

HASCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES of Hascombe Parish Council Annual Meeting held on **Thursday 18th December 2014** in Hascombe Village Hall, Mare Lane, Hascombe at 7.00pm

Attendees: Mr C Orange – Chairman
Mr P Lye – Vice Chairman
Mrs S Jeffrey - Member
Mrs S Sullivan – Member
Mrs B Weddell – Clerk

Eight members of the public were in attendance.

Apologies: Apologies had been received from Mr Richard Gates and Mr Maurice Byham, Waverley Borough Councillors, and Mr Kevin Kingham.

ACTION

14/117 **Declarations of Interests**
There were no declarations of interest pertaining to agenda items.

14/118 **Accounts for Payment**
There were no accounts for payment.

14/119 **Planning**
a) Consideration of new Planning Applications
After full consideration of the following planning applications, the Parish Council resolved to respond as follows:

WA/2014/2168 Erection of building to provide 2 units for continued Class B2 (general industrial) use following substantial demolition of existing building. The Woodyard, Church Road, Hascombe. **Letter of OBJECTION appended.**

b) Joint action with neighbouring parishes regarding the Local Plan
After full consideration, it was agreed the parish council would make a contribution towards the cost of an initial study into the traffic reports included as evidence in support of the recent Local Plan consultation.

Clerk

14/120 **Next meeting**
Monday 19th January, 6.00pm, Hascombe Village Hall

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:45.

Hascombe Parish Council

5 January 2014

Mr William Clarke
Planning Services
Waverley Borough Council
The Burys
Godalming
GU7 1HR

Dear Mr Clarke

RE: WA/2014/2168. Erection of building to provide 2 units for continued Class B2 (general industrial) use following substantial demolition of existing building. The Wood Yard, Church Road, Hascombe.

Hascombe Parish Council has carefully considered the above application and listened to views expressed on it by villagers at a meeting on December 18th. Hascombe Parish Council strongly OBJECTS to the application.

1. The buildings

It is important to be clear about the buildings referred to in the application as there could be a misunderstanding as to which building the applicant is seeking to obtain retrospective planning permission to replace.

- The applied for permission is for the replacement of the open insubstantial shelter with corrugated iron sheets supported on and fixed on to poles, which in this letter is called “ the original building” or” pole barn”. This pole barn had existed for some years before it was replaced in 2012.
- In 2012 the building presently on site was built without any planning permission having been obtained. In this letter this is called “the Existing Building” The Inspector in his refusal of an appeal by the applicant to WA2013/2137 acknowledged that the works on the original pole barn did not constitute repairs and wrote “..my judgement is that the works undertaken have been so extensive that they amount to the rebuilding of the original structure and go beyond what might reasonably be considered repair and refurbishment works. Accordingly, before the works subject of the appeal scheme, the property was not of substantial construction for the purposes of a change of use of a building in the Green Belt.”
- The building for which permission is now sought is called “the New Building”.

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Chairman:

Mr Charles Orange. Telephone 01483 208343. Email charlesorange@hotmail.com
Hascombe Place, Hascombe, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4JA

Clerk:

Mrs Beverley Weddell. Telephone 01483 200314. Email clerk@hascombeparishcouncil.co.uk
Lock House Lodge, Knightons Lane, Dunsfold, Surrey GU8 4NU

2. Is the New building a replacement and not materially larger and for the same use?

It is or should be common ground that the applicant needs to show that the New Building is the replacement of the pole barn and is in the same use and not materially larger than the original pole barn in order to satisfy Para 89 of the NPPF.

There are statements by the local residents close by that the Existing Building is materially larger than the original open pole barn. The now proposed New Building is enclosed on all 4 sides and would be still larger and designed for a BI Business use and not for the B2 use as a sawmill.

3. The Certificate of Lawfulness

This controversial and unpopular grant was made on 2 December 2013 "for use of barn for commercial purposes, for use as a contractor's yard and sawmill for a period in excess of 10 years". It is important to remember that the existing building has NOT been certified as lawful commercial premises and does not qualify for such an application as it was only built in 2012.

