single storey rear extension. Dimensions 6.5m from rear wall, 3m maximum height, 2.9m eaves height.

**SMPC Comments:** No objections.

### **23/00072/RESMAJ: Land South of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, West Berkshire**

Approval of reserved matters following Outline Permission 19/00981/OUTMAJ [Section 73: Variation of condition 6-approved plans of approved application 17/03004 /OUTMAJ: Matters seeking consent: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale.

The Committee discussed details of the proposed retaining wall including asking questions of Mr. Steve Davies (T.A. Fisher) and taking comments from Mr. Pat Wingfield and District Councillor G. Bridgman (West Berkshire Council).

**SMPC Comments:**

- SMPC are very pleased with the planting and seeding program and the tree and shrub palette.

- SMPC strongly approve the recent change to the central access path from mown grass to hoggins and the addition of low safety railing around the ponds.
- With regard to the proposed retaining wall, SMPC object on the ground of appearance, safety (including the danger to adults and children of a 5 m high wall from aspects both above and below), and future maintenance. Concern was raised as to whether the structural integrity of the wall could be affected by permitted development which involved digging foundations in rear gardens adjacent to the wall. In particular, the current planning committee would not wish to recommend adoption of the open space by SMPC in the future because of this extensive wall. From the site visit we have understood that similar walls will be proposed around the south side of Phase 3. These are not on the current drawings for this application or 23/00297/RESMAJ but really should be considered together.
- The top of the wall is (of necessity) at approximately the same altitude throughout its length. The height of visible face of the wall therefore depends on the existing ground levels. Behind plot 51 the maximum height of the wall is 5.0 m with a considerable length above 4 m. Behind plots 54 /55 the maximum height is 3.8 m but with a considerable length above 3 m. The large heights are the main basis of our objections above.

Policy SDB1 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan starts that:

“The Site will develop a high quality development in accordance with the following parameters:”

One of those parameters states:

“Incorporate areas of useable, accessible open space, utilising the natural topography to create a 'soft' edge to the residential development with attractive views into and from the surrounding countryside.”

The proposed wall does not meet the second part of that sentence.

- Had the necessary difference in heights been solved, for example, by a short length of steeper slope covering the wall face, SMPC would have likely come to a different conclusion.

### **23/00297/RESMAJ: Land South of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, West Berkshire**

Application for Approval of Reserved Matters for the residential development of phase 3 comprising 52 dwellings including affordable housing, public open space and associated landscaping following Outline Approval 19/00981/OUTMAJ Matters to be considered: Appearance landscaping and scale.

It was agreed Cllr. Morsley would ask West Berkshire Council for an extension to submit comments on this application in order to enable the Committee to consider the proposal in detail at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

# The Chairman, Cllr. Morsley, proposed to close the meeting early as not enough time left for further discussion on 23/00297/RESMAJ and remaining agenda items.

AGREED unanimously.

## **Close**

Meeting was closed at 7.20pm

**22/0212 Items for information only**

Items will be taken to next meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

**22/0213 Communications**

Item not covered.

**22/0214 Future Agenda Items**

Any items will be taken to the next meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

**22/0215 Exclusion of Press and Public**

Not required.