

4/01327/19/FUL	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 X TWO BEDROOM DWELLINGS INCLUDING WIDENING OF THE ACCESS ROAD AND ASSOCIATED PARKING, AMENITY SPACE AND REFUSE STORAGE
Site Address	LAND ADJACENT 35-36 WEST DENE, GADDESSEN ROW, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP2 6HU
Applicant	Dacorum Borough Council, The Forum
Case Officer	Sally Robbins
Referral to Committee	- Dacorum Borough Council scheme - Contrary view of Parish Council

1. Recommendation

1.1 That planning permission be **DELEGATED with a VIEW to APPROVAL subject to the completion of a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

2. Summary

2.1 The proposed development would be an appropriate redevelopment of a car parking site that would meet an identified need for affordable housing in the Rural Area, in accordance with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS20 and paragraph 77 of the NPPF (2019). Additionally, it would make a small but valuable contribution to the Borough's existing housing stock and would provide a high quality residential scheme in accordance with Policies CS1, CS7, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS17, CS19, CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy.

2.2 There would be no significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of surrounding residential units, in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy and Saved Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004).

2.3 The wider redevelopment of garage/parking sites across the borough is making effective use of previously developed land. Parking provision for the scheme is policy compliant and parking surveys show that there is sufficient parking on street and in the designated parking bays on West Dene. The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on local parking provision or the safety and operation of the adjoining highways, in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy 51 and Appendix 5 of the Local Plan.

3. Site Description

3.1 The application site is located on West Dene in Gaddesden Row, which lies to the north of Hemel Hempstead. The site comprises a hard standing car parking area measuring 847 sqm. There is existing residential development to the south and west, comprised of semi-detached and terraced dwellings and flats. To the north and east the site is surrounded by open agricultural fields. The site resides within the designated Rural Area and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Proposal

4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of 3 x 2-

bedroom dwellings including widening of the access road and associated parking, amenity space and refuse storage. All three units would be provided as social rent and managed/maintained by Dacorum Borough Council with priority given to those with a local connection.

5. Relevant Planning History

5.1 The proposed scheme is the second phase of development of affordable housing sites on West Dene, the first phase being the 4 recently constructed dwellings on the former garage site to the south of 30 West Dene.

Address: LAND SOUTH OF 30, WEST DENE, GADDESSEN ROW

4/03282/16/FUL FOUR TWO-BED DWELLINGS
Granted
15/03/2017

6. Policies

6.1 National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

6.2 Adopted Core Strategy

CS1, CS7, CS8, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS17, CS19, CS20, CS24, CS29 and CS35.

6.3 Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policy 13, Policy 51, Policy 129, Appendix 3 and Appendix 5.

6.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents

- Accessibility Zones for the Application of car Parking Standards (July 2002)
- Gaddesden Row Landscape Character Assessment (May 2004)
- Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (Feb 2013)
- Planning Obligations (April 2011)
- Affordable Housing (Jan 2013)

7. Constraints

- CHILTERNNS AONB
- RURAL AREA

8. Representations

Consultation responses

8.1 These are reproduced in full at Appendix A

Neighbour notification/site notice responses

8.2 These are reproduced in full at Appendix B

9. Considerations

Main issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

- Policy and Principle
- Layout, Design and Scale
- Impact on Parking
- Impact on Rural Area and Chilterns AONB
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Access and Highway Safety
- Other

Policy and Principle

9.2 The site is located within the Rural Area wherein small-scale development will be permitted, such as the redevelopment of previously developed sites, provided that it has no significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and it supports the rural economy, in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy. Additionally, Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 77 of the NPPF encourage small-scale rural exception schemes that would provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

9.3 Furthermore, within the Core Planning Principles outlined in the NPPF there is heavy emphasis on the planning system's responsibility to deliver more homes. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF stresses this further, seeking to boost the supply of housing and paragraph 118 promotes and supports the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively. Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that decision makers should give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.

9.4 The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle. The main issues of relevance are discussed below.

Layout, Design and Scale

9.5 Core Strategy Policies CS11 and CS12 state that development within settlements should respect the typical density in the area, integrate with the streetscape character and respect surrounding properties. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and layout and are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

9.6 The proposal is for a row of three terraced dwellings that would continue the existing staggered build line along the northern side of West Dene. The application site is located within a residential area of Great Gaddesden and the surrounding area comprises two storey semi-detached and terraced units, as well as some flats,

constructed from an eclectic mix of materials (including cladding, brickwork and rendered brickwork) under pitched roofs. The proposed development would constitute a logical extension on the periphery of the existing built development that comprises Gaddesden Row.

