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**A meeting of the Planning Committee is being held at the Westway Centre, Chaldon Road at 2.00pm on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Present: Cllr Geoff Duck (Chair), Cllr G Dennis, Cllr V Robinson

**PL23/52**      **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Carpenter, Cllr Grasso and Cllr Sowambur.

**PL23/53**      **Declarations of interest:** there were none.

**PL23/54**      **Minutes**  
It was agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 1st September and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be signed by the Chair as a true record.

**PL23/55**      **Public Forum**  
There were no members of the public present.

**PL23/56**      **Recent decision**  
Recent decisions were noted.  
It was agreed that Cllr Robinson in her capacity of Parish Council Chairperson extend an invitation to the District Council Chief Planning Officer to meet with members of the Parish Council Planning Committee (Cllrs Botten and Webster to be copied in on the invitation).

**PL23/57**      **Planning applications**  
The following responses to planning applications were approved:

2023/1006: 4 Christie Walk – detached garage.  
*No comment.*

2023/1031: 119 Park Road – single storey rear extension and loft conversion with Velux skylights. *No comment.*

2023/1062/TPO: 10 Halton Road – crown reduce maple by 2.0 - 2.5 m.  
*No comment.*

2022/23/NMA1: former 2 Gordon Road – non-material amendment to parking for one plot. *No comment.*

2023/1001: 24-26 High Street – redevelopment for 5 residential units (3 flats above ground floor commercial units and 2 mews houses in rear yard).

*It was agreed to request that the District Councillors call this application into committee.*

*It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Joint Committee have advised that they will be making a representation on this application.*

Objection:

The Parish Council accepts the principle of development here but the proposal is inadequate in its current form, requiring design improvements:

*Character and appearance* – the High Street is the original historic core of Caterham Hill, containing a characterful variety of building types and styles. Whilst a few of these are 1960s – 80s eyesores, the Parish Council sees great opportunity to drive up the quality of replacements and refurbishments. The aim is to conserve and enhance historic character to regenerate the appearance of the High Street. This in turn supports the viability of the small independent business sector upon which the economy of Caterham Hill depends. That approach is reflected in the designation of the High Street as part of a Neighbourhood Character Area in our Neighbourhood Plan.

This site is adjacent to a regeneration initiative that has created a strong character nucleus around the listed building, the King and Queen. It includes the Blacksmiths Arms where the ugly white render has been stripped off to reveal the original brick detailing, the former bank building and the successful restoration and extension of the Victorian fruiterers opposite with new flats to the rear. We would see the latter development in particular as a good example of the opportunity for quality enhancement of the street scene offered by the application site. The added character value of a conservation-based approach would enhance the financial viability of the scheme.

Accordingly, the Parish Council is seeking the use of better-quality materials, detailing and finishes to reflect the vernacular of the adjacent streetscape. Traditional roof tiles should be used and especially a brick finish and detailing for the street facade and mews elevation, instead of the white block and render currently proposed. It is readily apparent that the Victorian brickwork of the existing street elevation has been painted over, to the considerable detriment of its character and appearance. The Blacksmiths Arms is an example of the enhancement that can be achieved to rectify this.

*Flooding* – this is a serious omission given the well-established surface water flash-flooding risk in Caterham Hill. Further infill and intensification can only be considered sustainable if it demonstrates no off-site flow from the increased built form during the storm events that are becoming more common with climate change. Any such flow would migrate down the High Street to the high-risk area around Town End roundabout, where elderly residents of the sheltered housing had to be rescued during the severe flooding in 2016. It is therefore unacceptable that no outline SUDS proposal is included. In our view, a retrospective SUDS condition should only be considered if the applicant has first demonstrated that achieving no off-site flow is feasible. If not, the scale and massing of development should be reduced.

*Parking* – Caterham Hill (including roads around the Hight Street) suffers badly from congested on-street overspill parking that affects road safety for drivers and pedestrians. Accordingly, new development must in our view adhere to the adopted TDC Parking Standards SPD. It would require a minimum of 8 on-site parking spaces for two houses and three flats but only 5 have been proposed. This suggests that the proposal constitutes overdevelopment of the plot in its current form.

The Parish Council always stands ready to engage constructively with applicants in resolving such issues but is unlikely to support proposals where there has been no advance dialogue. We draw attention to the NPPF guidance on early proactive engagement in the design process (e.g. para 132). We are surprised that the District Council has conducted pre-application discussions without pointing this out.

2023/1079: 45 Macaulay Road – two storey side extension for granny annexe.

**Comment:**

The extension would constitute independent, self-contained two-bedroom accommodation with a separate external entrance and hallway. Therefore, if approved, please apply a planning condition restricting the use to domestic purposes ancillary to the main dwelling and its occupants and not to be used for commercial purposes such as renting out to others.

2023/1103: 6 Macaulay Road – replace existing dwelling with four.

*It was agreed to request that the District Councillors call this application into committee.*

*It was agreed to include on an agenda for the meeting requested with the Chief Planning Officer a request for a planning liaison officer to enable the Parish Council to obtain technical advice. This would simplify the process and fewer applications would need to be referred to committee.*

**Objection:**

The proposal is to replace an existing detached house and the majority of its garden with a pair of three storey 4 bed semi-detached on the street frontage and a further three storey, 3 bed pair to the rear, within the present garden. Whilst the Parish Council is not opposed in principle to infill development, Caterham and Whyteleafe have together taken 50% of all new residential dwellings in Tandridge District for many years. This has had inevitable consequences for increasing overload of our social and environmental infrastructure. Therefore, in the Parish Council's view, we have reached a point where all infill development must now be able to demonstrate clearly that it is socially and environmentally sustainable. It must meet local housing needs in Caterham Hill, be in keeping with the streetscape and to scale, not overcrowding the plot and not further overloading infrastructure such as roads and drainage.

