

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 3rd NOVEMBER, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Fletcher in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Copeland, Heron, T. Martin, Miller, Scaplehorn, J. Scott, Snowdon, Wake and Wakefield

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chamberlin, Cuthbert and I. Richardson

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Chief Executive submitted a report and a supplementary report (copies circulated) which related to Hetton, Houghton and Washington areas, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Cabinet upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

09/03207/LAP – Creation of a new skate park and bike track on site of disused ‘crocodile pond’ to the rear of Washington Leisure Centre, Pond/Lake 1 Princess Anne Park, Washington Town Centre, Washington

Members welcomed the plans for the development, and it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the three conditions as set out in the report and two additional conditions being added in respect of approved plans and the fencing to be erected to protect retained trees.

09/03250/FUL – Erection of single/two storey extension to western elevation at Westbourne Surgery, Kelso Grove, Shiney Row, Houghton-le-Spring. DH4 4RW

Councillor Speding spoke against the application on behalf of local residents, and advised that their objections referred to three specific issues around:-

- the parking requirement for this development would be 36 spaces yet the practice would only provide 15 with the remainder of the spaces being assumed to be from the adjacent Council car park. This car park currently has a 95% occupancy rate during the day which could result in extra vehicles using the surrounding side streets to park, causing disruption to neighbouring residents;
- pedestrian movement is not referred to in the report. Mobility could be a problem as the site is on a steep incline and there is no footpath;
- the proximity of the building to neighbouring homes being under the normally required guideline of 21 metres.

The representative of the Chief Executive replied to the points raised by Councillor Speding, and Members having discussed the issues agreed that they needed the opportunity to see the site prior to making a decision on the application.

2. RESOLVED that the application be deferred pending a site visit.

09/03268/FUL – Erection of dormer window to front (Retrospective) at 22 The Green, Houghton-le-Spring, DH5 8AL

Councillor Wakefield explained that he had requested that this application be presented to the Committee as it would normally be determined under the Council's Delegation Scheme. He advised that the dormer had been erected to the front of the property which overlooked the rear of the Market Place and the Council gritting depot, and was adjacent to a derelict steel unit. He also informed the Committee that new developments at a site at Penshaw were being built with similar dormer style windows to overlook Herrington Country Park. He referred Members to the previous application where a dormer was being proposed as a solution to a problem and felt there was no difference with this application.

The representative of the Chief Executive advised that with regard to new estates the dormers had been included in the development as an original design feature and so are seen as helping to create the character of the estate. He explained that the previous application had been a single storey building and the dormer would create a second storey not a third so it was significantly different to this application. He advised Members that to grant retrospective approval of this application would create a precedent upon which other applicants for like development would seek to rely in the future. He further advised that the Council had been successful in several appeals submitted in respect of dormer extensions, even in streets where there were dormers already present.

It was acknowledged that the extension had been well carried out and the windows were in fitting with the rest of the property but the application did not conform with current Council Policy. The Officer advised that had the application come before the Committee prior to being built the recommendation would have been to refuse the application and Members should be mindful of this. He indicated that there were no material considerations which indicated that the application should be determined other than in accordance with the adopted policy and guidance.

Members further discussed the issues raised by Councillor Wakefield and the Officer.

The Chairman having moved that the recommendation be agreed and Councillor Miller having seconded the motion, the decision was put to the vote, and:

7 Members having voted for, 2 Members having voted against, and 2 Members abstaining from the vote, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the application be refused for the reasons set out in report.

Items for Information

4. RESOLVED that the following site visits be undertaken:
 - a. 09/03824/LAP – Washington School, Spout Lane, Washington. At the request of Councillor Fletcher

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeals

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the above for the period 1st September, 2009 to 30th September, 2009.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) J. FLETCHER,
Chairman.