9.7 Each dwelling within the two-storey terrace would comprise two bedrooms at first floor level and living room with kitchen/dining area at ground floor level. The terrace would comprise a traditional gable end roof form, measuring 5m to eaves and 7.5m ridge height. The combined footprint of the dwellings would be 160 sqm and they would be oriented with the front elevation facing the side elevation of 36 West Dene to the southwest.

9.8 The dwellings would be finished in red facing brickwork, light grey coloured weatherboarding and dark grey roof tiles. The proposed external finish is considered to replicate the existing architectural form and features of the surrounding area.

9.9 The addition of solar panels to the front elevation would normally be avoided within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, however taking into account the design and form of existing development on West Dene and the fact that the solar panels would face the street rather than open countryside, it is considered that the benefits would outweigh any visual harm.

9.10 The garden depths, which range from 8-10m, do not meet the minimum requirement of 11.5m set out in Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan. However, owing to the fact that open countryside surrounds the site to the north and east and that the proposed dwellings are small (two-bedroom, possibly starter homes), a reduced garden depth is considered to be acceptable. Additionally, there is a recreation ground situated 60m towards the south, which can be accessed via the public footpath that runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

9.11 In terms of dwelling density, the proposed development would be commensurate with the existing density on West Dene. The proposed density would be 37.5 dwellings per hectare, which falls within the required range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare set out in Saved Policy 21 of the Local Plan.

9.12 The proposed houses would be set back from the adjoining block of flats, which would help to retain open views across the fields to the east. A gate would be introduced to the front of the proposed dwellings in order to maintain pedestrian access to the public footpath that runs along the eastern boundary of the site. It is considered that sufficient spacing would be left around the development to ensure that it would not appear cramped within the site. However, to ensure that the proposal remains acceptable in this regard, it is considered reasonable to remove Permitted Development Rights for extensions and alterations to the units under Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and B.

9.13 Overall the proposed units follow the existing grain of development on West Dene and the layout, design and scale respects that of the surrounding area. The proposal complies with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF in that regard.

Impact on Parking

9.14 A wider redevelopment of parking/garage sites is taking place across the Borough, particularly where such parking sites have no beneficial use or are no longer required. The application site has been identified as surplus to the Council's garage/parking requirements and, as outlined above, its redevelopment is considered to be an effective use of land.

9.15 In terms of the parking requirements for the development, Saved Appendix 5 of the Local Plan states that a 2-bedroom dwelling in this location would require 1.5 spaces, equating to a total requirement 4.5 car parking spaces for the entire development. 6 allocated car parking spaces are proposed for the new houses, in addition to 3 unallocated car parking spaces (a total of 9 car parking spaces). It is noted that the 3 unallocated car parking spaces would be available for use by existing residents of West Dene. In this instance an over-provision of 4.5 car parking spaces is considered to be acceptable, noting the rural location and loss of parking area.

9.16 It is considered that the submitted Parking Survey satisfactorily demonstrates that there is sufficient parking on West Dene and that the loss of off-street parking to allow for the development will not have a negative impact on local parking provision. Furthermore, it is noted that there are existing parking bays on West Dene (capacity for 15 vehicles), many of the dwellings on West Dene have off-street parking on driveways and that there are no parking restrictions on West Dene. It is considered that the displaced car parking could be comfortably accommodated in the proposed elsewhere on West Dene and within the 3 unallocated parking spaces.

9.17 Concerns have been raised by local residents regarding the accuracy of the parking survey. The transport consultant has responded to those comments, stating that *'My main response in relation to the parking was that the parking surveys were undertaken by an independent traffic survey company with no link to Dacorum Council (as client and planning authority) or County Council (as local highway authority), and therefore no investment in the outcome of the surveys. We are therefore content that they reflect the parking situation on the dates of survey in March 2019, though there will of course be daily fluctuations in parking demand. The times of survey, 11am and 11pm, ensured that typical overnight and daytime parking was assessed.'*

9.18 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development complies with Core Strategy Policy CS12 and Saved Appendix 5 of the Local Plan regarding parking provision.

