

HAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Planning Meeting of Ham Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 17 April 2019.

Present: Mr C Dean (Chairman), Lady Walker (Vice Chairman), Mr R Buchanan-Dunlop, Mr J Marriage, Mr D Bicknell, Mrs C Garrod (Acting Parish Clerk) and nine members of the public.

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 19 February 2019.
4. Matters Arising
5. Planning Application 19/02151/FUL

Proposal: Change of use from residential garage to holiday let with occasional guest accommodation.

At: The Well Cottage Ham SN8 3RB

Mr P Crozier, Fowler Architecture and Planning, representing the applicants who were not present, explained the background to the application. It was needed because the applicants' daughter had returned from overseas, and it would be used occasionally for holiday letting. It involved the conversion of an existing building. No major landscaping was involved. The parking issue had been resolved with Wiltshire Council (reduced from 5 to 4 car parking spaces). The applicants were content with the condition that the converted garage should remain ancillary to Well Cottage, and such conversions were generally supported by Wiltshire Council. In response to questions, he said that sewage disposal details had not yet been determined; he was not aware whether a part of the garden would be set aside for the use of holiday letting occupants; and the window on the south elevation was now in four parts: two closed outside panels and two opening panels in the centre.

Mr Buchanan-Dunlop explained that planning consent for the existing garage had been given in September 1980. It contained the following condition:

The garage hereby permitted shall be used for the storage of private motor vehicles or ancillary domestic storage only and for no other purpose without the prior written permission of the District Planning Authority.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the application in the interests of amenity and the satisfactory planning of the area.

He said that although ownership of the garage had changed twice in the meantime, it was clear that the original intention was that the garage should not be used for any other purpose.

Since 1980 the Ham Conservation Area had been established and the garage was now in the centre of it. The application contained two main elements: the conversion of the garage into residential accommodation and its change of use for holiday letting. The footprint and height of the existing garage would not change. The principal exterior alterations were the addition of three dormer windows on the west elevation and, in particular, a floor-to-ceiling glass window 3 ½ metres wide which would replace the garage doors on the south elevation. The main issue was whether this conversion would enhance or detract from the Conservation Area. He considered that the very large window on the south elevation, some

6 metres from the public road, would have an adverse impact on what was a quiet lane leading to a 12th century church. This would be exacerbated by the number of cars parked in the forecourt of the converted building. As it would not be possible to park all the cars without juggling car parking spaces and turning, this would increase the propensity of the occupants of Well Cottage to park their cars on the public road outside Well Cottage in the congested centre of the village. He also drew attention to the complaints to the conversion which had been posted on the Wiltshire Council planning website by immediate neighbours.

The change of use was significant. What the application proposed was in essence the establishment of a private commercial enterprise at the congested heart of the Conservation Area which was of no benefit to the village. It would again detract from the Conservation Area and the noise and distraction caused by it would impact adversely on the quiet enjoyment of immediate neighbours. It would also impact adversely on the Crown & Anchor public house. The pub was registered as an Asset of Community Value and was due to reopen shortly. It would be dependent on the letting of its bedroom accommodation for economic viability.

Mr Marriage and Lady Walker agreed with the points raised by Mr Buchanan-Dunlop. Mr Bicknell added that the proposal would create carnage in the middle of the village and would disrupt funerals and marriages taking place in the church. The Chairman noted that an application for the erection of a summer house at Well Cottage was yet to come and asked what was the purpose of this drip-feed of planning applications by the owners. Mr Crozier said he was unable to comment.

Members of the public then commented. The owner of South House said he had seen many such applications in the village over 40 years. It was a cynical application which would end up with the converted garage being sold off as a separate dwelling in the middle of a dense part of the village. Because Mr Fowler, one of the applicants, was an architect who had been employed by members of the village, many people felt uncomfortable about the application, and everyone he had spoken to opposed it. The owner of Doves House said he was suspicious of the application because of what it might lead to in the future. It conflicted with the tourism already provided by the Crown & Anchor, and he strongly objected to the application. The owner of the Old Rectory commented that Church Lane was a very special part of the village. It was a quiet lane and any change to it would be detrimental. He too was concerned about creeping planning consent. The owner of The Old School said that the holiday letting would affect the parking of his own car in front of his studio, and he objected to the application. The occupant of 1 Church Road also objected to the application. He said it was obvious that the applicants would try to sell the converted garage as a separate dwelling, and the additional car parking would encourage others to park along Church Lane. Mr Crozier was asked to relay the views expressed and their unpopularity to the applicants. Mr Crozier stressed the assurance given by the applicants that they would not try to overturn a condition that the converted garage should remain an ancillary of Well Cottage. Mr Buchanan-Dunlop commented that that rang hollow when the applicants were currently engaged in trying to overturn a previous condition that the garage should not be used for any other purpose.

The Parish Council recorded an Objection to the application.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm