

Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 29th August 2007 in the Parish Room

Present: Cllrs. Crafter, Martin – Chairman, Radford and Page, Mr M. Stevens

In attendance: The Clerk

Apologies: Cllr. Hildrew

1. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Radford declared a personal interest in item 3 as a neighbour.

2. Decisions

SE/07/01162/FUL Bowman's Orchard, Burlings Lane, Knockholt TN14 7PS: Detached stable block

3. Application received

SE/07/02412/FUL Blueberry Farm, Blueberry Lane, Knockholt TN14 7NH: Change of use from barn conversion to 4 x B1 office units

Whilst there are some elements of this application of which this council can be supportive there are many factors which can only lead to a recommendation for refusal.

In our view there are many discrepancies in the Design & Access Statement and quite differing interpretations of the Inspection Report to SE/05/00568 which was refused. Plans are anomalous and the same vagueness shown in that application is apparent now e.g. where does building 4 sit - in or outside the proposed B1 curtilage - or on the boundary. Where all buildings are concerned it is difficult to reconcile scale measurements at 1:200 as against quoted square metrage and assume you will check their accuracy.

Despite claims, in the presentation, to the contrary the Inspector was unequivocal in his view on the condition of buildings especially no 4 and if this was not sound enough for conversion to residential, without the same works (except for not raising the roof level); it would be similarly unsuitable for office workers. Paragraphs 9 & 10 of the Inspector's report refer. SDLP policy requires that buildings must be of permanent and substantial construction to qualify for conversion proposals. In this case they are not.

Access is a most serious problem – in regard to the highways situation the Inspector's remarks at paragraphs 16 & 17 (Character and Appearance) and 23 (Very Special Circumstances) still apply.

Where the submitted plans are concerned there are serious discrepancies as concerning the red and blue lines and these particularly affect the hedge line in front of Blueberry farmhouse.

Much of what we had to say under date 18.9.05 is still relevant and indeed, looking as we have at 'Very Special Circumstances' we cannot but concur with summary paragraph 25 of the Inspector's report to SE/05/00568 where he said "...notwithstanding the advantages arising from the proposal in terms of improving the openness of the Green Belt and highway safety in my judgment these considerations do not outweigh the harmful effects in terms of inappropriateness and the impact on the character and appearance of the area. As such, they do not amount to the very special circumstances which need to be demonstrated if planning permission is to be granted."

N.B. This is our underlining and the conclusion arrived at, in our view, is just as applicable in the case of the current application. We reiterate refusal is felt to be appropriate.