Impact on Rural Area and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

9.19 The proposed development is for three affordable housing units, which would be secured by a legal agreement. There is support for small schemes of affordable housing within the Rural Area, for example paragraph 77 of the NPPF, which states that local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

9.20 Additionally, Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy states that within the Rural Area small-scale development will be permitted, including the redevelopment of previously developed sites provided that it has no significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. This is reflected in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy, which states that small-scale schemes for local affordable homes will be promoted if it meets an identified local need for affordable housing; the housing is for people who

have a strong local connection with the village or parish and the scheme is of a scale and design that respects the character, setting and form of the village and surrounding countryside. In addition, Policy CS24 seeks to conserve the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB.

9.21 Therefore the main issue of relevance with respect to the Rural Area and Chilterns AONB is whether the proposed development would have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside and whether it would conserve the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB.

9.22 The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide seeks to ensure that new buildings are designed in a sensitive way, with particular regard to materials and external finishes. Whilst the Guide does encourage the use of traditional materials, it also acknowledges the importance of integrating with surrounding built development. Paragraph 3.18 of the Guide states that the main priority must be to ensure the buildings relate well to one another, as well as to neighbouring plots within a wider context.

9.23 As outlined above, the layout, scale and design of the three terraced units reflects that of the surrounding houses and flats on West Dene. The use of red facing brickwork and light grey timber cladding on the front elevation of the proposed units will integrate with the surrounding area.

9.24 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and it will conserve the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB, in accordance with Policies CS7, CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy. Additionally, the proposed development does not conflict with paragraph 78 of the NPPF, which promotes sustainable development in rural areas, stating that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Impact on Residential Amenity

9.25 Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that developments should avoid visual intrusion, loss of sunlight and daylight, loss of privacy and disturbance to the surrounding properties. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF seeks to ensure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. Saved Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Local Plan states that 9.22 minimum distances of 23 metres between the main rear wall of a dwelling and the main wall (front or rear) of another should be met to ensure privacy, however there is no specific minimum distance within policy in relation to a front to side relationship.

9.26 The front elevation of the proposed dwellings would be situated 20m from the side elevation of 36 West Dene. There are no windows on the side elevation of 36 West Dene. The proposed first floor windows of unit 35d would face the rear garden of 36 West Dene, however the separation distance of 20m is considered to be sufficient to avoid any significant overlooking or loss of privacy.

9.27 There is a block of flats adjoining the application site (33-35a West Dene). The build line of the proposed dwellings would be set back from the build line of the back of flats, with the rear elevation of the proposed units projecting approximately 5.5m to the rear of the flats. The new development would be visible from the rear windows of the flats, however the new development would not breach a 45 degree line drawn from the

centre of first floor windows of the flats. Additionally, there would be a separation distance of 5m between the new dwellings and the adjacent block of flats.

9.28 An objection has been received from 35 West Dene relating to the impact of the proposal on the amount of light received in the garden and overlooking. In terms of sunlight it is acknowledged that there would be some overshadowing of the garden, particularly in the morning, however it is not considered that the impact would be significant and, in relation to the first floor windows, the proposal would not breach the 45 degree line mentioned above. In terms of overlooking, the first floor windows of the proposed dwellings would afford an oblique view of the rear garden of 35 West Dene, however this relationship is not unusual in residential areas. Additionally, the relationship is not dissimilar to the existing relationship between the two neighbouring blocks of flats (33-35a and 29-31a West Dene).

9.29 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a significant impact upon the residential amenity of surrounding units. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy Saved Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Local Plan.

Access and Highway Safety

9.30 The proposal includes widening the existing access to the site to 4.8m to enable two vehicles to pass one another. This would result in the pavement being replaced with block paving. These alterations would be carried out in agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The Highway Authority considers the access arrangements acceptable, noting the size and nature proposed development.

9.31 The Highway Authority has requested a swept path analysis to demonstrate that that the proposed turning area is sufficient to enable waste collection vehicles to safely turn around and egress to the highway in forward gear. However, discussions with the applicant has established that the intention is for refuse vehicles to collect from the bin collection point (and not enter the site).

9.32 The existing dwellings on West Dene are served by refuse vehicles and no objections have been received from Waste Management (Refuse). Nonetheless, the applicant has provided a swept path analysis that demonstrates that the intended movements of refuse vehicles could be achieved. As such, it is not necessary to request any further information regarding refuse collection by condition.

9.33 The Highway Authority considers that the proposal will not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the surrounding highway and that the development is unlikely to result in a material increase in traffic generation, subject to the inclusion of the relevant conditions and informative notes. The proposal complies with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy in that regard.

