

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Tuesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.00pm held by Zoom



Present: Councillor P Hanlon (Chairman)
Councillor A Brown (Vice Chairman)
Councillor J Crooks
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor D Smith
Councillor L Smith
Councillor A Stinchcombe

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mayor John Burns
Councillor Paula Fox
Councillor Joe Mason
Councillor Elaine McManus
Colin Poole, Town Clerk
Vicky Phillips, Assistant Clerk

There were 5 members of the public present.

Welcome:

Councillor P Hanlon welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being recorded.

ACTION

P21 Apologies for Absence

/036 The above apologies of absence were noted.

P21 Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensation

/037 Councillor J Mason declared an interest in item P21/042 – Item 3, being a resident of Boyton Hall.
Councillor E McManus declared an interest in item P21/042 – Item 3, being a resident of Boyton Hall.
Councillor P Fox, declared an interest in item P21/042 – Item 2, being a neighbour of the applicant.
All members of the planning committee declared an interest in item P21/042 – item 8, the applicant is a member of staff at Haverhill Town Council

P21 Minutes of the Meetings held 16th February 2021

/038 Councillor A Luccarini proposed and Councillor J Crooks seconded that the minutes of the meeting held 16th February 2021 were approved as a true record by show of hands. All in favour

RESOLVED

P21 Matters arising from the Previous Minutes

/038 None

P21 Street Naming, NW Haverhill

/039 Following on from an email received from West Suffolk Council (circulated to members) requesting further suggestions for street names at NW Haverhill, members requested the Clerk to contact West Suffolk Council to enquire as to whether all the names previously supplied have been allocated and whether any had been rejected.

VP

P21 Public Forum on planning matters other than applications before the committee

- /040**
- i. Item P21/032 Item 3, Persimmon Homes application DC/21/0110/RM, notes of objections from members of public for this application have been attached to the minutes, (appendix ii)
 - ii. Councillor J Burns reported that a prior approval application has been submitted to West Suffolk Council for a change of use from office to residential on the industrial estate at Rookwood Way, Haverhill. Councillor J Burns recommended that this would set an unwelcome precedent and have a serious impact on neighbouring units. Councillor J Crooks advised that this was for Officer assessment and that he was unable to call it in, however he would share with the Town Council when it becomes available. The committee had serious concerns over this application, it was therefore proposed by Councillor T Brown and seconded Councillor D Smith that the Clerk contact West Suffolk District Council to request that this application be put before the planning committee.

VP

RESOVLED

- iii. Councillor J Mason, reported that a ditch has appeared at the Persimmon site, which followed the line of the proposed relief road. The ditch is quite hazardous and deep and asked the committee if they knew whether this was to code? No members were aware of this ditch.

P21 Planning Applications determined by the Clerk and Chair under Delegated Powers (List A attached)

/041 None

P21 Planning Applications currently before West Suffolk District Council and received by publication of agenda (List B attached)

/042 Applications determined by the Committee are shown on List B attached to the Minutes, see Appendix (i)

P21 Matters to Report

- /043**
- Councillor J Burns reported that there had been two fires at the ex-Vixen Pub on the Chalkstone Estate in the last 36 hours. Councillor Burns has written again to West Suffolk Council chasing the Enforcement Officer regarding this building. The Building Standards Team and the owner of the building were in attendance today regarding boarding the building up. West Suffolk Council building services team have stated that the *“condition of the building does not fall in the ambit of being a dangerous*

structure as defined in building control legislation'. Councillor Burns has written back to them to say that due to the condition of the building, there is a likelihood of someone being hurt or worse. The building is un-sightly and considered by the Fire Brigade following a past fire to be dangerous.

- The Fox Pub: Councillor Burns reported that he will be withdrawing his objections on the basis that Highways will be only allowing a 'left in, left' access to the site.

It was agreed by the Committee that due to this updated information from Highways that the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Chairman and Mayor meet with Hen Abbott, SCC Highways, to discuss under delegated powers.

PH, VP

P21 Date of next Meeting

/044 The next meeting of the Planning Committee will be 22nd March 2021

P21 Closure

/045 The meeting was closed at 8.45pm

Signed
Chairman

Date.....