*Local housing needs:* These are set out in the District Council's adopted Housing Strategy (2019-2033), a material planning consideration. It indicates that prior to this a disproportionate number of flats and larger houses (4 bedrooms and over) were built. The District Council wishes to redress the balance and provide smaller more affordable homes. The Housing Strategy indicates that 73% of local housing need is now for dwellings of 2/3 bedrooms. Where development is appropriate, the Parish Council supports a better proportion of smaller terraces and townhouses that are more suitable and affordable for young families. These substantial three storey 3 and 4 bed dwellings do not meet that objective.

*Loss of green space:* The Parish Council accepts that large, detached houses occupying wide plots may offer opportunities for smaller dwellings within the street frontage, more in line with local housing need (e.g. 2/3 bedroom terraced town houses). However that is not the

case here. The frontage is narrower and so the proposal includes an additional pair of semi-detached behind, occupying the rear garden. This is not in line with national and local policy. Whilst NPPF encourages the use of previously developed brownfield land, it indicates that private residential gardens in built up areas do come under that definition. Policy DP8 of the Local Plan resists this type of piecemeal, tandem back garden development. It addresses inappropriate sub-division of curtilages to a size below that prevalent in the area, taking account of the need to retain and enhance mature landscapes.

That is certainly the case here. About 75% of the present plot is open green space (Planning Statement, fig 1). However, in order to create access to the rear the proposal includes substantial areas of hard standing driveway and parking, plus the additional built form. The green space would reduce drastically to about 20% of the site area (Planning Statement, fig. 10). Mature green garden space within urban areas is increasingly important for environmental sustainability for people and wildlife in the face of climate change. The proposal results in a severe net loss that could not be mitigated by on-site restoration, whereas government policy is to create demonstrable net environmental gain following development. The Parish Council regards this as a clear indication of overdevelopment.

*Parking provision:* Caterham Hill suffers increasingly from congested on-street parking that affects road safety for drivers and pedestrians. Accordingly, new development must in our view adhere to the adopted TDC Parking Standards SPD. It would require 11 parking spaces for these dwellings but the proposal only provides 8. This is the clearest indication that the layout and scale of the proposed dwellings are too substantial for the capacity of the neighbourhood to be socially sustainable.

*Character and appearance:* Many streetscapes in Caterham Hill display architectural variety and openness of form, reflecting an area that has been developed slowly over the past 150 years. The increasing infill should respect this character and cumulatively not crowd the street frontage. The front elevation of the existing house (although tall) has a gable end facing the street, so that the roof slopes maintain an open, uncongested appearance. In contrast, the proposed third (roof) storey (of a similar ridge height to the existing) runs parallel to the street. This creates a more substantial bulk and height on the frontage, especially as the separation to the adjoining property has also been reduced (Planning Statement figs. 13 and 14)

*Flood risk:* One of the clearest indications of infrastructure overload is the inadequacy of our drainage system. Caterham Hill suffers from periodic surface water flash flooding from the storm events now becoming more common with climate change. The increasing built form and hard standing from continual infill sheds storm water into the streets. Because the drainage infrastructure has not been significantly upgraded in a hundred years, capacity is inadequate. The streets therefore act as conduits channelling surface water down-slope into the medium-high risk flood pathways shown on government mapping. The last major event was in 2016 but localised flooding occurs after every large storm. Any off-site flows onto the highway from the substantial areas of hard standing proposed would migrate west into that surface water and sewer surcharge flow path, crossing Banstead Road and heading north towards Coulsdon Common. Many properties along that route were flooded in 2016.

NPPF makes clear that mitigating flood risk both to and from a development site is a material consideration. Therefore, all developments in Caterham Hill should demonstrate a drainage design resulting in no off-site surface water flow during defined storm scenarios. Where (as in this case) the greater majority of absorbent garden land would be built over, the environmental principle of net gain should be applied- ie betterment over the undeveloped greenfield state as per government objectives.

However, the Planning Statement is strangely silent on this material consideration. It is essential that the application includes an outline SUDS proposal and that the LLFA is consulted on it. The Parish Council doubts whether sustainability for this level of additional built density is feasible without attenuation tanks or deep drainage boreholes. The Environment Agency would need to be consulted if the latter were proposed. That is why a drainage assessment is needed up front, rather than being left as an afterthought to planning condition. If the current

design cannot demonstrate surface water betterment, it should be scaled back until that can be achieved.

2023/1126/TPO: 29 Danvers Way – reduce and re-pollard two polars and three sycamores.  
*No comment.*

2023/1155/TPO: 1 Foxon Close – reduce and raise crown of Himalayan birch.  
*No comment.*

2019/1742/Cond3: 172 Whyteleaf Road – discharge of drainage condition for development of 42 dwellings.

**Objection:**

Given the size of the two adjacent residential developments in progress on Whyteleaf Road and the technical complexity of the flood risk and drainage issues raised at the planning application stage, specialist advice will be necessary before the condition can be discharged. TDC does not have that expertise in-house and so normally consults the Lead Local Flood Authority for SUDS solutions (and the Environment Agency regarding deep drainage boreholes). These statutory authorities have not been consulted though, so how does the Planning Authority mean to establish whether the submitted drainage report can be signed off?

2023/1097: 8 Wood Lane – single storey front extension, two storey rear and fenestration changes. *No comment.*

2023/1130: 14 Foxon Lane Gardens – single storey rear extension.  
*No comment.*

**PL23/58**

To note the date of the next meeting as Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

The meeting closed at 2.59pm