

**PLANNING (SITE VISITS) SUB COMMITTEE**

**12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2013**

**ENVIRONMENT SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING – N. PEARCE**

**AMENDMENT SHEET**

**PART 1 – Doc.Code: PSVS-121213-REP-EN-NP-UA**

**SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION**

**1. PLANNING APPLICATION RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL**

<b><u>ITEM 1.</u></b>	
<b><u>APPLICATION NO:</u></b> P/2013/673	<b><u>DATE:</u></b> 05/11/2013
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	One detached dwelling (Additional tree survey received 05.11.13)
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Plot Adjacent To, 35 New Road, Ynysmeudwy, Pontardawe, SA8 4PJ
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	CPR Distribution
<b>TYPE:</b>	Full Plans
<b>WARD:</b>	Pontardawe

Subsequent to the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 Planning Committee, the applicant's agent has provided the following additional comments:

"I have taken the opportunity since last week's committee meeting to monitor traffic and parking at and around the site, including at peak times of the day when the primary school starts and finishes. I trust you and your highway's officer may find these findings useful in responding to members concerns.

## Findings:

- Except at peak times traffic flow along New Road is very light as most through traffic now uses the bypass below. Even at peak times however traffic is not heavy and the road is more than capable of accommodating significant additional traffic.
- The traffic priority scheme which has been introduced to the north of the site is quite effective in reducing traffic speeds which presumably is why it was introduced. The straightness of the road and generally light traffic would inevitably have contributed to speeding in the past.
- The site itself is used for short term parking by parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The most cars I have observed parking there at any one time was 7, with cars generally parking along the south east boundary of the site and mostly turning within the site before leaving in forward gear. This is when there is the most potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians both within the site and on New Road, with vehicles entering and leaving the site at the same time that parents and children are themselves entering and leaving the site, with other children and parents walking along the pavement at the front of the site which has a dropped kerb along its entire length.
- Parents generally try and park as close to the main primary school as possible and there is a significant amount of short term illegal parking near the main school at school drop off and pick up times. The existing school crossing patrol provides a very valuable safety function outside the main school. The further away from the main school however, the less indiscriminate the parking. The application site quite distant from the main school and adjacent to the nursery and reception block, an annex to the main school, which makes it particularly attractive for parents dropping off or picking up their children from this annex, rather than the main school. There is also usually on street parking capacity in front of number 35 to 45 New Road at peak times.
- Traffic movements from New Road onto Old Road are extremely light and take place almost exclusively from the south rather than from the north. If necessary however there is sufficient space for vehicles travelling from the north to turn acutely into Old Road when the

mouth of the junction is clear. Vehicles travelling from the north obviously have the alternative of entering Old Road from its northern end.

#### Further Commentary:

As your report makes clear the existing use of the site for car parking is unauthorised and could be stopped at any time. My client has generously allowed this to take place in the past without charge but must now protect his assets, and realise the potential of the site and bring it into beneficial use. The site will shortly therefore be completely enclosed to prevent its unauthorised use. This is however completely independent of this application. As you made clear to members therefore concerns expressed about displaced car parking cannot be considered as material to this application and cannot be used in any way to influence their decision on the application. To do so would clearly be unreasonable as defined by Welsh Government.

The traffic flow generated by one new house on existing highway conditions will be minimal. The width and geometry of New Road at the site entrance allows the development to accord with all adopted highway safety standards. The existing junction with Old Road will not be affected by the new development. The proposed development will improve pedestrian safety along the site frontage by reducing the existing 13 metre stretch of open dropped kerb by 50% and incorporating a widened footway of 2.4 metres (condition 20 refers) and an attractive front wall to the new property. The development has been designed in accordance with the requirements of your highways officer to provide three off street car parking spaces laid out to allow those vehicles to turn within the site before driving onto New Road. This again accords with all your adopted standards.

The development has been laid out specifically to allow for the private right of access which exists to the rear of 35 to 45 New Road to be maintained and actually improved by virtue of conditions 17 and 18. My client has also already paid for tree surgery works to increase headroom under the tree near the garage of number 35 New Road. The private interests of the residents of these houses are therefore being protected by the development, and the broader public interest of maintaining an existing secondary access to the rears of the properties is also secured by the development.

As your report confirms the development will not unacceptably affect the health of the trees adjoining the site. This is the conclusion of both the Council's arboriculturist and the applicant's. A method statement however will be submitted in accordance with condition 14 for all works within the Root protection area. Japanese knotweed will be treated in accordance with condition 19.

## Conclusions

I would agree with the conclusions in your report that the development complies with the relevant development plan policies for infill development within the urban area. It does so unequivocally. There are no reasonable or sustainable reasons therefore to refuse the application. I do not want or need to remind you of the costs consequences at appeal of an unreasonable decision and sincerely hope that the application can now finally be approved without further delay.”

In response, Officers consider the committee report adequately covers the above-mentioned issues which relate to highways and pedestrian safety. It is noted, however, that the agent has now confirmed that his client intends to enclose the site to preclude its use for informal parking. It should be noted that the Head of Engineering and Transport (Highways section) has no objection to the proposed development.