

BURLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes for approval at the meeting on 11th November 2015

Present	Cllr P Daubeney, Cllr N Martin, Cllr R Clarke, Cllr J Kendall, Cllr K Hall
In attendance	Clare Ings, New Forest National Park Planning Officer; Robin Bryer, Designer and Agent for the applicant; Ms G Dalgarno standing in for the Parish Clerk
Also present	63 members of the public.
Date	Monday 19 th October 2015
Opened at	6.30pm Closed at 8.05 pm
Subject	Burley Parish Council Planning Committee meeting

1 Public Participation

Philip Daubeney, Chairman of Burley Parish Council, welcomed everybody & set out the purpose of the meeting i.e. to consider planning application ref. 15/00727 regarding the proposed *New dwelling; associated landscaping (demolition of existing outbuildings)* at the site of *Manor Farm Cottage, Forest Road, Burley, BH24 4DQ*

In conjunction with Senior Planning Officer Ms Ings, he explained and identified the key points as set out in central government's National Planning Policy Framework which need to be taken into account when considering such an application i.e.: -

Generally the erection of a new dwelling would be contrary to the policies of the Core Strategy - this site lies outside any of the NF 'defined villages', is not a replacement dwelling, is not for an agricultural worker (or commoner) and is not affordable.

However, paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (*the NPPN*) states:

"Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

Such a design should be truly outstanding or innovative,

helping to raise the standards of design more generally in rural areas;

reflect the highest standards in architecture;

significantly enhance its immediate setting;

and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area."

and it is on this basis that this proposal will have to be assessed.

Other considerations, such as impact on the landscape, whether it would enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and other impacts on ecology, trees or adjoining amenities would also have to be taken into consideration.

Robin Bryer then explained to the meeting the main points of the application on behalf of himself and Mr Adams (the applicant). Plans were displayed and made available for examination. Mr Bryer pointed out that the design, originally commissioned by Lord Lichfield, had previously come before both Staffordshire District and County Councils and they had accepted that the design fulfilled the remit of an 'outstanding design' and had passed the test of a 'design of an innovative nature'. Mr Bryer stated that in his view the plans made a 'positive contribution to the National Park' and stressed that the house sits in parkland and should be considered as a whole piece as shown on the designs by the red line.

The meeting was then thrown open for questions and statements from the public. The following points and opinions were raised and responded to:

- Taking into account that this is an elevated site, how high will the finished buildings be? Without good landscaping a building in excess of 19 metres will be visible for some time.

Robin Bryer replied that this is a building that "you would not want to hide" and that the background of taller trees behind it will not make the building conspicuous.

- An elector expressed concern at the proposed transformation to manicured parkland, in direct contradiction to the Forestry Commission who has been trying to return the forest to a more natural state.

Robin Bryer replied that the parkland would be no more manicured than the Forest lawns that have been planted since WW2. Animals would be welcomed in to graze the land and the block of land will merge into the existing forest.

- This building will be out of character and keeping with the forest. Burley has a particular built heritage, that of the Arts and Craft movement exemplified by the architect Clough. His philosophy is that in land that is not mountainous, buildings should be long and low, not high. There must be a sense of proportion. This application is going against his philosophy. The elector also said areas of the forest are needed where there are no oaks or sycamores, not more.
- Would any bridleways or paths be lost?

Cllr Robert Clarke confirmed that no paths would be affected.

- The designed building for Lord Lichfield was never built and this design harks back to 1700's or the 1500's which would make it irrelevant anywhere, but particularly so in Burley. Technology and innovation are absent from the paperwork. Surely a new plan would at least attempt to be carbon neutral?

Robin Briar replied that whether innovation appears in the plans is a matter of opinion and that Staffordshire District and County Council would appear to differ from the view expressed.

- Core strategy is being disregarded; this states that 'new buildings should fit comfortably in their surroundings' and 'respond to the scale and character of neighbouring buildings'. A precedent will be set if ignored.
- The National Park and the New Forest must be protected or the commoners will lose out and there will be empty houses i.e. second homes.
- Was the house proposed for Lord Lichfield in a National Park?

