

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (VIEWING) SUB-COMMITTEE**19 February 2007****Attendance****Councillors:**

Jeffs (Chairman) (P)

Baxter (P)

Bennetts

Beveridge (P)

Busher (P)

de Peyer (P)

Evans

Huxstep (P)

Johnston (P)

Lipscomb (P)

Read (P)

Ruffell

Saunders (P)

Sutton (P)

Deputy Members:

Councillor Pearson (Standing Deputy for Councillor Ruffell)

Councillor Pearce (Standing Deputy for Councillor Bennetts)

Others in Attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey and Wright

Officers in attendance:

Mr J Hearn (Planning Team Manager, East)

Mr T Patchell (Senior Planner)

Mr N Culhane (Engineering Assistant)

Mr S Dunbar-Dempsey (Landscape Architect)

Ms F Sutherland (Planning and Information Solicitor)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bennetts, Evans and Ruffell.

2. DOWNLANDS ESTATE DEVELOPMENT, DOWNLANDS WAY, SOUTH WONSTON**40 NO DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND PARKING (OUTLINE)****CASE REFERENCE: 06/02159/OUT**

(Report PDC668 refers)

The Sub-Committee met at South Wonston Village Hall where the Chairman welcomed to the meeting the applicant's agent (Mr Rees), Mr Selby (South Wonston Parish Council) and approximately 80 members of the public.

The application had been considered by the Planning Development Control Committee at its meeting held on 1 February 2007. At that meeting, Members had convened the Planning Development Control (Viewing) Sub-Committee to assess the relationship between the proposal and the surrounding properties.

Immediately prior to the public meeting, the Sub-Committee viewed the application site and noted the position of the proposed buildings, the access, the relationship to

adjoining buildings, the gradient of the site, and the position and importance of existing trees.

Mr Patchell introduced the application to the Sub-Committee. The proposal was an outline application of the erection of 40 dwellings and associated access and parking. As the application was an outline application, the Sub-Committee were asked to determine only the siting and access arrangements as, if approved; detailed matters would be considered in a later application. However, he highlighted that given the size of the site (1.07 hectares), 40 dwellings could only be accommodated if some of the buildings were three storeys. Therefore, the applicant had indicated that the site would include a mixture of 2, 2 ½ and 3 storey buildings and that the majority of the taller buildings would be located in the centre of the site. Vehicular access would be provided via Downlands Way from the west, Downlands from the east and Lower Road to the south (serving only three properties at the south of the site). However, there would be no east-west through road linking the two halves of the development, except for pedestrian, cycle and emergency access.

Mr Patchell illustrated to the Sub-Committee photographs of the application site from long distance views, including Teg Down, Magdalene Hill, Cheesefoot Head and from locations to the south of the site. From these, he suggested that the proposed development would have a minimal impact. The Sub-Committee also noted photographs which had been submitted by the owners of Farthings, Lower Road at the south of the site, which illustrated the view from the rear first floor looking over the site and from the garden.

During the public participation part of the meeting Mr Guy (a local resident) spoke against the application. In summary, he stated that the proposed density of the development was too high and would lead to a development which would be out of character with the surrounding area. He also spoke against the principle of three storey buildings which, he suggested, would be accentuated by the raising slope of the site, and potential overlooking issues.

Mr Guy also raised highway concerns with regard to the development and highlighted the high number of vehicles that already used the Downs Road junction, traffic generated by a nursery near the site and the number of young children that used the existing, currently quiet, cul de sacs.

Mr Selby (South Wonston Parish Council) also spoke against the application. In summary, he explained that the proposals had been opposed by a large number of local residents. He also stated that the taller, town house style developments would be out of character with the surrounding buildings, that it would set a poor precedent for future development and that there was an over supply of new housing in the district. In addition to echoing the highways concerns raised by Mr Guy, Mr Selby added that the development may not have vehicular access rights from Lower Road. He also questioned the need for the proposed play area, which formed part of the application, and how the transport contribution would be spent.

Mr Selby concluded that whilst the majority of local people did not oppose the development of the site in principle, the regrettable lack of prior consultation from the applicant with local residents had resulted in an unacceptable application.

Councillor Wright spoke as a Ward Councillor against the application. In summary, he raised concerns similar to those above and highlighted the need to protect Lower Road which was well used by walkers and pedestrians as a link between Farley Mount and Micheldever Woods.

Councillor Godfrey also spoke as a Ward Councillor against the application. In summary, he reiterated the concerns regarding the proposed density of the development. He explained that the October 2001 Urban Capacity Study had identified the site as suitable for the development of 25 dwellings and that the density of the surrounding area was 28 dwellings per hectare. The proposed development had a density of 42 dwellings per hectare if an area of trees to be retained was excluded – the density of the entire site was 37 dwellings per hectare.