Affordable Housing

9.34 Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy seeks to secure 35% affordable housing on sites outside of Hemel Hempstead measuring 0.16 hectares or 5 dwellings and larger. However, on rural housing sites 100% of all new homes will normally be affordable

(Policy CS20). The affordable housing will be provided on-site and will be secured by a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991). The Section 106 agreement will also ensure that priority is given to people on the housing waiting list with a local connection.

Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on Trees and Landscaping

9.35 The application site is currently surfaced in hard standing with no trees within site. The submitted site plan gives detailed information regarding proposed tree planting and soft landscape works. It is however considered reasonable and necessary to impose a landscaping condition requiring further details of boundary treatments and hard surface materials.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

9.36 Saved Policy 129 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments have adequate storage for refuse and recycling. The proposed dwellings would provide secure space to the side and rear to store wheelie bins, which would then be presented to the bin collection point when required. As such, it is considered that the development could be incorporated into the existing refuse and recycling service and therefore complies with Policy 129.

Contaminated Land

9.76 Whilst the site does not reside within an area of known contaminative former land uses, consideration is given to the current use of the site as a parking area. There exists the slight possibility that this land use may have affected the application site with potentially contaminated material. Due to no other known sources of contamination, it is not considered that it would be reasonable or necessary to impose a full contamination investigation. However, an informative will be included if permission is granted, advising the developer to keep a watching brief during ground works on the site for any potentially contaminated material. Should any such material be encountered, then the Council must be informed without delay, advised of the situation and an appropriate course of action agreed. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF states that where a site is affected by contamination issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

SuDS

9.38 The applicant has provided a drainage strategy, which recommends that surface water run-off will discharge into two borehole soakaways and there would be an attenuation tank to prevent flooding. Foul water would be pumped into a private manhole prior to discharging into the public foul sewer. No objections have been received from Thames Water. Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development could provide an adequate water supply, surface water and foul drainage, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS29.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

9.39 Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy requires all developments to make appropriate contributions towards infrastructure required to support the development. These contributions will normally only extend to the payment of CIL where applicable. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in February 2015 and came into force on 1 July 2015. CIL exemption may be applicable as the development is for affordable housing.

Response to Neighbour comments

9.40 The main concern from neighbours is with respect to the loss of the car parking area. These points have been addressed above under the subheading 'Impact on Parking'. No 36 has raised concerns with the proximity of the bin collection point. It is considered that the location of the bin collection point is reasonable, taking other factors into consideration including highway safety and access for refuse vehicles. Additionally, the intention of the bin collection point is for bins to be wheeled there for on collection day, rather than for the storage of wheelie bins. There is provision for refuse storage within the curtilage of the proposed dwellings.

S106 and Planning Obligations

9.41 In accordance with Saved Policy 13 of the Local Plan, a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991) will be required to deliver the affordable housing. The Section 106 agreement is currently being processed by Dacorum Borough Council with Hertfordshire County Council required as the enforcing body. This application is recommended for approval subject to the completion of this Section 106 agreement which will secure three units as social rented accommodation, to be managed/maintained by Dacorum Borough Council with priority given to those with a local connection.

Other Considerations

9.42 Local residents have raised concerns regarding continued problems with drainage and disruption during construction works. These are not material planning considerations and therefore do not alter the considerations discussed above.

10. RECOMMENDATION – That planning permission be **DELEGATED WITH A VIEW TO APPROVAL** subject to the completion of a planning obligation under **Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990** for the reasons referred to above and subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

No	Condition
1	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p>
2	<p>No development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning</p>

	<p>Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan shall include details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Construction vehicle numbers and type b. Access arrangements to the site c. Traffic management requirements d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas) e. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway f. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times g. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities h. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas i. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements. <p><u>Reason:</u> In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018) and Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).</p>
3	<p>No development other than groundworks and site clearance shall take place until details of hard landscaping and boundary treatment have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard surfacing materials - Means of enclosure <p>The approved landscape works shall be carried out prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted.</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interests of the visual amenities of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in accordance with Policies CS12 and CS24 of the Core Strategy (2013).</p>
4	<p>Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed access and on-site car parking areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaces and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> To ensure permanent availability of the parking / manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy CS8 of the Dacorum Core Strategy.</p>
5	<p>Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order amending or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no development falling within the following classes of the Order shall be carried out</p>