Appendix (i)

List A – Approved by Chairman and Clerk under delegated powers

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION

List B – Considered at the Committee Meeting

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION
11.02.21 Expires 04.03.21	1	DC/20/2217/FUL	a. one dwelling b. parking space for 74 High Street Mr Cuong Duy Dang	Plot rear of 74 High Street	
<p>STRONGLY OBJECT</p> <p>The current Nail Bar, which is now occupying 74 High Street, was granted permission with Conditions that the four parking spaces at the rear were for the purpose of loading, manoeuvring and parking of vehicles, thereafter these areas shall be retained and used for no other purpose. The proposed bungalow will be built over these parking spaces.</p> <p>Overdevelopment of the site. The proposed bungalow is shown to be directly adjacent to the neighbouring boundary with no or very little space between the building and the boundary.</p> <p>Safety In the event of a fire, there is insufficient space between the boundary wall and the building to allow an escape from any exit other than the front door.</p> <p>Insufficient parking</p> <p>Reiterate Highways objections.</p>					
15.02.21 Expires 08.03.21	2	DC/21/0183/HH	Single storey side and rear extension Longland	2 Earls Green	NEUTRAL
16.02.21 Expires 09.03.21	3	DC/21/0110/RM	Reserved Matters – submission of details under outline planning permission SE/09/1283 – the means of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of 127 dwellings, together with associated private amenity space, means of enclosure, car parking,	Land NW of Haverhill, Anne Sucklings Lane, Little Wrating	See below

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION
			vehicle and access arrangements together with proposed areas of landscaping and areas of open space for a phase of residential development known as phase 2b Mr Stuart McAdam, Persimmon Homes (Suffolk)		
<p>OBJECT: The Town council support the material objections raised by Ward member Councillor Mason and members of public attending Planning Committee 02.03.21, K Stockwell, Mr and Mrs Strachan and Mr and Mrs Ford who will be submitting their objections to the WSC portal.</p> <p>The Town Council raised concerns over the building of 4 storey units at the gateway to the site which contradicts the Design, Access & Compliance Code which states that the Council would not be supportive of 4 storey elements'. They are overbearing, boxy and out of character to the rest of the site being of a city-scape design and will have a dominant visual impact. The parcel of land is not big enough to justify the grandiose structure and will be incongruous to the site plan as a whole and is contrary to the agreed building limits when the masterplan and outline planning was approved.</p> <p>Although the Town Council are aware of the forthcoming revised infrastructure application, we would have liked to have seen more green open space on this specific application.</p> <p>It must be ensured that sufficient, accessible areas for wheelie bins are provided, experience from earlier phases have shown that residents are not using the appropriate areas and are leaving them in the street.</p> <p>Proposed Councillor Liz Smith, seconded Councillor T Brown, 1 Abstained</p>					
17.02.21 Expires 10.03.21	4	DC/21/0229/HH	a. single storey rear extension b. replace existing flat roof on side elevation with pitched roof K Dick and K Davis	10 Caernarvon Walk	NEUTRAL
22.02.21 Expires 15.03.21	5	DC/21/0248/FUL	New outbuilding for dog grooming salon (following demolition of existing garage) Mr A Pavey	10 Abbots Road	NEUTRAL The Town Council would request that a condition is set that the grooming salon does not allow for more than one customer at a time and that dogs are to supervised at all times to alleviate potential for noise nuisance to neighbouring properties.

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION
22.02.21 Expires 15.03.21	6	DC/21/0251/HH	Single storey front extension (following demolition of existing porch) Mrs L Brinkler	6 Lee Close	NEUTRAL
23.02.21 Expires 16.03.21	7	DC/21/0275/HH	Single storey rear extension Stearn	26 Ladygate	NEUTRAL
23.02.21 Expires 16.03.21	8	DC/21/0283/TPO	TPO 480 (2008) – one Beech (T1 on order and in blue on plan) overall crown reduction by up to 2 metres and remove lowest limb going towards house Wayne Chapple	Cedar Home, 2 Broad Street	NEUTRAL

Appendix (ii)

