

Minutes of a meeting of the Sandwich Town Council Planning Committee held within the Jury Room, Guildhall on 18th January 2022 at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors: P G Graeme (in the Chair)

P Carter

A Fox

JE Franklin

K Heaven

H Sampson

Non-voting Members: Cllr DR Friend, Mr J Hennessy, Mr J Sneller and Mr C Wiles

Minute Taker: A Hollobon-Baxter, Chief Executive

22.01.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received. All members were present.

23.01.22 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

24.01.22 PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK

No requests to speak.

25.01.22 PLANNING APPLICATIONS (application plans and papers may be viewed via the Dover District Council website – use of a computer in the Town Council’s office is possible by arrangement)

26.01.22 DDC PLANNING

(i) Ref. No: 21/00274

Location: Land at Archers Low Farm Sandown Road Sandwich CT13 9NU

Proposal: Erection of 44no. dwellings with associated access, parking, open space, landscaping, drainage, and infrastructure. (Amended plans and details)

RESOLUTION: Refuse application as per Planning Committee’s consultee comment submission August 2021 as follows:

August 2021 submission from STC Planning Committee to be repeated for January 2022 – Sandwich Town Council met on 23rd August and agreed their Planning Committee’s recommendation that this site should not be permitted due to a number of highways issues, traffic generation, vehicular access problems and highways safety. There are already significant traffic problems on St. George’s Rd and Sandown Rd that cause obstructions and gridlock. Planning Inspector’s previous objections to the site should also be re-iterated: Site is allocated in the LALP for residential development with an estimated capacity of 50 dwellings. This application refers to 46 dwellings. This allocation is not justified because of the harmful visual impact on the character and appearance of the local area that would result. The site is an integral part of the unspoilt countryside that wraps around this part of Sandwich and as a result makes a significant contribution to the town’s setting. At present the trees and the open cultivated land on the site provide

a soft and attractive edge to the town. The construction of dwellings on the site and the formation of a new access on to Sandown Rd would constitute an unwarranted intrusion into the countryside to the detriment of the sensitive landscape setting of this part of town. Other allocations in Sandwich endorsed in this report, including Sites LA14 and LA16, do not share the same landscape. The retention of the trees on the site, even if associated with a buffer area, and coupled with the retention of farming and woodland uses nearby, would not be able to mitigate the visual harm to an acceptable extent. The development would be particularly apparent from Sandown Rd during the winter months when the existing deciduous vegetation is not in leaf. The standard of road likely to be required and the necessary sightlines along Sandown Rd would also open up views of the site and would be likely to involve tree loss. Although Sandown Rd may not be heavily used by vehicles and pedestrians, and some existing housing development in the area may not be of the highest quality, this does not obviate the need to assess the visual implications of this particular allocation. Taking account of all these factors the allocation of this site is not justified. Main Modification MM24 deletes this site from the LALP and is required to make the plan sound." (from Inspectors1Report-Complete.pdf (dover.gov.uk)) Nothing has changed since 2013 that makes this site now suitable for the proposed development. **PLUS ADD to January 2022 submission, Tree Warden's report** - 21/00274 | Erection of 46 dwellings with associated access, parking, open space, landscaping, drainage and infrastructure. | Land At Archers Low Farm Sandown Road Sandwich CT13 9NU

The amended proposal does not allay my previous concerns and additional considerations are stated below.

Inconsistencies -

The tree report is lacking in detail, and omits to show that some new dwellings would be unduly close to retained trees. The Ecology report suggests certain trees would be retained and yet they are due for removal and also that for e.g. ivy would be retained on the mature trees but in fact it is scheduled for removal. These examples of inconsistency demonstrate a lack of investment by the developer to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the site.

There is unacceptable redaction within the Ecology Report as no personal data would be expected in these sections

Root protection area concerns remain.

Tree loss-

The design fails to integrate appropriately the trees being retained. For example the row of juvenile oaks on the north-western boundary are proposed for retention in the separate private ownerships of Dwellings 2–7, but would be fenced off from their owners, there is the inevitable risk that would arise to remove the trees from this domestic setting at a later date, before they reach maturity.

30 trees are to be removed and 49 planted. However tree gain cannot be measured on a simply numerical scale as character and very mature trees are being lost along with their associated habitats and juvenile trees of species not characteristic to the area are proposed which will not compensate for the loss of character and habitat.

Tree works are also proposed for example reduction of crowns and removal of ivy. This also results in serious loss of character and habitat.

Despite the Tree Preservation Order served by Dover D.C. on most of the trees at Archers Low Farm it appears to have had little effect on the recommendations for tree retention. Also **n.b** TPO tree does not protect the tree from removal either by

developer or new resident. Just makes it a legal requirement to ask for permission prior to works and possible for DDC to issue a tree replacement notice if removed in contravention of the order. which cannot mitigate the ecosystem services of a mature tree.

