

Beaulieu Parish Council Planning Committee minutes for meeting held August 20th 2024

1. Apologies: None
2. Present Cllr Steele [Chairman], Cllr Hubbard, Cllr Dolbear, Cllr Reece and Cllr Knight
3. In attendance: Nicky Deering [Clerk] and Kerry Dames for the Spearbed Copse application
4. Minutes of the meeting held on July 29th 2024 were unanimously passed:
Proposed: Cllr Dolbear Seconded: Cllr Reece
5. Cheque for £1,150 made out to Gary Boulton in payment for the new playground bench was authorised:
Proposed: Cllr Steele Seconded: Cllr Dolbear

The following planning applications were discussed:

24/00783 CAC Spearbed Copse, Dock Lane, Beaulieu, SO42 7YJ

An application for a replacement dwelling, replacement pool house, swimming pool, walled garden, machine store, refurbishment of barn and Water Tower, alterations to boathouse, associated landscaping and infrastructure works, ground source heat pump, electric gates, refurbishment of existing walls, piers and driveway. Demolition of 2 dwellings, pool house, pump room, ancillary outbuildings and removal of hardstanding.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the site is in the Beaulieu Conservation Area and Spearbed Copse West SINC and is adjacent to the North Solent SSSI and North Solent NNR.

The site has an existing extant planning permission which determined that the existing house can be demolished and removed from the Local List due to its poor condition but that the Boat House remains on the List.

Pre application advice from the National Park had been broadly supportive as had the report by the Conservation Officer.

The Chairman briefly outlined this extensive application to the Committee as follows:

1. Demolition of existing dwelling, guest cottage, pool house, pump room and ancillary out buildings. Removal of sections of hard standing currently laid as drive.
2. A replacement contemporary dwelling part one storey, part two storey with enclosed basement and flat green roof with solar array, roof light and external roof terraces. Its footprint will be broadly that of the existing dwelling. The overall bulk of the proposed dwelling is less than the extant proposal and set further back into the site. The building is 1.7 metres lower the existing house and is designed to sit below the tree line. It is constructed of natural stone and dark heat treated timber panelling designed to help the dwelling recede into its wooded site.
3. Walled garden enclosed by 2.55 metre high walls containing an in-ground swimming pool and single storey pool house with a flat roof measuring 111 sq. metres.

4. A single storey machine store with clerestory windows and flat roof containing a solar array and off centre circular roof light. This replaces the existing guest cottage and measures 328 sq. metres.
5. Refurbishment of the Water Tower and single storey Forestry Barn
6. Upgrade to the existing Boat House to include a replacement bat maternity roost and associated compensatory and enhancement measures.
7. Extensive landscaping and regeneration of grounds which include engineering works for the purpose of installing foul and rain water infrastructure and bore hole collector array
8. Widening the access including installation of a new cattle grid over existing pit, installation of electric gates and restoration of existing walls and piers. Upgrade of existing drive.
9. This project is very much landscape led with the aims of increasing the bio-diversity of the site and the quality of the habitat. The application includes a very comprehensive Landscape Management Report. The project is designed to reduce the build form across the site with hard landscaping reduced by 1,357 sq. metres and habitable space reduced by 294 sq. metres.

The Committee thanked Kerry Dames for organising the lighting meeting the previous night with the applicant's lighting consultants and architect [also attended by Rachel Pearson] which they had found extremely useful following their concerns about light spillage that had been raised at their recent site visit. Kerry Dames stressed to the Committee that the National Park's design criteria and the statutory three purposes of the National Park had been at the forefront of their design process.

The Chairman stressed that as Spearbed Copse is an exceptional site in a very dominant position on the Beaulieu River and in the Conservation Area it is important that the Committee ensures in making their decision that the proposals 'preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area'. With this in mind the Committee discussed the merits and disadvantages of the application:

Merits:

1. The proposals conform with the main planning policies DP35, DP36 and DP37 and reduces habitable space on the site by 294 sq. metres

2. The proposed dwelling has less bulk than the extant proposal, is set further back and is 1.9 metres lower. Its natural pallet of materials should help the building receded into its wooded landscape.

3. Plans are landscape led and regeneration of the extensive grounds should benefit the Conservation Area, especially the area in front of the property running down to the river which will be left as meadow

4. Hard landscaping is reduced across the site to the benefit of the Conservation Area

5. The main dwelling is designed to be highly sustainable with spoil from existing building to remain on site

6. The existing heritable buildings on site to be refurbished with the Boat House remaining on the Local List which is more sustainable than building new

Disadvantages:

1. A contemporary design for the main dwelling is not going to be supported by everyone on this dominant site on the Beaulieu River

2. The design itself could be described as 'two boxes on top of each other' and may look too industrial to some people

3. Light spillage from the building's large expanse of glass [especially on the ground floor] which had been identified at our recent site visit as a major issue in this sensitive area of the river

4. The proposed property may look very wide when viewed from the river as it completely fills the gap between the trees on the site.