DC/21/0110/RM

OBJECTIONS submitted by members of public and Ward Member Councillor Mason:

Mr and Mrs Ford, Mr Ford read out the following statement:

The Vision for NW Haverhill, was undertaken by a design process with a design code. This code was meant to strengthen the character of the town and provide new facilities for use by the existing and extended community. Points were included of scale and massing should respect to surround existing properties. Lower density to be applied to the eastern section of the site boundary and around Boyton Hall, to respect the existing properties at adjoin the site boundary. Specific issues were listening to the existing community. Another point was transitions between character areas to be carefully considered and designed to match existing storey heights. The design is said to be contemporary, however the design code infers the vernacular to be Victorian buildings, which in Haverhill are predominately in the Town Centre, but these are at the bottom of the valley. To fall back on an outdated theme of Victorian design is not only a retrograde step but is not in keeping with modern life and aspirations.

I am concerned on the lack of frontage on many of the houses, along with the sharing of thoroughfares for pedestrians and vehicles.

The neighbourhood square above the allotments seems to be lacking in space and parking

Adjoining estates have a lower density, are a maximum of 2 storeys and have so much more open spaces. They are building an area more suitable for an inner-city on the edge of a country town. There is no need for statement gateway of 4-storey, flat roof apartments. The Design Code is stated on issues of density and building height, but somehow ignored when it comes to conserving the environment, open spaces and children's play areas. We were told that these points were to be implemented at the next phase, but how long will that be and where will the current children play. I believe also that there are issues on water supply, surface water and foul water drainage which has not been sufficiently met.

I would urge the Council to object to this proposal on ground of density, lack of open space and amenities and contrasting completely with its surroundings.

Mr and Mrs Strachan submitted the following:

For your information: After studying the current proposals, here are our initial draft of objections and concerns that we will form the basis for our submission to the West Suffolk Planning Site. This will be updated following tonight's (2/3/2021) meeting. We hope this is helpful.

1) The 4 storey 'Gateway' proposition.

We have strong objections concerning the building of such a dominant feature for various reasons.

Scale and Massing: The justification of building the 'Gateway' given by Persimmon is to create an entrance and presence for the development as part of the 'character build'. We believe this claim is disingenuous and inappropriate; it would be totally out of scale for this 2B area. This justification feels very much as grasping at straws to, in reality, possibly aim to squeeze more profit and density per hectare into the area. Whilst we understand that the Council have targets to build as many houses as possible and Persimmon need to make a profit, there must be an

acceptable level of compromise to achieve a residential area that is seen as being developed well. We are still unclear about exactly how much flexibility is given about the formula for deciding on the housing density for an area or if every area is subjected to the same formula, irrelevant to the topology of the area and sensitivity towards the established residents and housing on the edge of a development. It would appear and that every extra apartment that can be squeezed in to the area is the overriding focus from the building company. It is also important that building a residential area should be developed in a way that creates a sense of wellbeing and allow communities to thrive. We feel that as far as possible, the council need to look at what flexibility there is on housing targets and push back from allowing any move to allow 4 storey housing in this context. Even the three and half storey housing, rather than 3 storey housing is out of keeping with the area, especially as its position on the skyline will be so prominent as has, unfortunately, been allowed on section 2A.

Style: The style of the 4 storey component of this gateway wall is not in keeping with the building statement for the area, and rather being a character feature, appears to a forced statement that unsuccessfully attempts to marry two very different styles of building. On the plans it looks overbearing and the contemporary flat roofed apartments forming the edge to the 'Gateway' looks 'tagged on' to buildings of a more local vernacular style. The 4 storey component fits more with urban development rather than a country town. In Persimmon's design plan, they claim to endeavour to compliment the town's character in their present developments; there are some 3 storey buildings such as Barclay's in the middle of the town, however, these are individual buildings and not creating solid blocks as is seen the 'Gateway' entrance to the 2B section.

Another part of the justification of allowing a 4 storey development is that it is the same height as their three and a half storey build. However, the visual impact of the flat roof building is very dominant and bulky looking, creating the feeling of a huge wall or obstruction. As stated previously it is also at odds with the style of the other part of the development.

