



Iden Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th January 2024 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.

Notices

The Chairman briefly spoke of the history of the Conker's site and emphasised that all residents should submit their thoughts about the application, based on planning considerations and not to leave this to others. A request had been made for the application to be considered by the planning committee rather than delegated to planning officers. The Planning Committee does allow for one representative to speak for and against each application. Residents should take this opportunity to voice their concerns.

Present

Councillors M. Miller (chairman), P. Allard. B. Luckhurst, G. Say and J Wood
In attendance: the Clerk M. Philo.
Members of the Public: Fifteen.

Iden Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence

1. Apologies

District Councillors P. Osborne and L Hacking.

2. Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations

Councillor Say declared a non-prejudicial interest in the application as he was indirectly working for the architect but not in relation to this application. Councillor Wood arrived.

The meeting adjourned at 7.41 pm for Public Session

Residents made the following comments:

- Suggestion that the site should not have been chosen due to the access issues through Elmsmead. Providing another access through the listed property garden of Conkers appears to break the rules protecting a listed building and curtilage. The

access road blights the setting of the listed building.

- The application is made for a site that exceeds the area included in the Local Plan and exceeds the number of dwellings proposed in the Local Plan.
- A site with 12 dwellings is a more appropriate development.
- Although the area for development has been increased, the site is over developed.
- The egress from the access road has limited view along a short stretch of road with a bend that further reduces visibility.
- The suggested increase in the number of vehicles movements is too low.
- The amenity value of the existing properties is affected along proposed dwellings 12-17, as the flats overlook the Main Street gardens from the living room windows. Also, air source heat pumps may have improved but they do still make a noise. Car lights in the evening now shining into the front and back of their houses. The proposed homes rear gardens are smaller than might be expected for a village and so the houses are nearer to the existing properties than might have been expected.
- Natural screening only works when very mature trees are planted. Smaller trees are planned in some areas, and these will take time to fill out.
- For a natural screen to be effective, it needs to be maintained.
- More homes should have solar panels.
- Electric charging points are not specifically covered in the details.
- There should be no street lighting of any kind.
- The street scene along Main Street will be changed because of the increase width of the site across the whole of Conker's plot.
- There are discrepancies and errors in the submission. A reference to Iden Green, the incorrect location of the current pond and implication that trees are being left whilst the trees referred to are not on the site but on adjacent land.
- Concern that considerable habitat, particularly the hedge, had been lost by the clearance conducted prior to any surveys.
- Concern about pollutants running into the pond from the new access road.
- Concern that no one would be responsible for maintaining the open spaces and wildflower area.
- Concern that neighbours' hedges would be taken out during works.
- Ecology survey work remains outstanding.
- Concern over a path to Elmsmead Road.
- Unrealistic parking allowance.
- Car ownership would be required to allow for commuting to work.
- Concern that the smaller open market homes will be become holiday lets or rentals and larger homes would become second homes.

The meeting reconvened 8.16pm

3. Planning

RR/2023/2153/P Conkers, Main Street: Erection of seventeen dwellings together with associated access, car parking and landscaping, and demolition of modern extension of

Conkers together with improvement works.

Iden Parish Council voted unanimously to object to the application, on the following grounds.

- The Parish Council has always recognised the need for new housing in Iden and for years have acknowledged that the existing development zone is saturated and needs to expand.
- Since the 2014 building target was set, the Parish Council and the residents for many sound reasons have consistently opposed the Conkers site for this purpose. We stressed this to Rother Planning and later to the Building Inspectorate and local opinion has been ignored.
- The Council has already highlighted that Elmsmead does not provide an appropriate access for a building site. Similarly, the proposed new access is unacceptable as it appears to break the rules protecting a listed building as the access road is within the curtilage of Conkers.
- The application is made for a site that exceeds the area included in the Local Plan and exceeds the number of dwellings it proposes. Had the required target number of homes been built elsewhere the increased number of dwellings would not have been considered nor the increase land size been accepted. A site of twelve dwellings is a more appropriate spatial development for Iden.
- Although the area for development has been increased, the site will still be over developed.
- Parking provision within the site does not reflect the probability that each dwelling, including the flats, will have at least two vehicles and there will be visitors' cars as well. The proposal is one property to have only have one dedicated space. Access for the refuse truck and emergency services could potentially cause problems as the consultees are noting.
- The available public transport is not as frequent as suggested being only every two hours.
- The egress from the access road has limited view along a short stretch of road with a bend that further reduces visibility. The number of vehicle movements is likely to be much higher than estimated as delivery vehicles, the school run, and 2/3 car households have not been considered.
- Natural screening only works when very mature trees are planted. Smaller trees are planned in some areas, and these will take time to fill out. However, they may never be allowed to mature as they will shade the small gardens and will have to be pruned. It also only works when it is maintained over the decades and not

forgotten about in the first few years once building is completed. A wildlife corridor might have been a better option.

- Little consideration appears to have been given to the effect upon the houses bordering this development and the closeness of the proposed buildings.
- Energy efficiency could have been further increased with fewer homes providing an opportunity to align more homes to permit the correct position for more solar panels. Electric Charging points are not specifically covered in the details.
- Iden residents and the Parish Council do not want street lighting and we wish this to apply to any new development.
- The Parish Council is very concerned about the ecological damage done already to this site and it is questionable to claim that the habitat will be protected in the way proposed. This alone justifies a refusal. The Parish Council is supporting an ambitious project to regenerate the natural world and it cannot be said that this application will advance this cause.
- There are some discrepancies and errors in the submission. A reference to Iden Green which is many miles away may be understandable, but the incorrect location of the current pond suggests the plan is to move the pond. This does appear to have allowed for a further dwelling to be included.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 6th February 2024, 7.30pm Iden Village Hall.