4. Unsubstantiated statements made by the applicant

There have been several failed applications for this site. In each application unsubstantiated statements have been made by the applicant and agents to support their applications which have been disputed by all local long- residing residents in the immediate neighbourhood. There is a strong belief amongst some of the neighbours that the applicant has been and is still misrepresenting the true situation to the planners regarding the building ((see section 6 below). The Parish Council considers that the statements made by the long- term residents on the history of the site are more reliable than those made by the applicant. The applicant's unverified statements should not be accepted at face value.

5. Size of the Building

The agent Planit Consulting appears to be saying says in para 1.6 of its presentation that the architect has prepared plans of both the original building and also of the New Building. This is what we would expect so that the plans can be compared. However, when you look at the plans they show the existing building and the New Building, but there is no plan or drawing of the pole barn.

Para 6.13 of the applicant's submission to the Inspector on the applicant's appeal against a previous refusal of permission claimed to provide photographic evidence "proving the substantial nature of the original building". This so called proof was dismissed by the Inspector and the photograph produced seemed to show the Original Building as smaller than the existing building and an insubstantial edifice. It is no surprise that the inspector found that "the property was not of substantial construction for the purposes of a change of use of a building in the Green Belt". The Inspector also stated: "whether these works have resulted in a larger building cannot reasonably be assessed from the photographic and mapping evidence."

The closest neighbouring residents have stated their view that the existing building is materially larger in size and substance and more imposing than the pole barn – a view which is in line with the photographic evidence. A further increase in size and substance is applied for in this application by the addition of walls and doors and a new annexe for a kitchen with a footprint of 3.23m x 3.45m. This new annexe whilst it may not be a disproportionate addition to the Existing Building should be considered as an additional enlargement over the Pole Barn.

As the applicant replaced the pole barn with neither warning nor permission, there is no evidence of its previous size, as acknowledged by the planning inspector. The size of the pole barn is integral to the determination of the planning application. It is surprising that the applicant does not seem to have documented the size of the pole barn before demolishing it.

The Parish Council has concluded that the Existing Building and the New Building is indeed and will be substantially larger and of more substance than the open sided Pole Barn and that it is this change for which the applicant is now seeking permission.

6. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 89 and 90 of the NPPF

Paragraph 89 states “A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces...”

Paragraph 90 gives another exception for “the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction”

The applicant claims in 6.12 of the supporting document that the existing building has the same proportions and dimensions as the original pole barn it replaced. Yet they offer no evidence to prove this and local residents consider that it is larger. The Inspector stated that the original pole barn “was not of substantial construction”. Thus the proposal does not fit with the exceptions per NPPF paras 89 and 90. It would be a nonsense for WBC to justify the New proposed building by stating that the unapproved Existing building is substantial and permanent because the comparison should be with the Original insubstantial and impermanent pole barn Paragraph 28

In 6.2 of the supporting document it is claimed that the proposal will support a prosperous rural economy and quotes an extract from NPPF paragraph 28. The Parish Council supports this aim but considers that a workshop would be inappropriately positioned in the outstandingly beautiful area at the centre of the Village by the Church and Village pond.

Good design

Paragraph 28 and 56 of NPPF refers to good design as being a key component of sustainable development. The Parish Council does not think that the New Building is

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of a “good design”. It is a simple shed with very poor insulation and if allowed to stand all agree that the building should be hidden by a high hedge. This demonstrates that the Existing and New Building is not of good design or fits in with the character or appearance of the area. The application proposes that the existing leylandi hedge be replaced by a hornbeam hedge which being deciduous would mean that the ugly shed would be visible in winter.

A report is attached which was written in June 2014 and updated by Sarah Sullivan who is an historic buildings and conservationist specialist. She concludes that the New Building “ would result in substantial harm to designated heritage assets” and that it “fails to conserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting Listed and non heritage assets”.

Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

7. Waste drainage

The site is only a few yards from the Village Pond and a stream and as such a waste facility such as a cess pit or sewage system for the site may be closer than the minimum 10 metres to the water course that we understand is the rule for such systems.