	<p>without the prior written approval of the local planning authority:</p> <p>Schedule 2 Part 1 Classes A and B</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> To enable the local planning authority to retain control over the development in the interests of safeguarding the residential and visual amenity of the locality, in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013).</p>
6	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials specified on page 20 of the submitted Design and Access Statement.</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development, in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).</p>
7	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:</p> <p>19 WDGR SL01 (SITE LOCATION PLAN) 18 WDGR SP02 Rev E (SITE CONTEXT & PARKING IN WEST DENE) 18 WDGR SP03 Rev F (PROPOSED SITE PLAN) 18 WDGR PE01 Rev D (PROPOSED PLANS AND ELEVATIONS) Design & Access Statement (Materials on Page 20)</p> <p><u>Reason:</u> For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</p> <p>Article 35 Statement:</p> <p>Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which lead to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.</p> <p>INFORMATIVES</p> <p>1. The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website:</p> <p>https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-</p>

pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. The developer is advised to keep a watching brief during ground works on the site for any potentially contaminated material. Should any such material be encountered, then the Council must be informed without delay, advised of the situation and an appropriate course of action agreed. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF (2019) states that where a site is affected by contamination issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

Appendix A

Consultation responses

1. The Chiltern Society

No comments received

2. Three Valleys Water

No comments received

3. Thames Water Utilities

No comments received

4. Highway Authority:

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Provision of Parking & Access Areas Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed access, on-site car parking and turning area shall be laid out, demarcated, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use. Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

2. Construction Management No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan shall include details of: a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing; b. Access arrangements to the site; c. Traffic management requirements d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas); e. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway; f. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of

waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times; g. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities; h. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas; i. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements. Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

CONDITIONS: No development shall commence until full details (in the form of a swept path analysis) have been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed turning area is sufficient to enable waste collection vehicles to safely turn around and egress to the highway in forward gear. Reason: In the interest of highway safety and traffic movement. This is to be in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) construction specification and to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.

HIGHWAY INFORMATIVE: HCC recommends inclusion of the following highway informative / advisory note (AN) to ensure that any works within the public highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

HIGHWAY INFORMATIVE: HCC recommends inclusion of the following highway informative / advisory note (AN) to ensure that any works within the public highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN) Agreement with Highway Authority: The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

COMMENTS / ANALYSIS: The proposal comprises of the construction of three two-bed dwellings at land adjacent to 35-36 West Dene, Great Gaddesden. West Dene is designated as an unclassified local access road, subject to a speed limit of 30mph and highway maintainable at public expense. Public footpath Great Gaddesden 009 runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

ACCESS: The site has existing private vehicular access from the end of a cul-de-sac leading to a garage area. The proposals include using this access for vehicular, cycling and pedestrian access into the site, the layout of which is shown on the submitted plan no. 18 WDGR SP03 F. The proposals include widening the existing access road to the site to approximately 4.8m to enable two vehicles to pass one another at the entrance of the site. Following consideration by HCC as Highway Authority of the nature and size of the proposals, the arrangements are acceptable and in accordance with Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide and Manual for Streets (MfS).

A small area of the works at the entrance into the site is on land, which is considered to be highway land. The applicant would need to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with HCC as Highway Authority in relation to any works that would be needed on highway land (please see the above highway informative for more information).

The proposals include the provision of a shed for each property to provide safe storage for cycling and a pedestrian gate to provide access to the public footpath Great Gaddesden 009, which runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. These are important to maximize pedestrian and cycling use and accessibility to and around the site.

PARKING: The proposal includes the provision of nine on-site car parking spaces, the layout of which is shown on submitted plan no. 18 WDGR SP03 F. HCC as Highway Authority considers the layout and dimensions of the proposed parking to be acceptable and in accordance with MfS and Roads in Hertfordshire. Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) is the parking authority for the district and therefore should ultimately be satisfied with the level of parking provision.

A small area of the works at the entrance into the site is on land which is part of the highway maintainable at public expense. The applicant would need to enter into a minor Section 278 Agreement with HCC as Highway Authority in relation to any works that would be needed on the highway land.

REFUSE / WASTE COLLECTION: Provision has been made for on-site bin/refuse storage within 30m of each dwelling and bin collection point has been provided to within approximately 25m of each dwelling, which is considered to be acceptable. The collection method / arrangements must be confirmed as acceptable by Dacorum Borough Council waste management.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS: The proposals are considered to be acceptable to enable emergency vehicle access of 45 metres from the highway to all parts of the building. This adheres to guidelines as recommended in MfS, Roads in Hertfordshire; A Design Guide and Building Regulations 2010: Fire Safety Approved Document B Vol 1 - Dwellinghouses.