Councillor Godfrey also commented that three storey buildings in the proposal would be visible from long distances, that it would affect the character of the village, that it was the wrong development for the site, and that there were no other three storey dwellings in the village. He explained the proposed dwellings were too close together, dominated surrounding buildings and could lead to overlooking. He also added that there was insufficient parking and that the access road was too narrow.

In concluding, Councillor Godfrey requested the Sub-Committee to reject the application as it did not comply with Policy DP3 of the Local Plan (in that it did not respond positively to the character of the area) and Policy DP4 (which sought to preserve important views and trees).

Mr Rees (the applicant's agent) spoke in support of the application. In summary, he explained that the application was the result of a long period of negotiation with officers. He stated that the three storey buildings would only be 1 metre taller than the ridge height of two existing buildings onto Lower Road and that none of the statutory consultees had raised any objections to the application.

In response to concerns raised by the objectors and Members, Mr Culhane explained that the access road would not be adopted by the Highways Authority, so that it did not incur future maintenance costs. As such, the road was not required to meet highways standards. Members also noted that in raising no objection, the County Council had also considered the application's effect on the surrounding road network.

Mr Culhane added that the applicant had negotiated a one-off contribution payment of £94,000 to improve the existing bus stop and to enhance evening and weekend bus services to the village.

In relation to access issues from Lower Road, Mr Culhane confirmed that the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 had restricted the use of public rights of way by vehicles in certain circumstances. Members noted that as it was proposed that Lower Road would only be used to serve an additional three dwellings, it was unlikely that the Rights of Way Officer would object. However, Ms Sutherland reminded the Sub-Committee that rights of access to a site was ultimately an issue for the applicant to resolve.

With regard to density, Mr Hearn explained that the Urban Capacity Study was not an accurate assessment of the number of dwellings that would fit on any site and that what was important was to maximise the capacity of the site without harming character or amenity.

Mr Hearn also commented that there were examples in other villages in the district of three storey buildings surrounded by predominately two storey dwellings which had worked well. He added that the effect of these taller buildings in this proposal would be limited as they were positioned in the centre of the development and from longer distances would be viewed against a backdrop of taller trees. Issues regarding the detailed character of the application (such as use of materials) would be considered in a later, detailed application.

In response to a question, Mr Hearn explained that the buildings would be slightly cut into the land to partially mitigate against the slope across the site.

Members noted the importance of the trees to the site and agreed that, if approved, the trees near the boundary with Farthings and Kentsbray should be preserved and enhanced.

Mr Dunbar-Dempsey explained that the proposed play area was the usual requirement sought on developments of this scale and, notwithstanding the existence of a larger play area for older children elsewhere in the village, it would provide a door-step facility for families with very young children.

During debate, Members raised concerns regarding north/south pedestrian routes through the site. Mr Hearn explained that although these were desirable, they had not been included in the application.

The Sub-Committee discussed the sustainability of the site and Mr Hearn explained that, as a designated H2 policy settlement area, in policy terms the site could be developed; so long as it did not adversely affect the character of the surrounding area.

At the conclusion of debate, the majority of the Sub-Committee agreed not to grant permission for the development, against officers' advice. Members discussed possible reasons for refusal and then agreed to refuse permission for the following reasons: the proposed development was too dense for the site and had resulted in buildings of a height that was out of character with the surrounding area. Members further agreed that the three storey buildings at the south of the site near Farthings and Kentsbray would be overbearing on these properties. The Sub-Committee also agreed to the standard reasons of refusal relating to the provision of open space and affordable housing. Members also expressed concern (albeit not a reason for refusal) that there had been insufficient consultation from the developer with local people, which, although it had not been endorsed at the time the application was submitted, contravened the Statement of Community Involvement.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused for the following reasons:

Detailed reasons for refusal:

Reason 1

The applicant has shown on the submitted plans that in order to accommodate 40 dwellings on the site, in the positions shown, it is necessary to include some 3 storey development. It is considered that 3 storey development would be incongruous with the height generally of existing surrounding development and would have an adverse visual affect on the character of the area. The development is therefore contrary to UB3 of Hampshire County Structure Plan Review and DP3 (ii) of Winchester District Local Plan Review.

Reason 2

The proposed development by reason of its height would have an undesirable overbearing affect on the amenity of the occupants of number 84 Downlands Way and Kentsbray and Farthings, Lower Road. The development is therefore contrary to DP (vii) of Winchester District Local Plan Review.

Reason 3

The proposal is contrary to policy R2 of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review and RT4 of the Winchester District Local Plan in that it fails to make adequate provision for public recreational open space to the required standard, and would therefore be detrimental to the amenities of the area.

Reason 4

The proposed development is contrary to policy H8 of the Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review), and policy H5 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review in that it fails to make provision for affordable housing. The proposal would therefore conflict with the housing strategies of these Plans.(Affordable Housing)

The meeting commenced at 11.00am and concluded at 1.35pm

Chairman