8. Inaccuracies, misstatements and unverified assertions in the supporting document

Section 1.4 of the application states as a justification for rebuilding the structure that it had been damaged by a fire. No proof was provided of this fire and no resident of Church Road is aware of there having been a fire at the site.

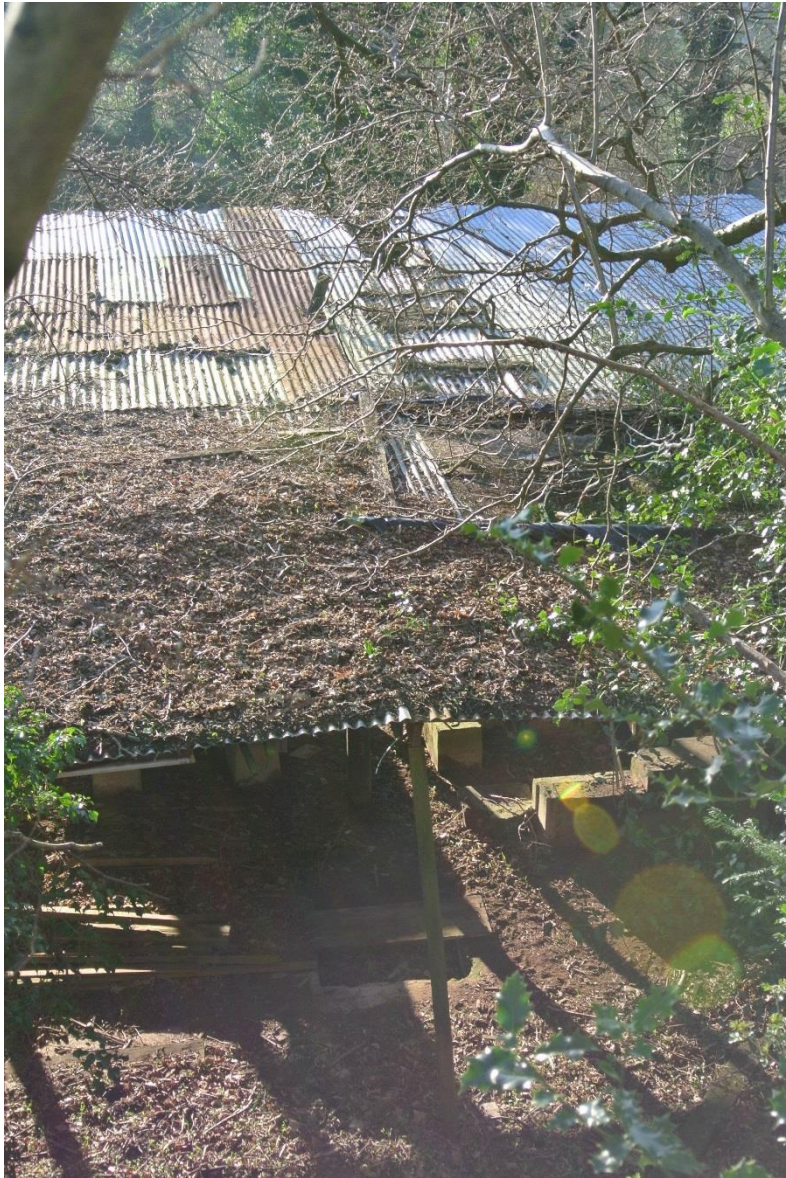
Section 3.2 of the application states that the nearest property is some distance from the site. This is not true as 1 School House is within feet of the property, just the other side of a footpath. Stillwell Cottages are close being, on the other side of Church Road.

Section 1.6 states the applicant has provided plans of the original building. No plans of the pole barn have been provided.

Section 3.6 states there was a back wall that rotted away. There was never a back wall before the rebuilding was undertaken as can be seen in the photo below.

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No evidence has been provided for the statement that the building has not been increased in size.

