

Minutes of a site meeting held on **Monday, 21 October 2019** at **9.30am**
at Former Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 1AU.

Planning Committee South Members Present:

Councillors Debbie McCallum (Chairman), Tony Fryatt (Vice-Chairman), Stuart Bird, Chris Blundell, Tony Cooper, Linda Coulam (substitute), Louise Gooch (substitute), Colin Hedgley, Kay Yule

Apologies Given:

Councillors Melissa Allen and Mike Deacon

Officers Present:

Liz Beighton (Planning Development Manager), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Katherine Scott (Development Management Team Leader – South)

Others in Attendance:

Mr Patrick Gillard – Woodbridge Town Councillor
Councillor Chris Mapey – Ward Member for Woodbridge
Mr Eamonn O’Nolan – Mayor of Woodbridge
Councillor Caroline Page – County Councillor for Woodbridge
Mr Mike Sutton – Woodbridge Town Councillor
Ms Margaret Walsh – Woodbridge Town Councillor

The site meeting began in the car park of the Former Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the site meeting and reminded those present that the purpose of the meeting was a ‘fact finding’ exercise only and to provide Members with an opportunity to view the site and its surroundings.

The Chairman explained that the site visit would follow a similar routine to the one undertaken by Suffolk Coastal District Council’s Planning Committee in 2017. The only difference would be that the Committee would not enter the gardens of properties on Deben Road, Woodbridge.

The Planning Development Manager was invited to give an overview of the planning application. She provided the Committee with copies of the submitted plans and outlined the various areas that would be visited during the site meeting.

The site’s planning history was outlined; an initial application was approved by Suffolk Coastal District Council’s Planning Committee in April 2018 but was withdrawn prior to formal consent being issued.

A second application, similar to the first but with the removal of affordable housing via Vacant Building Credit (VBC) was submitted and this was refused by Suffolk Coastal District Council’s Planning Committee in November 2018. The applicant submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, the outcome of which was expected imminently.

The Planning Development Manager outlined the latest application to be submitted, outlining the affordable housing that had been included in the proposal. She described the application as being similar to the original application that had been approved.

The two non-designated heritage assets were identified; these were proposed to be demolished and the buildings constructed would host the concierge and community space. The Planning Development Manager demonstrated the application site's proximity to the boundary of the Woodbridge Conservation Area.

The current entrance to the Former Council Offices car park would be retained as the site access for ingress and egress. The office's former exit only access was proposed to be removed.

The Planning Development Manager outlined the position on the site of bin collection and bin marshalling points. She explained that additional bicycle storage would be added and that a pedestrian link from the site to Deben Road would be established.

A member of the Committee sought clarification that the pending appeal decision on the refused application had no bearing on what the Committee would be asked to consider. The Planning Development Manager confirmed that was the case and that the Committee would be required to determine the application before it in isolation to previous applications.

The site meeting travelled on foot to the corner of Melton Hill and Old Maltings Approach. The Planning Development Manager highlighted an area of vegetation that would be removed as part of a garage development that had been allowed on appeal.

The view towards the site looking from Old Maltings Approach towards Melton Hill was taken in. The Planning Development Manager advised that the presentation at the Committee meeting would feature an artist's impression of how the proposed development would impact this view.

The site meeting continued on foot down Old Maltings Approach, stopping at Old Maltings Court. The site's boundary with Old Maltings Court was highlighted; the Planning Development Manager explained that this area of the site would contain the below level car park and Blocks G and H.

The Planning Development Manager outlined the landscaping conditions that would be attached to any planning permission granted.

In response to a question from a member of the Committee, it was confirmed that Blocks G and H would be taller than the existing accommodation buildings that bordered the site. It was confirmed that a computer-generated image demonstrating this would be shown at the Committee meeting on 22 October 2019, which would demonstrate the angle of the proposed blocks.

The site meeting then walked to the corner of Melton Hill and Pytches Road. The front of the Former Council Offices was highlighted, and the Planning Development Manager identified which buildings were non-designated heritage assets. She also identified nearby dwellings that were listed buildings.

It was noted that the development would be private housing which would have a permanent concierge presence.

The site meeting proceeded into Pytches Road.

The site meeting took in the view from Pytches Road towards the application site. It was again confirmed that an artist's impression of this viewpoint would be demonstrated at the Committee meeting, to allow Members to understand the changes to the view.

The site meeting then moved to Deben Road, walking to 19 Deben Road. The Planning Development Manager outlined the relationship of the site to nearby dwellings. The residents of 19 Deben Road invited the site meeting to proceed down the private driveway to the rear of the property; it was confirmed that the yew tree on this part of the site border would now be retained.

The site meeting continued to the end of Deben Road, stopping at the junction with Kingsway. The Planning Development Manager noted that the two-storey structures would border this area and pointed out where the pedestrian link from the site would terminate.

The resident at 33 Deben Road requested that the site meeting view the site from the garden of her property, but this was declined.

The site meeting then returned to the car park and all present drove to Sutton Hoo, proceeding into the site to appreciate the view from Sutton Hoo towards Woodbridge, including the application site.

The Planning Development Manager advised that a computer-generated image would be shown in the presentation that outlined the impact the new buildings would have on this view. It was noted that the roof lines of the new building would not be above the existing tree line and that there would be a clear gap between the view of the site and the view of Woodbridge's historic core.

The Chairman stated that it was important to bear in mind that, given the deciduous trees within the area, this view would not be constant throughout the year. The Planning Development Manager added that Historic England's objections to the application was based on the impact of the development on this view.

The site meeting was reminded that concerns regarding adherence to conditions, should planning permission be granted, could be taken back to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The site visit concluded at 10.46am.