

Minutes

NORTH PLANNING COMMITTEE

3rd DECEMBER 2009

Meeting held at the Civic Centre, Uxbridge

Published on:

Come into effect on: Immediately



1.	<p>Members Present:</p> <p>Eddie Lavery (Chairman) Michael White Michael Markham Liz Kemp David Payne John Oswell Dave Allam</p> <p>Apologies:</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Councillors Allan Kauffman and Carol Melvin with Councillors Liz Kemp and Michael White substituting.</p> <p>Advisory Members / Co-optee Members present:</p> <p>Ms Pam Jeffries Ickenham Conservation Area Advisory Panel.</p> <p>Officers Present:</p> <p>Jales Tippell, Charmian Baker, Vanessa Scott, Sarah White and Charles Francis.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest:</p> <p>None</p>
3.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public:</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business would be considered in public.</p>
4.	<p>Consideration of Reports:</p> <p>Reports were considered as set out below:</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>SWAKELEYS HOUSE, ICKENHAM</p> <p>Proposal to vary by consent of the owner and Local Planning Authority a Section 52 Agreement of 1984, relating to the erection of 25,092 square feet of offices in the grounds of Swakeleys House.</p> <p>23202/F/81/1435</p> <p>At the discretion of the Chairman, the Ward Councillor spoke first and addressed the meeting in support of the petitioners objecting. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointment that the owner and agent had chosen not to contact Ward Councillors about the application. • When the property was sold to the present owner this included a duty to enhance and protect the (House for the) community. • The officer report does not include security concerns as a reason for difficulties with the commercial let. • No reports of criminal damage had been made to the Ward Panel. • The role of the security firm employed by the current owner in view of Police suggestions that security would be easy to maintain through a combination of close circuit television and infra-red sensors. • That the community Church services should be retained. • Three days access for the Ickenham Festival should be retained. • That security (of tenure) ought to be provided to the Bowls Club • Insufficient information had been provided in the report to make a decision and the request that the decision be deferred for further information. <p>In accordance with the Council's constitution a representative of 6 petitions received objecting to the proposal addressed the meeting.</p> <p>Points raised by the petitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closure of the perimeter path would be a loss to the community. • The proposed sum of £15K to be used by the Council for coppicing and scrub clearance was insufficient and would only allow work to continue for several years. • The suggestion that £15K could be used for a new gate instead of ground works. • Reducing the amount of public access to the House from 3 days to 1 day per year would be a great loss to the 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Jales Tippell, Charmian Baker</p>
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community.

- The proposal to develop a website to provide a virtual tour of the House would be a poor substitute to visiting in person.
- The use of the Festival and the Bowls Club ensures that the House is key to the community.
- The role of the Bowls Club and Festival should be formalised.
- The Bowls Club and Ickenham Festival have helped to deter crime locally.
- The previous owner had managed to let accommodation for commercial properties successfully and the purchase price of the House took account of access to the House
- Concerns in relation to increased traffic flows
- The current access rights to the House should be increased to include access to the lower floors and attic.
- The hope that the current informal arrangement with the owner to allow 3 days access on the day before and day after the Festival to set up and take down should continue.

In accordance with the Council's constitution a representative of the Ickenham Area Conservation Panel objecting to the proposal addressed the meeting as the application was located in a Conservation Area.

Points raised included:

- The long range views of the House could be opened up through minor coppicing
- The concern that the sum of £15K for coppicing and scrub clearance would only last for 5 or 6 years and not the period of 20 years as outlined in the report.
- To support the fullest possible use of the Festival and Bowls Club for the benefit of the local community.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Cllr David Routledge addressed the Committee in his role as Heritage Champion.

Points raised included:

- Security problems could be overcome by the erection of a palisade fence.
- No work should be allowed to start at the House until the current owner has signed an undertaking agreeing the work to be undertaken.
- The Grade 1 listed status of the building and concerns about the amount of deterioration to fabric of the building and the levels of disrepair

In accordance with the Council's constitution the agent addressed the meeting in response to the petitioners.

Points raised included:

- Swakeleys House is privately owned and the cost of maintaining the building has been £1.3 million over the last 6 years.
- The Bowls Club lease expired in 2005 but this was extended to 2008. The current lease has already expired.
- The current owner supports the Ickenham Festival
- Trespass and maintaining security is an ongoing concern.
- The need to strike a balance between continued public access and the security / privacy of the owner.

Members felt that after listening to the concerns it was felt that before a decision could be made further information needed to be provided on installing secure fencing to the perimeter path; appropriate landscaping improvements; and to increase the level of access to the House to allow further negotiations to take place between the owner and Council.

Members also asked for further information on the marketing undertaken for Swakeleys House.

Officers advised members that the owner was responsible for the fencing the perimeter path and difficulties had arisen between managing the tensions between access, providing views of the property and security concerns.

Officers explained that the issue of the Ickenham Festival was a separate matter to the proposal to alter the Section 52 Agreement.

Concerns were raised in relation to the number of days per year the House could be accessed and the degree of access within the property. Members supported the concept to develop a website to both market and provide virtual tours of the House which was felt would help strike a balance between access and conservation.

Members still had concerns about the application and it was moved and seconded that the application be deferred to enable further information to be sought from the owner in relation to marketing the property, the feasibility of installing secure fencing to the perimeter path; appropriate landscaping improvements; and to increase the level of access to the House. On being put to the vote deferment was agreed by 5 in favour and 1 against.

	<p>Resolved – That the application be Deferred to enable further information to be sought on marketing the property and to enable further negotiations to take place regarding the feasibility of installing secure fencing to the perimeter path; appropriate landscaping improvements; and to increase the level of access to the House.</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed at: 20:55 p.m.</p> <p>Next meetings: - Next ordinary meeting 8 December 2009</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Charles Francis on 01895 556454. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.