

## **WA/2019/0296: Orchard Farm, Hambledon**

Erection of 9 dwellings including 7 affordable; accesses from Petworth Road and Wormley Lane together with landscaping following the demolition of existing buildings.

## **DRAFT / Response by Hambledon Parish Council**

### **Introduction**

Hambledon Parish Council has for many years supported, and continues to support the provision of affordable housing in the Parish and has looked at the application in this light. It believes that there is a continuing local need. This application has been made in the light of the rejection of application number WA/2016/1644 (“2016 application”) and the failure of the applicant’s appeal. This new application is expressed to address the comments and reasoning of the Inspector in refusing the appeal.

This is an application for a small development of nine houses, seven of which are to be affordable (two shared ownership and five affordable rent), to be situated on the footprint of the existing buildings of the application site. Four of the houses are to be single storey and five to be two storey, to be built to conform to the topography of the site. The existing area of the buildings to be demolished is stated to be 804 m/sq. and the proposed development to have a building footprint of 685 m/sq. with a gross internal area of 742 m/sq.

We comment on the present application, but our comments, and recommendation are also prepared in the light of the concerns expressed by HPC in relation to the 2016 application following consultation in the village, and the comments made by villagers relating to this application.

### **Review of current application in relation to the 2016 application**

Concerns expressed in 2016 which remain relevant to this application are: scale of the development, prioritising Hambledon connections, drainage, traffic, and appropriateness of development on this site. HPC’s views in relation to these concerns are as follows:

1. Scale – This is to be a much smaller development on a reduced area of land, but which addresses the demonstrated requirement for affordable housing in Hambledon. The roof lines will be reduced to fit with the topography, and there is a greater spread of the houses with more through sight-lines. HPC therefore considers that the concern as to the scale of development has been adequately addressed, and that this development is sufficiently small in scale so as not to affect the openness of the Green Belt.
2. Priority to the affordable dwellings for those with Hambledon connections – As with the previous application this application specifies in the Planning Heritage & Landscape Statement (para 5.19 and 8.31) that the legal agreements will prioritise those with Hambledon connections. Therefore, HPC considers this point also adequately addressed, provided the legal wording creates certainty on this point, and that HPC will be involved in the decision on allocation. HPC is also pleased to note that the affordable element will be in perpetuity.
3. Drainage – Detailed drainage plans are included which reflect and augment the drainage plans which accompanied the previous application. HPC considered in 2016 that, following the initial application, and various commitments made by the Applicant to WBC, the drainage issues had been adequately addressed. In the meantime a further drainage report to consider the current scheme has been prepared by Hawarth McCall. This demonstrates that a sound surface water drainage solution is proposed and which is supported by relevant calculations. Subject to satisfactory future maintenance plans, adequate capacity of the swales, upgrading of the A283 western ditch, upgrading the culverts under New Road by Tigbourne Farm, construction of new culverts across the A283/New Road bellmouth and agreement of the final design by Waverley and SCC, HPC, with the issue of the latest report, have no reason to change our earlier view that a

satisfactory solution can be achieved. However, to enable it to support the scheme HPC requires that all the drainage works proposed by ERHA, together with a full Flood Risk Assessment, are made conditions of permission being granted.

