

Corhampton & Meonstoke Parish Council
Planning Committee Meeting and Public Consultation
Wednesday 13 September 2017, The Meon Hall, Meonstoke.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jane McCormick, Jerry Pett (Chair), Patrick Rowe.
IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor Laurence Ruffell, Roger Huxstep (arrived 7 pm)
Za Rowe, Rosie Hoile – Clerk.
PUBLIC 10 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence:** Rowena Hyder
2. **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest:** None
3. **Public forum:**

The meeting adjourned to receive questions from members of the public concerning the following planning application and conditions contingent upon SDNP granting planning permission for SDNP/17/03849/FUL.

Ref: Ref: SDNP/17/03849/FUL
Location: Location Vernon House Warnford Road Corhampton SO32 3ND
Proposal: New access arrangements to connect between De Ports Heights and Warnford Road (A32) adjacent to Vernon House. To include a new link between the already approved roads and the closure of the Vernon House junction to vehicles.

Ref: SDNP/17/03850/CND
Location: Vernon House Warnford Road Corhampton SO32 3ND
Proposal: Variation of Conditions 2 and 12 on planning consent SDNP/16/02757/FUL – to reflect proposed new access arrangements.

Ref: SDNP/17/03856/CND
Location: Vernon House Warnford Road Corhampton SO32 3ND
Proposal: Variation of Conditions 2 and 12 on planning consent SDNP/16/02767/FUL - to reflect proposed new access arrangements

The Chair allocated a notional 5 minutes to those who wished to make objection and 5 minutes to those in support of the application.

No residents present supported the application. The following points were made alleging obfuscation of process and objections:

- a) Residents did not object to the development in principle, but did object to the increased use of the access through de Port Heights, and therefore their loss of amenity, from an additional 6 houses potentially to an additional 18 houses.
- b) Further arguments had been submitted that continued use of the 'chicane' at the entrance to de Port Heights by vehicles servicing an additional 18 properties would significantly increase the danger of vehicles 'stacking up' back to the A32.
- c) Fire engine access and turning circle compliance should have been checked and approved before the original application received planning permission to mitigate (the developer) having to resort to buy the ransom strip to comply with regulations.

d) Planning permission was granted on the basis of access through the former Houghtons Yard entrance, knocking down half of Vernon House. By submitting a new application with revised access through De Port Heights the developer will be able to create another building plot.

e) Commencement of building work was contingent on a signed Section 278 agreement for an effective access. There are no documents on the public access portal to confirm that this had been achieved.

f) It was alleged that the purpose of splitting the site was to avoid paying a large CIL contribution and avoid affordable housing.

Meeting resumed:

4. The Chair recapped the site's planning history: applications were separately submitted from the original owners of 3 adjacent sites. For Houghton's, an application (SDNP/15/01181/FUL for 8 dwellings, 6 accessed through de Port Heights and 2 directly from Warnford Road) was first submitted in Mar 15. For Vernon House, an application (SDNP/15/04203/FUL for 5 dwellings accessed through Vernon House) was submitted in Aug 15. Having 'called in' the applications, the SDNPA treated the 3 sites (including the site in the ownership of Chase Homes) as one contiguous vehicle for the purpose of design and layout, with the promoter of one agreeing to act as the lead developer for all proprietors. A revised application for the Houghton's site (SDNP/15/05227/FUL), reflecting the views of the South Downs Design Panel, was rejected by the South Downs Planning Committee in May 16, whilst a further application for the combined Vernon/Chase site for 17 houses (SDNP/16/00967/FUL) was subsequently withdrawn. Meanwhile, an appeal against non-determination of the original application for the Houghton's site (01181) was upheld, with the Inspector noting that objections to the access through de Port Heights "did not alter my conclusion that I should allow the appeal." Meanwhile, following discussions with the Planning Authority, a revised application for each of the Vernon (SDNP/16/02767/FUL) and Chase sites (SDNP/16/02757/FUL) was submitted that, together, would deliver 10 homes. These would both use the drive beside Vernon House, widened following the demolition of part of that property. A single access for all 3 sites was not sought at that stage as the developers did not control a 'ransom strip' between Houghton's and the Vernon site. When these applications were taken by the South Downs Planning Committee consents were granted. For the Vernon/Chase applications these were conditional on the successful outcome of further work between the developer and the highway authority to refine the design of the access, to be secured by a Section 278 agreement. Development of the Vernon/Chase sites was not to commence until this condition had been discharged. Subsequently, in proceeding with the Houghton's site, it became apparent to the developer that Building Regulations relating to emergency service access could not be satisfied without gaining control of the ransom strip. Specifically, the regulations require that a Fire Engine is able to both access and egress from the site in forward gear. This could only be achieved through use of the ransom strip, over which the developer was then obliged to gain control. Meanwhile, work to secure the S278 agreement for the Vernon access resulted in the need to demolish the whole of Vernon House to deliver a significantly greater visibility splay onto the A32. The current application seeks to obviate the need for demolition of Vernon House by accessing all sites through de Port Heights, only now possible through the acquisition of the ransom strip by the developer.

The committee was reminded that it can only comment on the specific application before it, and not the wider issue of which access/accesses to the sites it preferred. The justification of using the ransom strip for emergency vehicle turning was not, of itself, therefore relevant, unless the use of land outside the Houghton's site 'red line' was itself contrary to Building Regulations. The SDNPA Case Officer was understood to be looking at this particular point.

It was also noted that the statutory highways consultee, Nick Culhane of Winchester City Council, had stated that, in his professional view, the de Port Heights access was safe and acceptable to be used as an access, and would therefore raise no objection in principle to the current application. The Chair had spoken with Mr Culhane who advised that, in forming this view, he was also mindful of the Appeal Inspector's comment that the access was safe.

There was therefore a balance to be drawn between the undoubted loss of amenity to the residents of de Port Heights and the use of an access that was deemed, as a result of an Appeal Inspector's finding, to be safe for an increase in traffic. The Committee agreed that it was highly unlikely that the loss of amenity would carry greater weight.

Nonetheless, there were other issues of process on which the Committee required further information. If a Section 278 agreement had been reached for the originally proposed access through Vernon House there was no evidence for this on the South Downs Public Access site yet development of the Vernon/Chase site had already commenced. Further, it required reassurance and better evidence of the need for any change to the access to the Houghton's site for emergency vehicles.

The Committee unanimously **AGREED** to request the Chair to make further enquiries of both the planning and highways authorities and revert back to the Committee and, in the meantime, seek an extension of the window for comment until these points had been resolved, with the Committee reconvening as necessary before making any submission.

[Post-Meeting Note: It is now understood that the developer has proposed amendments to the application to address specific points made by the Highways Authority; the Planning Authority is consequently considering a further consultation round and has agreed to extend the window for comment, the exact date dependent on its consultation decision.]

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm