



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

**TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor N Hampshire (Convener)
Councillor L Bruce
Councillor S Currie
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor C McGinn
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor J McMillan
Councillor F O'Donnell
Councillor B Small

Council Officials Present:

Mr I McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Mr K Dingwall, Team Manager – Planning Delivery
Ms S McQueen, Planner
Ms C McMonagle, Graduate Planner
Mr J Allan, Planning Technician
Mr G McLeod, Transportation Planning Officer
Ms J Mackay, Media Manager

Clerk:

Ms A Smith

Visitors Present:

Ms S Stephen, Mr R Millar, Mr A Brown, Ms F Jones

Apologies:

Councillor T Trotter

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – PLANNING COMMITTEE 7 NOVEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee of 7 November 2017 were approved.

Councillor Currie indicated that he would be requesting an update in respect of the supply of housing land at Council on 19 December.

2. PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 16/00892/P: ERECTION OF 7 FLATS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT CLASHFARQUHAR, 37 KINGS ROAD, LONGNIDDY

A report was submitted in relation to Planning Application No. 16/00892/P. Stephanie McQueen, Planner, presented the report, summarising the key points. The proposed decision set out in the report was to grant consent.

Councillor Bruce asked why a commuted sum rather than the actual affordable housing units had been deemed acceptable. Ms McQueen indicated this had been the decision of Housing Services. Iain McFarlane, Planning Service Manager, added that the response by Housing Services was based on assessment of the viability of affordable units on site; for the proposed two units their assessment was that a commuted sum would be more appropriate.

Responding to Councillor O'Donnell's questions, Graeme McLeod, Transportation Planning Officer, clarified that the thirteen parking spaces provided included provision for visitor parking. He also confirmed that as this number met the relevant Parking Standard no assessment of on-street parking had been required.

In response to questions from Councillor Currie about affordable housing, Mr McFarlane reiterated that this had been the assessment of Housing Services. He advised that on large development sites they would look for groups of 30/60 units, however where there would only be 1/2 units their preference, in accordance with the Council's Affordable Housing Policy, was for a commuted sum. Responding to further questions, Mr McFarlane clarified that it was for the Committee to decide whether the recommendation and terms of the report, including the elements discussed, were appropriate. He advised that there was a question of viability for the Council regarding providing these units on this site, there was also a question of whether providing these units would undermine the viability of the site itself.

Councillor Small asked how the commuted sum of £7,400 per unit was reached. Mr McFarlane outlined the process carried out by Housing Services and the District Valuer in reaching this figure. Regarding questions about the suitability of the road, Mr McLeod confirmed the road had been fully assessed as required in respect of access and visibility.

Councillor McGinn asked about the statement in the report from objectors regarding an accident black spot. Mr McLeod clarified that there was no data regarding injury accidents in this location through the Police reporting mechanism.

In response to questions from Councillor McMillan about the potential traffic hazard resulting from construction traffic, Ms McQueen stated that one of the conditions was that a Construction Method Statement would be in place to minimise the impact of construction activity on the safety of the area.

Susan Stephen, Architect and agent for the applicant, stated that the proposed seven flats would provide much needed downsizing accommodation in Longniddy. There had already been five expressions of interest, all from people locally. Catering for this need would enable the larger houses to be released for families. The proposed building would sit comfortably in relation to its neighbours, it would fit with the architecture of the area and it would enrich the

diverse character of Kings Road and the wider area. It would give the appearance of a 2-storey building; the height would be lower than that of the existing building.

Robert Millar, immediate neighbour, spoke against the application. This proposed building could not be mistaken for anything other than a 3-storey building. The intrinsic character of Longniddry was one house, one plot, predominately 2-storey houses. The site would be viewed from the golf course; there would be no screening at this important public viewpoint. This development failed to meet the criteria set out in Council Policies, DP1, 2 and 7. The proposal would introduce multi occupancy of a single plot. The size, mass and density was unequalled in the area. He also raised issues about balcony screening and external lighting. This proposal was unacceptable; it would demonstrably harm the character of the area.

Responding to Councillor O'Donnell, Mr Millar appreciated that there had been notes of interest, this was not surprising and reflected the normal operation of the housing market. However, he pointed out that there was no identified housing need for this development, as housing needs would be met by the allocation of Longniddry South. He also stressed concerns relating to car parking provision and traffic issues.

Councillor McGinn queried points made about the impact on the golf course and the right of way. Mr Millar stated that the third storey of the proposed building would be prominent from the golf course, people used the golf course as a right of way to get to the beach; this would not be a small-screened development.

Antony Brown, also an immediate neighbour, spoke against the application. This application had unanimous opposition from local residents, Longniddry Community Council and Longniddry Golf Club. Kings Road contained villas of various sizes and styles but all shared one feature, they were all houses. There had been subdivision of some plots but all were still houses with their own gardens. There was no precedent for a proposal of this type. He also raised issues about balcony screening and car parking provision. This proposal was completely unacceptable.

Fiona Jones spoke against the application. She stated that this proposal was out of keeping with the other properties, this was urban development. She raised several traffic issues resulting from the increased number of cars from the proposed development. She referred to the multi occupancy nature of the property, which would change the character of the village and set an unhealthy precedent. Fifty-six objections had been submitted; no one in the village supported this application. This proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character of Longniddry village; she urged refusal.

Local Member Councillor Bruce indicated that in his opinion, the proposal was an inappropriate development and did go against the character of the village. Regarding the provision of flats, he remarked that this would be addressed in the new Longniddry South development. He would be going against the recommendation in the report.

Local Member Councillor O'Donnell noted the objectors' concerns that the proposal was not in keeping with the area but felt that a different view could be to welcome the opportunity for diversity in the area. She would be supporting the officer's recommendation.

Councillor Findlay felt that this proposal was an overdevelopment and would damage the character of the village. He also had traffic concerns in relation to the additional number of cars resulting from the proposed development. He would not be supporting the report recommendation.

Councillor Small concurred with Councillors Bruce and Findlay. He also expressed concern about the issue of precedent for sites across East Lothian if this proposal was granted. He would be going against the officer's recommendation in the report.

Councillor McMillan remarked that he did not regard the proposal as a major change; he felt that the building would not necessarily be seen as a block of flats but just as another property. He did have some concerns about traffic and external lighting. On balance, however he would be supporting the officer's recommendation.

Councillor Currie stated that he would not be supporting the report recommendation. The proposal was out of keeping with the area, it would have an unacceptable impact, it would be visually harmful to the streetscape; it was an overdevelopment.

The Convener ended the discussion. He referred to the history of planning applications on this road and to previous objections to some current properties. Regarding screening of the balconies, raised at the site visit, he stressed that the relevant Council policies were met. He would be supporting the recommendation to grant planning permission.

He moved to the vote on the report recommendation (to grant consent):

For: 5
Against: 6
Abstentions: 0

Decision

The Committee agreed to refuse planning permission; reasons to be determined by the Planning Service Manager, the Convener and Local Members.

Post Meeting

The Committee agreed to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

1. By its massing, size and scale the proposed flatted building would be out of keeping with its surroundings and harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies DP2 and DP7 of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008 and Policy 1B of the approved South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan.
2. There would be insufficient on street parking, which would lead to congestion and a road safety hazard, contrary to Policy T2 of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008.

Signed

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Convener of the Planning Committee