2) Housing distribution:

Another area of concern is the way affordable housing and rental properties are in concentrated clumps in only two areas of the development. We thought the housing policy would be aiming to use a more mixed design approach throughout the development, a strategy which is recognised as a way of fostering a healthy community. On the Boyton Hall Estate where we live, the very mixed arrangement of four bed roomed, three bed roomed and one bed roomed houses has proved to be a successful mix creating a harmonious community. On the 2B proposal, there seems to be a particularly concentrated group of larger houses arranged down both sides of the build rather than a more mixed approach.

3) Landscaping:

We continue to be disappointed by the lack of informal communal areas within each development section for adults and children. This is even more of a concern when we see that there are no footpaths alongside the internal roads of the estate. Also there is only one very small area that can be shared by the community, apart from the car parking areas and one grassed area that appears to be a deeper grassed verge with a few trees in front of one house. It seems ironic that the building plans that apparently warrant a huge 'Gateway entrance', do not also require a communal internal green area to support the same community. To illustrate the point, by contrast, the Hanchett End development in Haverhill (leading from Applecross Road) has some creative, generous landscaping with undulating grass areas, including trees grouped together rather than just narrow, flat grassed areas with the occasional tree planted. Also, in Burnt Lane, a very small residential road within the development, there are two reasonably

sized communal grass areas with one area having two park benches as well as other grassed verges and shrubs.

The areas Part 1, Part 2A and Part 2B of the Boyton Development, with a considerable amount more housing, seem to have almost no such areas contained within them, which is hardly future proofing the wellbeing of the community. We wonder how such areas are possible on one estate but not on this one. The claim from Stuart McAdam, the Persimmon representative, that such areas are available on other parts of the development is no substitute for more localised informal communal areas. Our concerns about this are as a result of our own experience here, in Boyton Hall estate, where lack of such communal, informal areas has created difficulties for families when children try to find places to play together without having to undertake a 'trek' to a formalised playground. Historically, from talking to other neighbours such areas are sorely missed when trying to raise children safely but also allowing some freedom and independence.

A link has been included which shows how places for recreation and play should be integral and more intimate to the living areas being created.

(Set children free: are playgrounds a form of incarceration?)

https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/feb/25/set-children-free-are-playgrounds-a-form-of-incarceration?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Street view:

There is still no street sketch shown of the view from Ann Suckling to show the skyline and visual impact of the street line. The views shown at the presentation (local council meeting, 16 Feb 2021) were only a few street views from the interior of the development but there are none showing the view from Ann Suckling road. A view from this position has now been requested several times since the original proposals were put forward in the summer. Without this view, it is very hard to visualise the impact that this development will have visually and aesthetically. I believe that at the Haverhill Town Council planning meeting (16.02.21), Stuart McAdam has promised to have such a view drawn up. This would be very helpful in giving a more informed response to the 2B proposals.

Linked Planning Matters

This area (2B) is specified as a 'Character Area'. So, let's build with care and build some character into it by considering the environment surrounding this area:

Allotments/Community Orchard:

Although this is not directly part of 2B it is so integrally connected that we need to mention it here.

We are not sure at what point the decision about choosing between a communal orchard and allotments was decided about the space facing on to Ann Suckling Road. Although we enthusiastically support the idea of allotments being integrated into the plans for the area, this particular position does not seem ideal. Instead a communal orchard with mixed trees would be a space that could be enjoyed by the new and existing community, rather than restricted access for only a small group of people. This will also filter out sound and air pollution for the 2B section of the estate and create a greener tree lined boarder on Ann Suckling Road. Such a group of trees will be the only significant group of trees or green area running east to west from Ann Suckling Road through the estate. Trees running in this direction will certainly have a huge

effect on softening and greening the landscape as well as creating a bridging corridor for insects and other wildlife.

Attenuation Basin We're not sure when, or even if this will come up for discussion; however, it is as with the area above, integral to the estate, existing and new. We are wondering about whether this will be a landscaped nature area to be worked in as a feature part of the proposed community area / centre. We understand that the attenuation basin's main function is for holding land flood drainage water; however it would seem ideal to build on this required basin and construct a feature out of the existing environment, that can enhance the area and its use as an outdoor recreational space, that can be used throughout the year. There is a feature of this type, which could be used as a model, in the Research Park in Haverhill.