Post-development pressure for tree works-

Due to the design of the proposal there would exist post-development pressure for tree works where trees are too close to dwellings. In small gardens the trees can cause anxiety or nuisance to residents for e.g. causing problems with shade. Residents then wish to reduce or remove the trees (if unprotected), or seek consent to reduce or remove the trees (if protected).

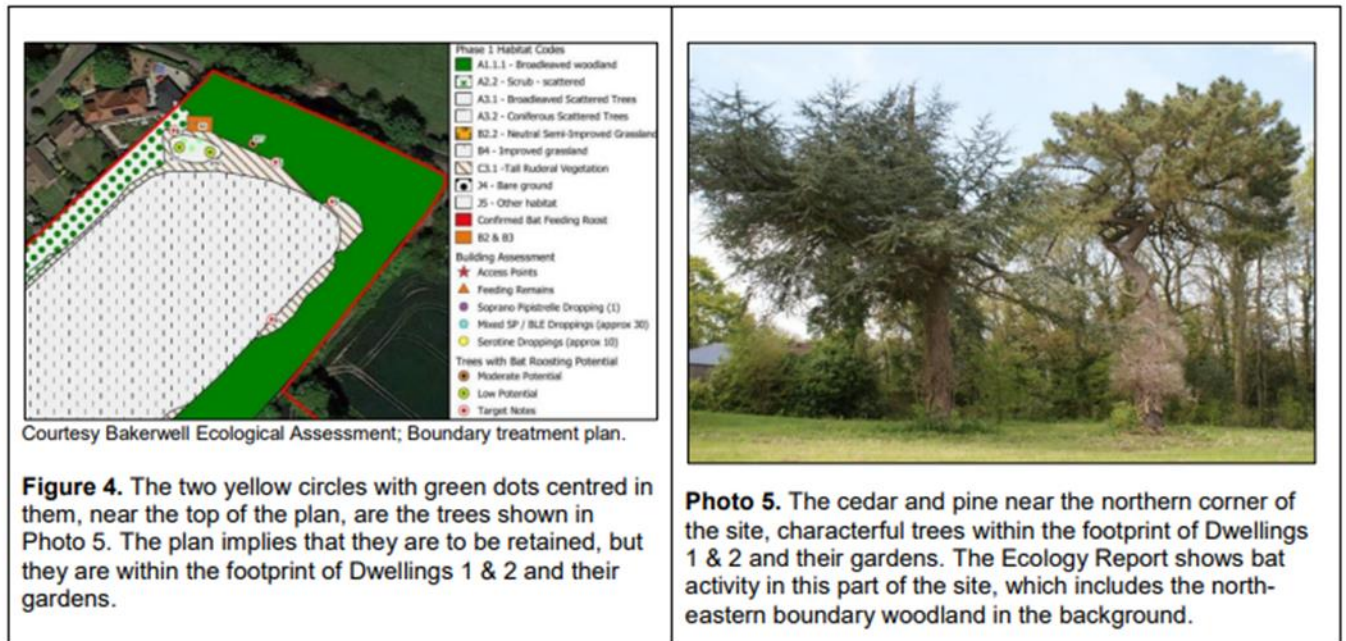
Many trees and much wildlife will be lost, the woodland character of what is left will be prejudiced or lost, and houses built too close to the retained trees will create future conflict and further eventual loss.

The necessary works to the retained trees to make them safe and accessible to new residents (crown reduction, removal of ivy etc.) are presented as biodiversity enhancements but are in fact the reverse as this leads to a loss of character and habitat. Unfortunately there tends to exist a conflict between residents needs and the preservation of an environments character and diversity of habitat.

Revised plans show that the” trees in the north west boundary would be within the curtilages of residential properties, [but in] ... a segregated garden area” for Dwellings 1–7 . However the crown extent is such that the headroom of the canopy of these trees would make passage difficult or impossible without removal of the lower branches . The land beyond the fences, and the trees on it, would belong to the residents. A fence or covenant is unlikely to discourage owners from entering their own land and occupying it as part of their garden. Where the existing trees prove to be problematic to owners in some way they are likely to want to reduce or remove the tree.

On a plan in the Ecology Report (see Figure 3), the segregated area is labelled ‘Trees to be retained and enhanced with woodland flora’. With the likelihood that the ground will be trafficked, the proposed woodland flora seems unlikely to persist because a single row of trees does not comprise a woodland environment Shading due to trees particularly dwellings 1-7, risk that the back of the houses and adjacent paving of the proposed dwellings would be prone to damp leading to an argument by the future residents that the trees should not be retained despite a covenant or Tree preservation order .

Loss of Bat habitat-



The Ecology Report tends to confirm” recording six bat species at the site”.

