

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Planning Committee, St Ives Town Council held via Zoom technology on Thursday 13th January 2021 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor Lait R
Vice-Chairman – Councillor Messenger K

COUNCILLORS

Burton P	Tanner J
Harris T	Tanner S
Mitchell A	Wells J
Nicholls C	Williams T

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Administrative Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

Agent - Mr Mark Scoot, Maypool Estates Ltd.

P.58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Symons.

P.59 PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Due to the complexity of this application, the format for public speaking differed to that of standard Planning Committee meetings.

On this occasion, there were six public speakers objecting to this application. Sixty-six members of the public attended the meeting via the Zoom link.

The Planning Consultant/Agent, Mr Mark Scoot, attended the meeting to answer questions solely from Members of the Planning Committee.

P.60 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED – that the Head of Development Management (Cornwall Council) be informed of the Council's observations on the planning applications set out in Annex 1 to these minutes.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman

PA20/09716 - Land SW Of Joannies Avenue, Halsetown Road, St Ives, Cornwall

Outline planning application with some matters reserved (access/layout) for the demolition of existing structures and development to provide an 80-bedroom hotel with associated facilities, 63 holiday villas, a community hub (providing reception facilities and an ancillary shop), associated infrastructure, landscaping, access and parking.

The Town Council has the strongest possible objection to this proposal.

Given the strength of local concern about this proposal (over 200 on-line objections), the Town Council held a single-issue on-line planning committee to discuss the application. It was attended by 66 members of the public. If Cornwall Council is minded to support this application, the Planning Committee requests that the matter be considered by the Area Planning Committee prior to any decision being made. Many comments and concerns were expressed at the meeting and the most relevant matters are set out below.

Strategic nature of the proposal

In the context of the parish of St Ives, the area of the town and the population of 8,735 in the whole parish this is clearly a strategic proposal of significant scale. The Design and Access Statement makes reference to the proximity of residential 1 and 2 storey development and, indeed, holiday accommodation, but these are not in any way comparable. There is no allocation for this site either in the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Development Plan and there is therefore no policy support for such a strategic proposal of this scale on this site.

The proposal is considered to be wholly in conflict with the aims and intentions of policies within the St Ives Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2030 as follows:

Demand and acceptability of holiday accommodation

The applicant relies on the NDP policies LE8 and LE9 as offering support and justification for the proposed hotel and holiday villa accommodation. However, this is to ignore the very specific and critically important caveats in relation to both policies. LE8 supports hotel accommodation in principle, but only subject to GD1 and OS1 being satisfied. A cursory consideration of the GD1 and OS1 policies in the NDP demonstrate clearly how the proposals fail to satisfy the NDP policies in almost every respect:

Policy GD1

- a) The size, scale and use of the proposed development is not sensitive to its surroundings, due to its scale and the density of development proposed. In particular, it does not (and in the Committee's view cannot) demonstrate that it minimises adverse impacts on neighbouring residences (it would be unneighbourly), nor does it improve the integration of the area into the landscape when viewed from the western approaches to the town which is the objective of Policy BE10. It would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the town.
- b) We do not believe that the landscape assessment work 'demonstrates that there is no significant adverse impact (visual or otherwise) on the area's landscape in line with policy OS1'. References to the existing developments already impacting on the landscape are not relevant as these are not comparable in either density or scale.
- e) The Highways Development Management does not fully support the proposed development. The proposal cannot demonstrate that highway access to the site is provided/improved to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority. Furthermore, without the acquisition of third party land, it will not be possible to provide a safe and acceptable pedestrian access from the development into the town. Highways maintain

Planning Minutes

their objection to this application, 'considering it contrary to Policy 27 of the Cornwall Local Plan in failing to provide safe and suitable access for all people through the inadequate pedestrian provision and connectivity'.

f) The density of the proposed development, which will be accommodating hundreds of residents at peak times, does little to offer meaningful amenity space or recreational facilities in order to 'have a positive contribution towards open spaces' when there is an existing deficit of formal open and play space in the town.

g) It does not in any way reflect the built character of the area.

h) There is no genuine attempt to make this a sustainable development by reducing car trips on the busy B3311 route into St Ives or encouraging any modal shifts.

Policy OS1

As the site is within a designated landscape area identified on Map 8 in the NDP it does not satisfy the policy test in that:

a) The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is not able to demonstrate that 'no significant adverse landscape impact would occur'. The proposal does not 'fully conform to the objective to conserve and enhance areas with a national or local designation and their surroundings', namely the AONB, the AGLV, a Local Nature Reserve and a County Wildlife site.

b) It more than 'insignificantly harms the landscape character, amenity, nature conservation, historic, archaeological or geological values of the coast, shoreline, beaches, adjacent coastal waters, and countryside'.

c) There would be an 'adverse environmental impact in terms of the number of trips generated or over-reliance on cars'.

d) The scale and density of the proposal means that it is not 'capable of being effectively integrated into the surrounding landscape through landform and appropriate planting'.

Only if policies GD1 and OS1 are satisfied is there policy support for NDP policies LE8 and LE9 for new tourist accommodation. In addition, it is worth noting that there are a number of local hotels which have closed in recent years and have been sold, demolished and re-modelled as apartments. The applicant's agent states that there is no threshold need test for holiday and tourist accommodation. However, the Council is concerned that the commercial viability of the hotel accommodation has not been tested and no evidence is provided to support a development of this scale and type.

It is apparent that there is little emphasis on considering the commercial viability and long-term sustainability of such accommodation because of the flexibility for it to be converted into self-contained privately owned holiday accommodation. Our experience in the town is that such properties are initially subject to holiday conditions which are subsequently lifted, and the units are then sold as second homes. The design and scale of the proposed villas does nothing to allay these concerns. These are not holiday villas but residential units of scale, some with 4 bedrooms and over 130 sqm in size.

The development will be too prominent in the landscape and will inevitably be intrusive and have an adverse impact on the AONB (contrary to NDP OS1 and OS9). It is disingenuous to assert that the proposed villas are consistent with LE9 in the NDP which clearly envisages a different form of accommodation:

LED 9 Camping and Caravan Sites

Development of new sites or the extension or intensification of existing sites for caravans and tents, including static or other year-round stationed units.

In addition to being contrary to NDP policies such as OS4 (disturbance and pollution - light and noise) and OS9 (impact on views and panoramas), councillors believe that the proposal is in conflict with Cornwall Local Plan Strategic policies 1, 2, 3, 5, 12 and 23. In particular, policy 5.3 specifically states that:

Planning Minutes

'The development of new or upgrading of existing tourism facilities through the enhancement of existing or provision of new, high quality sustainable tourism facilities, attractions and accommodation will be supported where they would be of an appropriate scale to their location and to their accessibility by a range of transport modes. Proposals should provide a well-balanced mix of economic, social and environmental benefits'.

It is also in conflict with policies in the Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2016-2021, as follows: CC7 - it is not promoting high levels of peace and tranquillity and would create a high level of light pollution (conflicting with dark skies); MD1 - it is not in the public interest; MD9 - it is not an appropriately located necessary development; MD13 - potential harm to the adjacent wildlife site.