4. Traffic – This was not considered to be a deciding factor in relation to the original refusal or the failure of the appeal. Other traffic concerns have been raised, particularly the increase in traffic resulting from the new houses. In reality most of the new occupants would be local people already living and driving in the local area. We do agree, however, that a reduction in the speed limit on the Petworth Road should be sought in the same way as HPC has tried to achieve in the rest of the village.
5. Appropriateness on this site – The existing derelict buildings are an eyesore, and so a sensitive development which provides the affordable housing required by Hambledon is to be encouraged. HPC consider that the size and positioning of the development on this land addresses the concerns expressed in relation to the adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt, and on the visual amenities of the AONB. Any potential harm has been significantly reduced by the scale and positioning, and the benefits remain broadly the same. HPC also considers that this proposal is sufficiently (i) small in relation to the size of the village and (ii) closely related to the rural settlement of Hambledon. Further, with regard to neighbouring heritage assets the inspector at the appeal considered that the benefits of providing 12 units of affordable housing outweighed the minor degree of harm to the setting of Tigbourne Court, and HPC's view is that this "minor degree" is further reduced by the reduction in number of buildings and the siting of the development further up the hill.
6. Affordable housing – In its 2016 Response HPC also addressed a concern which had been expressed in the village as to whether there is a genuine local need for affordable housing. HPC considered then that there was genuine local need for 12 affordable dwellings. It sees no reason to change that view, expressed by reference to evidence at the time, in relation to a smaller development of only seven affordable homes. The question of real "affordability" was also raised. HPC considers that this concern has been adequately addressed by the application, within the legal limits which exist, whilst recognising that in Surrey the question of "affordability" is moot.
7. Access – A further concern in the village was the question of a development on this site having adequate access to services and amenities. We repeat our comments made in 2016 on this aspect because they remain relevant (the relevant extract of those comments is included in **Appendix 1** to this response). HPC seeks the assurance of Waverley that the upgrading of Footpath FP144 running from the west side of the Petworth Road to Witley Railway Station will be the subject of the Section 106 Agreement if this application is approved. In addition, there is a thriving village shop and Post Office, just a short walk from the proposed development, selling a range of provisions; people travel for several miles to visit it.

Adjoining Land – HPC is concerned that the adjoining land has not been offered to the village, or otherwise covenanted, as public space in perpetuity and that no plans are included for that land in the application. HPC therefore wrote to ERHA asking as to its plans for this land. HPC's letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March and ERHA's response dated 29<sup>th</sup> March are attached (in **Appendix 2**). ERHA has sent a copy of its response to Waverley, and HPC considers that ERHA's proposals are a positive answer to these concerns. HPC will work with ERHA and Waverley to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

## **Conclusion**

For the reasons given above HPC considers that the reasons for refusal of the 2016 application, and the rejection of the appeal, have been adequately addressed, and supports this application, on the provisos (i) that SCC commits to the required drainage works, and (ii) the commitment in relation to the adjoining land is concluded by ERHA and Waverley.

## **Appendix 1 (Extract from HPC response dated 16.10.16)**

Adequate access to services and amenities – the Parish Council acknowledges that there are concerns over sustainability and proper access to services and amenities. It considers that, whilst the site does not tick all the boxes for access to all amenities, including schools, its location and access to good transport links, in particular Witley Station, is such that Waverley must decide on balance whether this requirement for a Rural Exception Scheme is satisfied.

School availability is already a severe problem for Hambledon – this year the closest primary school places that were offered to seven families in the village were at Beacon Hill (Haslemere). Whilst the existing range of infrastructure provision may just be sufficient to accommodate the proposed development at Orchard Farm, it falls far short of what will be needed for the totality of development that is expected to come on stream in several of the adjacent Parishes within the next few years. This is a general problem and reference should be made to the steps that are to be taken, by Waverley, Surrey and the relevant utility companies, to ensure that the right community facilities and other local services are being planned to enhance the sustainability of communities and meet local needs, whether or not there is development at Orchard Farm.

In this connection, concerns have been raised that the site is not served by public transport and is therefore unsuitable for an affordable housing development. However, the Parish Council notes that the hourly 71 bus service runs mostly along the A283, close to the proposed development and connecting it to Milford, Godalming and Guildford, as well as Chiddingfold and Haslemere in the opposite direction. In addition the 503 bus service operates twice daily, three days a week to Godalming and Guildford, beginning at Lane End which is practically outside the proposed development. Enhanced bus use could well result from the development but, whether or not it is permitted, the Parish Council hopes that SCC and others will continue to maintain these routes for the benefit of Hambledon residents.

The proposed development is a short walk from Witley station, on the London/Portsmouth main line with easy connections to Godalming, Guildford and Haslemere. Pedestrian access would be facilitated if footpath FP144, running from the west side of the A283 to the station, were up-graded to make it usable by those wearing normal footwear (as opposed to boots – which are almost always needed given the present wet and muddy state of the path). If the application were to be granted a requirement to this effect should be included in the S106 agreement.

## **Appendix 2 (Correspondence concerning adjoining land)**

[04.04.19]