

**LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 09 JANUARY 2024**

Present:

Chairman: Cllr. G Turner

Members: Cllr. B Larcombe MBE, Cllr P. May, Cllr. S. Cockerell, Cllr. B Bawden

Officers: M. Green (deputy town clerk), AM. Shepherd (administrative assistant)

24/83/P Public Forum

V. Bronk – P/HOU/2023/07022
R. Bronk – P/HOU/2023/07022
S. Williams – P/HOU/2023/07022
T. Andrews – P/HOU/2023/07022
I. Andrews – P/HOU/2023/07022
H. Britton – Did not wish to speak.

24/84/P Apologies for absence

Cllr. C. Alridge – Holiday

24/85/P Minutes

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 were **ADOPTED**.

24/86/P Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

24/87/P Dispensations

There were none.

24/88/P Member planning recommendations

Noted.

24/89/P Matters arising from the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 12 December 2023

There were none.

24/90/P Update Report

There were none.

Planning and Licencing Applications

The committee agreed application P/FUL/2023/04778 would be considered first to avoid members of the public being unnecessarily detained.

1. **P/HOU/2023/07022** (Received 02.01.24)
HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION

Provision of new annexe

Umbrella Cottage Sidmouth Road Lyme Regis DT7 3EQ

On behalf of the applicant, S. Williams explained the planning application in further detail, adding that the annexe would only be used by members of the family and friends when visiting. He explained the applicant specifically did not want a separate dwelling and were willing to accept a planning condition that restricted its use to an annexe only, preventing it from being sold off separately from Umbrella Cottage.

He discussed the dwellings on either side of Umbrella Cottage, one being the Listed Upper Cobb House which was set well forward from the application site. To the west was a large modern dwelling, The Sheerings, at a much higher level to Umbrella Cottage. He emphasised the site of the proposed annexe was sloping, rough land within the curtilage of the property. The annexe would be sat within this falling land and with a flat, sedum roof at the same level as the rear of Umbrella Cottage. The annex would, therefore, have minimal visual impact and be subservient to nearby properties.

S. Williams explained a geotechnical study had been undertaken by Riddlesden who were experienced in land stability within Lyme Regis. In summary, they concluded whilst further onsite investigations would be needed, especially in relation to a retaining wall at the rear of the site, it was nonetheless suitable for traditional foundations. Overall, it would have no significantly adverse effect on land slope stability.

S. Williams summarised that the scheme and its materials had been designed to ensure it didn't detract from Upper Cobb House, or cause harm or loss to this property and its setting.

In response to later comments made by neighbouring owners, S. Williams disagreed with their view that the proposed annexe would be visually prominent in the wider townscape or landscape, and he felt it would not cause any harm to the special character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He referenced various photographs which he felt supported his view. He went on to suggest that the councillors might like to add a pre-commencement condition to the application, requiring that on-site ground investigations were undertaken, then submitted to Dorset Council for approval prior to any work starting on site.

S. Williams informed members that, originally, the application was for a two-story building. This was reduced to single storey because the Conservation Officer was concerned about the impact of higher rise development. It did mean, however, that the 'footprint' had increased in size as a result. He didn't believe the development would take away all the remaining green space and it was entirely within the curtilage of the property.

S. Williams explained there had been no subsequent contact with the planning officer subsequent to the application being reduced to the scale now before members.

V. Bronk of Upper Cobb House, Lyme Regis told the councillors that this was their only property and they had lived there for 13 years. They objected to the proposed application due to the significant harm it would cause to the setting and potential damage it might cause to their Listed Regency house, particularly the ornate plastered ceilings.

V. Bronk reminded the councillors that The National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan stated that unless harm to heritage assets was balanced by public benefit, then the proposal should be turned down. In her opinion there was no such public benefit in this case. V. Bronk believed the proposal would lessen the public benefit by damaging the view of the Listed buildings, enjoyed by the many walkers using the coastal path and in Ware fields.

V. Bronk informed the councillors that Ware fields were owned by the National Trust due to a campaign, led by local author John Fowles, to preserve them for public benefit.