Woodland as a whole is favorable bat habitat. Landscape Plan specifies that ivy it be cut from the retained woodland trees. The Ecology Report refers to ivy as a potential bat roosting site (‘... epicormic and ivy growth were investigated as potential bat roosting features’), and presumably therefore to be retained, but the Landscape Plan specifies that it be cut from the retained woodland trees

Source Philip Wilson Addendum 210804 dated 16 September 2021. (forestry) MSc PhD MArborA.

Biodiversity “enhancements”

I fail to see how the biodiversity measures proposed would result in biodiversity net gain, the proposed biodiversity enhancements at the site are open to question:

Reptile receptor area - unlikely to compensate for the loss of existing habitat

loss of woodland character- the retained trees would have to be managed for tree risk (to include the removal of ivy) and fallen deadwood would likely be removed and the remaining wildlife would suffer loss of habitat and disturbance.

Landscape plan , selective crown lifting to increase headroom to the base of the canopy to improve access would improve the condition of the retained boundary trees for the amenity of new residents, but would not offer an enhancement to wildlife.

wildflower/grassland of native species -an area will be planted to the boundaries to provide foraging and shelter for reptiles, bats, invertebrates, birds and mammals. The thin strips proposed are of questionable compensation for the loss of existing woodland edge habitat

Bat boxes , bat bricks , bird boxes , swift boxes , bird nest bricks- intended to replace the existing roosting/nesting sites, but even in more favourable locations bat and bird nest boxes are often unoccupied. See bat box and nest box for background. No record of swifts at the site is mentioned

Native hedge planting- claim will provide additional nesting and shelter opportunities for birds most of the

proposed hedging will be under the canopy of retained trees and close to roads and dwellings. The hedging is not expected to be vigorous owing to shade and root competition, it would probably be trimmed

Natural England stated: “The proposed amendments to the original application are

unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal”

The Natural England responses advise “that if existing environmental features on and around the site cannot be retained or enhanced, or new features incorporated into the development proposal, off-site measures should be considered” - offsite mitigation does not take into account the wider impact of the surrounding wildlife habitats of which this site is an integral part.

Concerns remain, despite the change in curtilage and reduction in number of properties; regarding post-development pressure for tree works and subsequent tree loss and habitat loss. The proposal would clearly result in the loss of wildlife from the site.

The proposed biodiversity “enhancements “ are questionable and unlikely to compensate for the loss of existing habitat or result in biodiversity net gain.

This is an unsuitable site for development as building will disrupt the natural diversity which exists on the site with its wide belts of trees, grassland and all their associated habitats. As the site is only 200m from the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection area the development potentially degrades these habitats through the loss of a natural habitat which is so close.

(ii) Ref. No: 21/01899

Location: The Kings Head 9 Church Street St Mary Sandwich CT13 9HH

Proposal: Replacement of front and side ground floor windows and 2no. rear doors (part retrospective)

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval.

(iii) Ref. No: 21/01877

Location: 17 Delfside Sandwich CT13 9RL

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension (existing conservatory and workshop to be demolished)

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval.

(iv) Ref. No: 21/01823

Location: Sandwich Medical Practice Cattle Market Sandwich CT13 9ET

Proposal: Installation of external air conditioning units and solar panels to front elevation

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval providing the noise of the air conditioning unit is only run between the office hours of 8am and 6pm and Environmental Health have checked the noise levels to be acceptable.

(v) Ref. No: 21/01835

Location: 152 St Georges Road Sandwich CT13 9LD

Proposal: Erection of single storey, first and second floor rear extensions with alterations to doors and windows (part first floor, roof, and conservatory to be demolished)

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval.

(vi) Ref. No: 21/01758

Location: Esso Service Station Ramsgate Road Sandwich CT13 9NL

Proposal: Display of 1no. internally illuminated digital screen

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval providing the conditions placed by KCC are adopted.

(vii) Ref. No: 21/01723

Location: 16 Church Street St Clements Sandwich CT13 9EH

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension incorporating existing store (existing outbuilding to be removed)

RESOLUTION: Recommend approval.

27.01.22 CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee received and considered an email from DDC planning department regarding planning application number 21/01159.

RESOLUTION: This information be noted.

28.01.22 ENFORCEMENT

The Committee considered any enforcement notices and issues received from Dover District Council.

Cllr Carter requested an update regarding the Cabins inserted behind Malcom Waite's petrol station. Cllr Friend to ascertain up to date position and revert to Committee.

RESOLUTION: Cllr Friend to ascertain up to date information and revert to planning Committee as soon as possible.

29.01.22 DECISIONS

The Committee noted that Dover District Council planning decisions had been emailed to the Committee earlier in the week.

RESOLUTION: Note the content of planning decision emails.

30.01.22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 9th February 2022 at 6pm.

Summary of actions from Planning Committee Meeting of 18th January 2022:

Minutes	Action	Member/Officer to complete	Update/record of completion
26.01.22	Log consultee comments on DDC website for 6 planning applications. Please note that two applications were called into full council and therefore consultee submission has not yet been made.	AHB	19/01/2022