



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor N Hampshire (Convener)
Councillor D Berry
Provost L Broun-Lindsay
Councillor S Brown
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor S Currie
Councillor T Day
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor D Grant
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor J McMillan
Councillor J McNeil
Councillor T Trotter
Councillor J Williamson

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Ferguson, Service Manager – Legal Services
Mr I McFarlane, Acting Service Manager – Development Management
Mr D Irving, Planner
Ms A Smith, Committees Officer

Clerk:

Ms F Currie

Visitors Present:

Item 2 – Mr R Holder
Item 2 – Mr D Greenan

Apologies:

Councillor W Innes

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF 7 JANUARY 2014

The minute of the Planning Committee of 7 January 2014 was approved.

2. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 13/00901/P: ERECTION OF 1 HOUSE AND CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO FORM DOMESTIC GARDEN GROUND AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT ELANORA AND ADJACENT AGRICULTURAL LAND, DIRLETON ROAD, NORTH BERWICK

A report was submitted in relation to Planning Application No. 13/00901/P. Daryth Irving, Planner, presented the report, summarising the key points. The proposed decision set out in the report was for refusal of the application.

In response to questions from Members Mr Irving advised that the plots varied in size along Dirleton Road and that most of the houses were single storey with sloped roofs.

Mr Holder of Holder Planning, agent for the applicant, referred to the earlier applications submitted by his client and subsequently refused by the Council. In his view the previous applications had constituted an over development of the site. However, this was not the case with the current application which was significantly smaller and more in keeping with its surroundings. He drew Members' attention to the size of the Elanora plot – approximately 10m wider than other plots on Dirleton Road. This meant that it could comfortably support an additional house and that, by granting planning permission, the Members would not necessarily be creating a precedent for further infill development in that area. If planning officers had concerns about the design of the house, these could be addressed by further discussion. Rather than refuse the application outright, he proposed that Members approve planning permission "in principle", or sist the application, pending those discussions.

Iain McFarlane, Acting Service Manager – Development Management, advised Members that approval "in principle" or sisting the application would not be appropriate where significant alterations to design or materials were being considered.

Local Member Councillor Day explained that he had called this application off the list due to its history and to allow the Committee to give it their full consideration. He was broadly in favour of infill development but was mindful of concerns about overdevelopment and the impact on the surrounding area. In this particular case, he respectfully disagreed with the views of officers. The proposals did not, in his view, present an overdevelopment of the site and would not be detrimental to the surrounding plots. The houses on the road varied in size and style and the new house would be screened by a high hedge. For these reasons he would not be supporting the report recommendation.

Local Member Councillor Goodfellow agreed with some of Councillor Day's remarks. He considered the infill site to be a little cramped, but not sufficient to refuse the application, and detrimental was too strong a word. He commented that much had been made of the high hedge screening the site but hedges could be cut down. However, he agreed with the first reason for refusal – style of the house and materials not in keeping with the surroundings – and would have preferred alternative

materials to be specified. He wished to hear from other Members before deciding how to vote.

Local Member Councillor Berry reflected that this was an application which could be argued both ways. While he did not think that it was, of itself, an overdevelopment of the site; the new house would, in his opinion, break up the overall consistency of properties in the street. He also considered Councillor Goodfellow's comments about the hedge well made. Taking everything into account, he would be supporting the report recommendation.

Councillor Currie supported the proposition made by Councillor Day. He remarked that infill development is a reality and happens regularly in North Berwick due to the opportunities presented by larger sized plots. Having considered all of the information provided and the site visit, on balance, he thought that the Committee should approve the application.

Provost Broun-Lindsay acknowledged that the redevelopment potential of larger plots was often considered part of their charm; however he did not agree with the proposals for this site. In his view it would disturb the balance of the local area and the hedge was not a relevant factor, as it could be removed. He would be supporting the report recommendation.

Councillor McMillan commented that his own concerns had been put into context by Provost Broun-Lindsay. He considered that the development was incongruous, although not contrived as had been suggested by officers; some thought had gone into the design. He would be supporting the report recommendation.

Councillor Grant remarked that the site had proved to be much larger than he had imagined and it was clear that the applicant had worked hard to find a solution to fit the site. He supported infill development and would not be supporting the report recommendation.

Councillor Goodfellow proposed that, should the Committee be minded to approve the application, an amendment should be made to the conditions specifying that an alternative material to zinc be used as cladding for the upper part of the house. Councillor Day seconded this amendment. However, Mr McFarlane pointed out that the conditions attached to any planning approval must be specific and enforceable and that this proposed amendment was not appropriate.

The Convener brought the discussion to a close. He referred to the concerns often raised over infill developments but pointed out that only one objection had been received and there had been no concerns raised by the Community Council. In his view the proposed design would not detract from the character of the area but rather add to the existing variety of shapes and styles of property. He concluded that similar infill development had been done elsewhere in East Lothian; he would be supporting this application.

The Convener moved to the vote to grant the planning application, contrary to the report recommendation:

For: 12

Against: 5

Abstentions: 0

Decision

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission. The Committee also agreed to delegate determination of conditions to the Convener and officers. The application for planning permission was therefore granted subject to conditions to be determined.

Signed

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Convener of the Planning Committee