Robin Briar replied that it was not.

- Why does the 'hidden' car park allow for 8 cars?

Robin Briar replied that the design allowed for 8 bedrooms, therefore 8 vehicles may be required.

- This house and plan is out of character with Burley.
- How will this building impact on future building in Burley?

Robin Briar replied that this is an exception and not a precedent. Every application, whatever the outcome of this one, will be judged on its own merit.

At this point in the meeting Clare Ings explained the concept of precedence and pointed out that of the 5 recent para. 55 applications to the National Park under these guidelines 4 had been refused and 3 further appeals have been dismissed.

- Cllr Kendall asked if Mr Adams is proposing to build the property himself, or does he intend to put it out to tender?

Robin Briar replied that he didn't suppose Mr Adams intended to build the property himself and stressed that an application should show that the property is innovative or outstanding. It does not necessarily have to be both.

- Mr Briar was asked to define "outstanding" and how this applies to the plan?

Robin Briar replied that he would question whether it was outstanding visually and anyone outside the site will not notice it from Forest Road. But it is outstanding in terms of quality of design.

- There are many classically designed buildings in the country. Why does the National Park need one?
- There is no need for a mock Palladian house.
- Judging an application on a subjective assessment, such as 'outstanding' is problematic.
- What is there to stop the next owner from putting up a fence round the perimeter to keep grazing animals out?

Robin Briar replied that it comes back to obligation.

- If Mr Adams is not going to live in the house it will further add to the 60% of houses (*said to be*) already empty in Burley.

- Agricultural land and affordable housing are needed, not parkland.
- How will this building enhance the local area and the village of Burley? The reason people live here is that they are passionate about the village.

Robin Bryer replied the area under discussion is outside the village. It is outside the built area of the village and the wider picture/national interest must be considered. This is not a mansion, it is a large house. What makes it special is the bronze metal framed window panes, internal car parking accommodation and innovative roof design incorporating solar panels (which have yet to be developed).

- Burley is completely surrounded by common land. That defines the village boundary.

Clare Ings then further explained the rules concerning 'precedence', including the fact that conversion of existing farm buildings for business purposes is not subject to the same amount of rigour as conversion for residential purposes. This type of application must meet particularly high standards and must meet the conditions laid down in paragraph 55. Any application not meeting such requirements will be refused.

Philip Daubeney described the stages of the planning application process for the benefit of the meeting.

- Has permission been applied for or granted for change of use of the farm buildings to residential use?

There is no such application.

- Given the strength of feeling expressed at the meeting, is it of benefit for villagers to write in to record concerns?

Clare Ings suggested that any views should be forwarded by 26th October.

- Could a petition be sent in?

Clare Ings said yes, but any such petition must state very clearly why there are objections to the application.

- Where are the access points for the property?

Robin Bryer said there were three existing access points: in Chapel Lane, Forest Road and Long Mead Road (off Ringwood Road, close to Burley Street).

- Will there be a helicopter pad?

Robin Bryer pointed out that planning permission was not required for this.

Robin Bryer summed up by saying that the new house was not within the village. He agreed it was not of the vernacular, but equally, it doesn't have to be. There is no existing planning permission to convert existing buildings into residential accommodation.

2 Apologies Cllr P Russell, Margaret and Terry Brooks, Chris McDowell, Maggie Edwards, Diane Henderson (all intend to email their concerns)

3 Consideration of Planning Application: 15/00727 Manor Farm Cottage, Forest Road, Burley BH24 4DQ

Cllr. Clarke then chaired the BPC Planning Committee's consideration of the application and acknowledged the many good points made by the villagers present in their comments and questions.

He went on to run through his additional analysis of the background to the application. He did this with particular reference to the criteria for consideration of para. 55 applications set out in the Decision Report dated 2nd October 2013 by the Planning Inspector handling the first Appeal Hearing by Mr James Ratcliffe. This was in respect of the NFPA's refusal of Mr Ratcliffe's earliest application for rebuilding Thorns Beach House on the waterfront at Beaulieu. (The appeal against the Refusal of Mr Ratcliffe's 3rd & 4th applications had just taken place 2 weeks prior to this BPC meeting). Whilst those applications concerned a very different style of design, the Inspector's approach and earlier comments must have particular relevance in the consideration of this type of application i.e. made under para 55.