V. Bronk informed the councillors they had commissioned geotechnical survey and structural engineering reports from Peter Chapman and DHD Structures. Those reports agreed with the applicant's own technical report, i.e., sinking a large building three meters into a constrained site on a steep sloping hillside would require piling to stabilise the excavation. The reports showed that the piling would transmit vibrations through the hillside and into their neighbouring house only a few meters away, and there was a foreseeable risk that this could damage the Listed plaster ceilings within Upper Cobb House.

A sunken building could also change the ground water regime, increasing water around either side of it and possibly causing water damage to Upper Cobb House's half-sunken 19th kitchen and Vault.

V. Bronk felt the application would over develop the site, the last extension of Umbrella Cottage being in 2000, with very strict planning conditions. The new building would extend past their house windows and into original pasture, which would disturb wildlife.

V. Bronk urged the application be rejected.

R. Bronk believed the proposed building was an inappropriate design and would harm the rural, coastal setting of Upper Cobb House and Umbrella Cottage, and

the visual integrity of the historically linked pair of buildings. He stated the plans were misleading as they did not show the upstairs west-facing windows on Upper Cobb House. The proposed building would sit in front of one of the windows and would allow the occupants to look directly into the master bedroom of Upper Cobb House. This was in addition to the building looking into various other windows and the conservatory of their property. He mentioned the new hedgerow which had recently been planted along the site boundary without approval and which was already blocking direct light into the historic rooms of Upper Cobb House.

R. Bronk reiterated the point made by V. Bronk with regard to how the proposed pile driving would adversely affect their Listed building. He also believed the application, if approved, would not prevent the current or any subsequent owner of Umbrella Cottage renting out the annexe at some point in the future.

R. Bronk urged the application be rejected.

I. Andrews of Netherfield House, Lyme Regis and his wife T. Andrews lived two doors 'up' from Umbrella Cottage. They objected to such a large dwelling. He informed the committee that Umbrella Cottage had already doubled in size in the past and was currently only being used as a holiday home and was rarely occupied. Therefore, the need for such a large annex to accommodate a 'large family' was questionable. He also stated that any damage to the ceilings in Upper Cobb House caused by pile driving, would be 'catastrophic, and a great loss to our beautiful town'.

I. Andrews felt the proposal was not in keeping with the adjacent historic buildings and would look 'unsympathetic' when viewed from the coastal footpath.

He urged the application be rejected.

There followed a very lengthy discussion about the application during which S Williams and the various objectors were allowed to contribute at various points.

Members expressed a wide variety of differing views about the merits and demerits of the application.

The discussion focussed on a number of issues, including:

- The potential visual impact of the proposed annexe when viewed from the land below.
- The impact on the setting of the neighbouring properties, in particular, the Listed Upper Cobb House and Umbrella Cottage.
- The potential for the 'ground works' associated with the planned annexe to adversely impact Upper Cobb House.
- The scale of the proposed annexe and its location within the site.
- Material planning considerations and those matters which the council could properly take into account when considering the application.

- The role of the town council in commenting on the application, i.e., as a consultee only, with the final decision made by Dorset Council as Planning Authority.

In response to questions and comments made by R Bronk, the chairman explained that he had no pecuniary interest in the application. He checked on the building whilst the owners were away, but was not paid for this.

The chairman asked for members to vote on the application, and, by a majority, it was agreed:

*The Town Council recommends **approval** subject to reconsideration of its scale, together with an assurance that all associated land works and excavations will not create a negative impact on any neighbouring or surrounding properties.*

2. P/HOU/2023/07237 (Received 20.12.23)

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION

Demolish conservatory and construct single storey rear extension on a similar footprint.

2 Pine Ridge Lyme Regis Dorset DT7 3HP

*The town council recommends **approval** of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, does not involve material harm to the Conservation Area or heritage assets and has no adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.*

3. P/HOU/2023/03723 (Received 20.12.23)

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION

Install balcony off an existing rear bedroom dormer.

Bay House Sidmouth Road Lyme Regis DT7 3EQ

*The town council recommends **approval** of the application because it is in accordance with the approved development plan, does not involve material harm to the Conservation Area or heritage assets and has no adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.*

24/92/P Licensing Applications

There were none.

24/93/P Amended/Additional Plans

There were none.

24/94/P Withdrawn Applications

There were none.

24/95/P Planning Decisions

Noted.

24/96/P

Planning Correspondence

Noted.

The meeting closed at 20:15pm