Section 3.11 fails to state that the rear of the original pole barn building was completely open. Prior to the building of the Existing and unapproved building it was an open shelter. Section 3.11 also refers to a photo in section 2.9 of the original building. We assume the applicant means section 3.9, as there is no photo in section 2.9. The photo in section 3.9 shows the new building, not the Original Pole Barn.

Section 4.2 states the floor space is to remain unaltered. No evidence has been provided to substantiate this claim. In fact, from photographs of the Original Building it would seem that the enclosed floor space has been considerably expanded.

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The application states that where the applicant wants to build the kitchen and toilet extension, there was an existing structure of smaller size. This is incorrect; the structure there was a covered box to house a small generator. See photo below:



Every assertion in Section 6.8 re Good Design is controversial and obviously open to challenge.

Section 6.26 quotes the appeal inspector as saying the development would have no negative impact on neighbours. The inspector was referring to B1 use – use suitable for a residential environment. The applicants have applied for B2 use, which is general industrial use and not suitable for a residential area.

Section 6.27 refers to an increase in traffic. It says that the traffic movements will be no greater than the previous use of the site as a Woodyard. From neighbours statements you will see that the site has not been used for the last 14 years and prior to that it was visited infrequently by the tenant. When the site was used as a Woodyard, it was only operated by Mr Court and his son and traffic movements were therefore much less than those likely from new uses of the large New Building

The above comments are examples of the biased and subjective statements made by the applicant in the supporting documents

9. Parking and access

The Surrey County Council (SCC) Standing Highway Design Advice for Minor Development states that parking should be 2.4m wide with a 6.8m aisle between a wall or fence.

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Therefore the four parking spaces should have a space of 16.4m. The applicant has not allowed this amount of space for parking.

Visibility

The SCC document defines the requirement for this, but when exiting the property there is not a clear 55m view to the left.

Waverley's Parking Guidelines recommend that there should be one parking space of 30m² and a minimum of two cycle spaces. This development should have 6.9 parking spaces and two cycle spaces.

The lack of sufficient on-site parking for this proposed development is a serious defect. Church Road is a narrow lane and there is no suitable off-site parking. One of the reasons given by Waverley to refuse the previous application was the lack of on-site parking and the effect it would have on the local environment. This problem has not been addressed within this new application.

Great care is needed by drivers of any vehicle accessing B2130 from Church Road and there have been several accidents at this junction over the last few years. The most recent was a collision in which a horse was killed by a car.

Furthermore, we think the applicant's estimate of six to eight movements a day is a significant underestimate. If there are two businesses on the site, each with two employees, there will be eight movements a day, before allowing for deliveries or customer visits.

10. Duty towards preserving or enhancing the area

The site is part of a particularly beautiful immediate area around the Village Pond. It is within Surrey Hills AONB, Green Belt, and next to The Greensands Way and accessed on an ancient single track road. The appeal inspector's report re 2013/2137 states that:

"The property is within the Hascombe Conservation Area where there is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. The Conservation Area is characterised by buildings extending along Church Road and an open area adjacent to the pond which is overlooked by the listed St Peters Church." It is also near the listed Church Cottage.

11. Conclusion

For the reasons given above, the Parish Council strongly objects to the application and recommends that it be refused by Waverley Borough Council. In particular, the building for which permission is applied is considered to be a new building which is materially larger and of different design and construction and not a replacement of the original insubstantial pole barn. It would be inappropriate and harmful to a particularly beautiful and protected area. One of the core planning principles is to empower local people to shape their surroundings.

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You will be aware of the unprecedented amount of opposition from local Hascombe residents to this and previous applications for permission for Building in the ex Woodyard site.

If despite the arguments made in this letter, Waverley is minded to approve the application, we recommend that strong conditions are made regarding traffic levels which are consistent with those made re the Planning permission granted for Livery stables at Upper House in Church Lane and on noise and other nuisances to local residents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Weddell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Beverley Weddell
Clerk to the Council

Enc. Hascombe Survey Report January 2015
 Hascombe Survey Report Back Page
 Pond Drop January 2015 Jpeg
 Pond Walkers January 2015 Jpeg