Following a discussion of the merits and disadvantages of the proposal the Committee agreed that the lighting presentation showing the proposed dwelling at dusk and in full darkness with all the lights on lessened their main concern over light spillage towards the river and, while recognising a contemporary building will not be to everyone's taste, it was felt on balance that the proposal merited support. It was unanimously agreed that permission would be recommended but we would accept the decision of the National Park's officers for the following reasons:

1. A key issue for the Parish Council has been to consider in detail whether the proposed contemporary building is appropriate for this highly protected low-lying stretch of the Beaulieu River. This area of the river is not only in the Conservation Area but in a SSSI, The Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site, The Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation and the North Solent National Nature Reserve.
2. The proposed replacement dwelling at 750 sq. metres complies with planning policies DP35 and DP36 with habitable space across the site reduced by 294 sq. metres. The Machine Store, though large, is felt to conform with planning policy DP37 on Outbuildings.
3. We recognise that a contemporary designed replacement dwelling in this prominent site may not be everyone's taste but we feel that the building has been sensitively designed to blend in and over time to recede into its site and should not prove detrimental to the Conservation Area. In terms of design the proposed dwelling is understated and set back into the site in a position below the tree line. The proposed dwelling is 1.9 metres lower than the extant approved plans and all major trees are being retained, which together supports the sensitive positioning of the proposed dwelling on the site. The use of natural coloured materials and dark wood vertical cladding on the upper storey will over time help the dwelling recede into its wooded site.
4. The proposal to refurbish and upgrade the existing heritable buildings [the Water Tower, Boat House and Forestry Barn] on the site is supported and encouraged as more sustainable than building new. The proposed dwelling is designed to be highly sustainable and we are encouraged to see that the spoil from demolition is to remain and be used on site.
5. The proposal includes extensive Landscape Plans for the regeneration of the property's exceptional grounds with the aim of increasing the bio-diversity and natural habitats of the site which will benefit the Conservation Area. Hard landscaping is to be reduced across the site and the area in front of the proposed dwelling is to be left as meadow which will result in a much more natural look for this sensitive site and highly protected area of the Beaulieu River.
6. A key concern with the proposal has been the impact of light spillage from the concentrated expanses of glass. To reduce light spillage the dwelling has been carefully designed with an over-sailing first floor to shield light from the ground floor and with wooden vertical cladding to shield light spillage from the first floor. Beaulieu Parish Council has had a meeting with the applicant's lighting consultants and architects who have demonstrated to us through CGI images what the building would look like from the river with all its lights on both at dusk and when fully dark. On the basis of these CGI images we are satisfied that the design of the

building and measures taken to keep lighting across the site to a minimum should be sufficient to keep light spillage towards the river to a low level and thereby adhere to the National Park's dark skies policy.

7. A Construction Management and Environmental Management Plan has been put in place to safeguard and minimise the impact on Dock Lane.

Suggested Conditions:

1. A detailed external lighting plan is produced and approved before construction begins
2. Outbuildings should not be used for residential purposes.

Proposed: Cllr Reece

Seconded: Cllr Steele

Unanimously approved

24/00876 DOC Fairweather's garden Centre, High Street, Beaulieu, SO42 7YB

Application for the discharge of conditions 3, 4 and 5 of planning application 23/01265 for protective canopy.

It was unanimously decided in view of the technical nature of this application to refer it back to the National Park Authority and accept their decision.

Proposed: Cllr Dolbear

Seconded: Cllr Hubbard

24/00842 DOC Oxleys, Dock Lane, Beaulieu, SO42 7YJ

Application for the discharge of condition 6 of planning application 23/00640 for replacement dwelling which said no external lighting can be installed until the details are submitted and approved by the National Park.

The Committee unanimously agreed that as there was insufficient detail provided and the Conservation Officer's report was not yet available that they would refer the application back to the National Park and accept their decision.

Proposed: Cllr Reece

Seconded: Cllr Steele

The Chairman raised with the Committee the issue of the CO2 Pipeline project, one route of which would cross our Parish, which is currently being consulted on with a number of local meetings arranged by Exxon. It was agreed this needed looking into urgently as comments needed to be submitted by September 12th 2024.

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

