

A meeting of the planning committee of the Ashby, Somerleyton and Herringfleet parish council was held in the village hall at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday 6th January, 2022.

Those present were: Robert Wild (chair), Simon Phillips, Claire Diggins, Ron Lindsay, Chris Reynolds, District Councillor Paul Ashdown and Jennie Wild (press). Fourteen members of the public attended the public forum at the beginning of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to form a response to the planning application reference DC/21/5249/FUL; 1, Brickfields, Somerleyton.

The chair explained that the public forum would be followed by a committee meeting to establish a formal response to be submitted to East Suffolk Planning Department. It was recognised that the application was a contentious one about which some residents were extremely worried. He asked for the meeting to be conducted in an orderly manner with those wishing to make a point indicating as much by raising a hand.

One resident commented that the construction did not now adhere to the original planning application, especially regarding the windows. The design of the windows in the other cottages is the same as those installed when they were built in the 1860's. The cottages were sold and renovated in the 1970's. They were turned round with the front doors facing the track rather than the grass area and the garages were added. When the conservation area was extended in 2012 the conservation area appraisal report aimed at uniformity, so the windows should be as they were in 2012.

The applicant intends to plant a holly hedge. It is not clear where this will be, or how high, and may obscure the view of the cottages from the Angles Way. The Angles Way actually runs down the Brickfields track and not down the track leading to the Marina. The local signage is, in fact, incorrect.

Another resident added that the new ridge tiles on the property do not look correct. However, the new ridge tiles have been accepted even though they don't match existing buildings.

Further concern was expressed that the two fences the applicant intends to place on either side of the entrance to the Brickfields track will make it look like a private area.

The applicant intends to place an LPG gas tank near the existing substation. Several people were worried that this might be dangerous.

There are covenants on all the Brickfield cottages. The contravention of these is not a planning matter. The parish council planning committee will inform the Estate that covenants are likely to be broken, and that the proposed fences on either side of the track, although on the applicant's land, involve the narrowing of the actual track.

An extension to the garden is proposed. Concern was expressed the applicant will be enclosing land which residents and others have a right to cross. The land registry document uses two colours to indicate which is private and which has public right of way. This enclosure might set a precedent encouraging other residents to enclose land adjacent to their properties.

Another resident asked if the extension of the conservation area of 2012 was being ignored. It was pointed out that the applicant has permission for an extension but has submitted a new request for further changes and alterations.

The original application stated that the Angles Way is fifteen metres away from the property. However, it actually crosses his land. The land at the back is not open scrub, as stated, but amenity land. The site assessment is wrong probably due to a lack of coherence between different planning officers.

A resident asked if the planning application could be changed and whether it was possible to meet one of the planning officers. This is only possible in extenuating circumstances. On occasion one can be called upon to view a site. Councillor Ashdown agreed to request a site visit.

It was explained that, when preparing the formal statement, the parish council planning committee would consider all the points raised here, together with those already submitted by e-mail. Residents were encouraged to continue to make objections on the East Suffolk Planning Department's Open Forum. Husband and wife can make individual comments if they wish to do so.

The plan shows bright lights adjacent to the building which are not in keeping with the village and are counter to the Broads Authority dark sky policy.

It was pointed out that the new land registry document now shows the applicant's land in front of the substation. It was agreed that this should be checked. Evidence would have to be produced to prove this. The Estate must have been satisfied with the arrangement, though access to the substation would have to be maintained.

It was felt that the double gates and pillars planned for the property were out of keeping with the rest of the cottages and might indicate that the applicant was planning on including a driveway.

It was agreed that the Brickfield cottages are a historic asset to the village. Their aesthetic value is worthy of consideration. A request was made that all the comments be put on the East Suffolk planning website to show the weight of feeling against the proposed plans.

The public forum ended at 7.08 p.m. after which the parish council planning committee considered the above comments, together with those earlier sent by e-mail, and drew up a statement to be attached to the completed form and submitted to the Planning Department.

It was agreed that the public would be advised of the results, via the parish council noticeboards, website. The statement can also be found on the East Suffolk Planning Department website.

The meeting ended at 7.34 p.m.

Jennie Wild 11th January, 2022 (standing in for Sue Read, parish clerk)