Criterion 1 – Is the building truly outstanding or innovative?

The appearance of the **building would certainly stand out in the New Forest** where there is little in the way of significant large scale residences of architectural merit with the notable exception of the Grade I listed 18th Century Hale House in Hale Park. **But it would seem to be largely a mildly re-worked version of the Palladian principles to be found around the country as a whole.** Except that the equal sided floor plan and 4 identical elevations has not previously found favour, or perhaps more likely, been suitable to their promoters' site

conditions and preference for rectangular floors that lend themselves more readily to future expansion and change in occupational needs.

Since it's a reworking of long established classical style mansions **it would not seem innovative** in architectural terms although there are novel features to reflect modern life-style and current concerns e.g. the internal car parking spaces and environmental features.

Criterion 2 - reflecting the highest standards in architecture?

Probably only the architectural fraternity (& HRH the Prince of Wales) really feel equipped to answer this particularly subjective question. Depending on the time of consideration, the classical proportions will find favour with the general public to a greater or lesser degree. Most of us do feel respect/admiration for such traditional styles - thus the attraction of viewing old stately homes for many (but that may reflect as well the interest in the historical links with old-established families)

However, contemporary architects will very largely eschew what they tend to regard as pastiche workings of that which has none of the appeal/interest/shock of the new.

Criterion 3 – significantly enhancing its immediate setting?

The proposed site of the building is currently occupied by approx. 10,000 sq. ft. of mainly dilapidated steel frame & asbestos panel roofed agricultural buildings (of which only one relatively small old brick barn is to be conserved). So it may reasonably be said that the site could be enhanced to some degree by a proposed residence that will extend to some 15,000 sq. ft. of accommodation over 3 floors.

If not re-developed in the way being proposed, then the owner has Permitted Development rights to change at least some of the existing units to Industrial/Business use and rebuild them as a small factory/warehouse estate, say. It is difficult to imagine the property looking greatly better in consequence but such new employment opportunities that might flow from such a scheme could be said to be of greater benefit to local inhabitants. On the other hand, if fully occupied and used, the new residence might equally afford employment opportunities, but of a largely more domestic nature.

Criterion 4 – sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area?

As in the Thorns Beach House case, *"It cannot really be said that buildings in the vicinity display any defining characteristics that ought to be reflected in the design of a new house"*. But then no link at all with Burley village or the style and nature of the New Forest National Park has been demonstrated in the application papers nor even suggested.

The proposed building has no obvious appeal to any particular type of occupier (at least not in family terms) that might relate to the immediate or even wider neighbourhood. The lack of any detailed landscaping proposals or the sort of ancillary accommodation for staff, leisure or entertainment purposes etc. indicates that this is only actually a **conceptual** proposal. No doubt such further details would follow in due course.

However, the real impact on our environment of the ultimate development that would seem to be in prospect must be impossible to ascertain on the basis of the information currently before us. The plans do not show a house layout that could function in the terms of a grand residence for a family. Even as a house intended for high level entertainment purposes, it lacks the customary supporting service features. Perhaps an exceptionally well appointed boutique style hotel is envisaged eventually – but that – and many other possible alternative uses - would not fall within the planning definition of a home i.e. domestic residence.

Chairman's conclusion:

From what we have seen and *heard so far*, this application would not seem to meet the approval of most of our villagers, let alone the requirements of the relevant section of the National Planning Policy Framework and certainly not the Core Policies of the NF National Park Authority. Thus, Refusal is to be recommended.

After all the councillors present had made their own comments, they then unanimously voted to recommend Response - R4, i.e. Refusal, without qualification.

Cllr. Clarke would forward the agreed planning response to NFNPA by email in the usual way.

4 Any other business None

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.