

Planning Committee 21.10.21

Chair: William Patterson, Present: Councillors: Ali Ross, Elaine Martin, Henry Sawrey-Cookson, Ian Chambers, Debra Wicks, Graham Simkin, Peter Baker, Mike Eyles, Cllr Briggs, M Hanley. Officers: I Irwin (principal planning officer), N Atkinson (planning service development officer). Legal officer.

Questions from the public

Jonathan Davies: How many planning applications have gone beyond the expiration period?

William Patterson (WP): There were 1506 planning applications received since May 2019, 1407 had a planning decision made within the statutory period. Therefore 102 applications fell outside. Currently there are 173 applications which are out of the time period. Many are subject to negotiation.

JD: What monetary loss do these delays cause the council?

WP: We don't have the answer to that question. We will get back to you.

Planning Issues

1. Change of village shop at Melmerby to residential accommodation.

No extension or internal alterations are proposed. In the last three years very little profit has been made, not enough to pay the owners a salary. The shop closed last year. Melmerby Village Bakery has since stocked the goods that used to be sold in the shop, sufficiently to be considered an appropriate alternative to the shop. The property has been put up for sale to continue as a shop but received no interest. The shop is an integral part of the whole house, so cannot be sold separately.

The change of use passes all planning requirements: not viable financially, no interest from other people and there is a viable alternative.

Councillor Briggs (Melmerby councillor): I concur with the planning officer and give full support to this application.

H Sawrey- Cookson(HSC): Its a sad day when we lose our village shop. I am against this.

M Eyles (ME): In policy Comm 1 it talks about consulting the public, has this happened?

N Atkinson (NA): No.

Debra Wicks (DW): I propose to approve the recommendation. You can't hold people to ransom to continue a business that is not profitable.

I Chambers (IC):Its not a charity, it is a business.

HSC: We don't want to see village shops closing, I'm against it. I know we cannot force people to run a business.

A Ross (AR): I mourn the loss of a business but I acknowledge there is an alternative in the village. It's not reasonable for us to impose on the owners.

The change of use was passed by the committee.

2. Change of use of domestic garage (car) to business preparing second hand cars for sale at Thacka Lane, Penrith.

There are no objections from neighbours. The recommendation is for approval and for a time limited period of two years, to prevent a larger concern taking over in the future.

Owner Mr Dixon put his case.
The committee approved the change of use.

3. Demolition of old barns at Hoff (near Appleby) and build three modern dwellings.

The scheme is proposed as market housing.

NA: This scheme will not give affordable housing. It would need to do that. The site is not in a sustainable position. There is no discernable benefit to the local community. The proposal is inherently contrary to the strategic development policies. The property was put on the market for the barns to be converted in 2017 but there was no interest. There is no local housing need. It is recommended for refusal.

Agent (in support): The farm has not been used for some time. Approval was granted in 2017 but there was little interest from developers. There was one developer who said that if it were able to be demolished he would be interested. If the property is not developed the site will blight the appearance of Hoff for generations to come. We did do a bat survey but it wasn't submitted.

I Irwin (Chief Planning Officer, II): It's not in a location where we would want 3 houses. We accepted that the barns could be converted, they don't need to be demolished.

4. Extension and car park for The Watch, day nursery at Langwathby.

Access to the car park will be through the recently built Maypole Gardens. Six objections were received from local residents, mainly about the access to the car park.

Objector: Steve Winder: I object to the car park, not the extension. A previously private area will be overlooked. This will cause disturbance through noise. It will have significant impact on road safety.

It's a major security risk to our properties. It will devalue all the houses backing on to the car park.

Applicant, Rachel Forster: The nursery has been running since 2012. Currently there are 81 places and 24 staff. The car park would be used only at peak times. With the extension, there will be a further 11 places. Prior to the housing estate being developed, the access was through that land. The old car park will continue to be used by the staff. The new car park will be locked during out of hours and will not be of use to the general public.

I Irwin: The potential loss of value and insurance concerns are not considerations councillors should take into account.

DW: We should go with the officer's recommendation. This business provides a service to local house-holders. Fences will be erected by the developers.

The committee approved the extension and car park.