Anne Suckling Road We continue to be concerned about the proposed and developing use of Anne Suckling Road and would like some clarification as to whether our objections to this in previous planning meetings are still considered in forward planning or whether we need to re-submit these at every stage.

Mr & Mrs K Stockwell

We object to this application.

The two 4 storey block of flats (with 3 storey attached) at the top of the site. The phrase 'gateway' was used during presentation to the HTC, what sense does that make – use trees or a grassy area. They look like buildings that should be on an Industrial Estate, no matter what they are constructed with. They would be completely out of keeping with the look of Boyton Hall Estate and would impede views across the top of the area and completely dominate the landscape. There does not seem to be consideration for the people living on Boyton Hall Estate (here since the 1980's), who will be impacted by this estate – so please try to minimise the negative effect on them i.e. visual, noise, loss of rural walks, traffic.

The Design, Access & Compliance Statement says: ***“High ground at the eastern part of the site, north of Boyton Hall, is more visually sensitive and should be considered during the development of the masterplan” & “The Council would not be supportive of 4 storey elements particularly on the northern parcel”***. We are not aware these requirements have changed, so why are Persimmon pushing for these 4 storey blocks in the development? It would also set a dangerous precedent for the area and we feel even 3 storey are too high.

We value the area for walking/exercise and there does not seem to be any recreational areas on the site. The DA&C states: Pg 8: b) ***Identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.***

Density of the site – looks to be very concentrated with houses. The DA&C also states: Pg 5: ***Lower density areas should include the easternmost end of the site and areas around Boyton Hall, where a lower density will reflect the existing pattern of residential use.***

The Allotments & Parking – not marked on this application. Concern parking spaces will be used by the houses on the estate nearest to Ann Suckling.

Councillor Joe Mason

The document does show that Persimmon have made some improvements on applications submitted last year and that they are listening to some of resident's concerns, particularly the location of the 4 storey building. In his opinion he welcomes the various styles on Phase 1a and 2a.

Affordable housing, if plans are rejected, would welcome a redistribution of affordable housing throughout the estate.

Both developments at Persimmon and Redrow must meet the needs of a growing population, specifically the flow of traffic. Land allocated for an allotment is welcome, but a community orchard would have been more welcome and more accessible to more members of the community.

There is an essential need for communal space, though we must remember there will more children's areas in future phases.

Drainage, we need assurances that drainage will not impact on existing estates. There needs to be landscaping to beautify sumps and lagoons.

Gateway entrance, 2b is approximately the same size as the plots identified for 2b, 4a and 4b and 6. Phase 1 had 200 dwellings, phase 2a 41 dwellings, phase 2b is only 127 dwellings. Why is there a 4 storey city scape design as a gateway entrance to the estate? The parcel of land isn't big enough to justify the grandiose structure and will be incongruous to the site plan as a whole and is contrary to the agreed building limits when outline planning was approved. *(A picture was shown to the committee of a 3 storey building on phase 2a)*. Councillor Mason feels that a 3 storey building would be big enough and other phases do not have gateway entrances, would this lead to further gateway entrances giving to a higher population.

Responses from Councillors:

Councillor J Burns advised members of the committee and public to look at the submitted density plans for the whole site as is relevant to this application.

Councillor D Smith was disappointed that the visuals that had been requested had not yet been received. There are no bungalows on the site and did not like the Gateway entrance.

Councillor J Burns advised that the street scene visual is being worked on and that Persimmon were working on their website and ideas for getting communications out to the public.

Councillor T Brown thanked the members of public for their comments and the hard work that they had put into this.

Councillor J Crooks mentioned to the committee that modern housing estates often have flats designed in on site and that flats are quite normal and common in developments around Haverhill, for example at the Arboretum and Tudor Close which both have 3-storey flats. Also, flats have been used in the past such as on the Chalkstone Estate, which he feels added to the interest of the design of the estate. Councillor Crooks considers that modern housing estates do need flats, however, is torn on this application as these flats do look boxy, but actually the design will add interest.