CONCLUSION: HCC as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the surrounding highway with no direct impact. The development is unlikely to result in a material increase in traffic generation. HCC has no objections on highway grounds to the application, subject to the inclusion of the above planning condition and informatives.

5. Trees & Woodlands

No comments received

6. Great Gaddesden Parish Council:

As our parish clerk is currently on holiday, we are writing to feed back the views of the parish council, following our recent meeting. At the meeting we heard a number of concerns expressed by local residents who live in West Dene. We have also had the opportunity to review the very comprehensive letter Mr Panos Valentzas wrote to you

outlining the many negative consequences of the development and the inadequacy of the parking survey. We agree with many of the comments made in this letter.

We agree that the loss of parking spaces for the West Dene residents, who do not have their own spaces to park, will cause considerable problems on this road. The development, as planned, will also impact very negatively on Mr Velentzas's property.

We would suggest consideration should be given to developing a single property on the site, but retaining a parking area for the use of the current West Dene households, who do not have their own parking spaces on their properties.

For these reasons we oppose the application.

Appendix B

Neighbour notification/site notice responses

Objections

34 West Dene:

Letter of objection received, summarised as follows:

- Loss of considerable parking space for up to 15 cars
- Greater on-street parking
- It is important to be able to park outside house

31A West Dene:

I'd first like to say that the reason this comment is a few days late is because every time I kept trying to register your website site kept crashing. I tried every day and have only just been able to get registered. As far as this development is concerned I object because it will mean car parking will be extremely hard. In this block of flats there is not enough spaces and one of use always uses where you intend to build. The next block has no choice but to use where you intend on building so where do you expect them to park never mind the houses opposite. When I've had visitors in the past that car park has been totally full. This construction really will cause the street problems with parking.

32 West Dene:

I would like to bring to your attention two issues:

- Firstly, there will be inadequate parking in the street if these properties were to be built. Further, the pictures used as proof that there were not many cars in the car park are years old, and are therefore not a valid representation of the current situation.
- Secondly, the roads around West Dene which lead to the nearby villages and towns are not being adequately maintained with the current amount of road users, therefore, increasing the amount of traffic on the roads mean that they will only get worse.

24 West Dene:

I wish to strongly object to the proposed development. During a recent housing survey it was found that 11 applicants wanted social housing but of these 11 only 1 wanted a 2 bed house. There have already been 4 2 bed houses built very close to this proposed development and of these 4 only 2 went to people with local connections which is what they were built for. Therefore, what is the desperate need for another 3 2 bed houses. There has been 1 3 bed house vacant in the road for just over a year so there does not seem to be any urgency to create new housing stock in this village. When the application was first proposed to the chairman of the Parish Council, a parking survey was proposed to be carried out. The supposed results of this survey came up with some very odd figures. The registrations of the cars parked in the road were taken at 11pm then 11am and 11pm the following day. There are many cars missing from these figures which were definitely parked at these times and many registrations that do not exist in this road, the whole survey is a tissue of lies and made up figures. The application seems to believe that the village is well served by public transport with 6-7 buses a day! We have just 1 each way meaning people in the village who work, need to go shopping or just exist must have their own transport, meaning they need somewhere to park. There are already at least 15 properties in this small road with no access to their own dedicated spaces, so to add another 3 properties with potentially 6 more cars is unadvised. These proposed houses will have their own car parking spaces but that means the many cars which currently park there will have nowhere to go. The application states the site was a former garage area but garages have never been built there. The site was concreted with a view to build garages on it in 1973 but they were never built, and the area has been used by the residents for parking for the last 46 years. To enable the very narrow access road to be widened it is proposed to remove the footpath which serves as access to 4 flats and make those tenants walk in the road to get to their front doors, not a very safety conscious decision. Where have the orange planning proposal notices been placed? I thought these were a legal requirement for any planning applications. I wish to strongly object on the grounds that the application is flawed in so many ways so as to make it totally untenable.

Yours,

Very local resident for 47 years.

Additional letter of objection received from 24 West Dene re-iterating above concerns.

16 Gade Valley Cottages:

I object to the planning of building 3 houses in the area that is used for parking. We visit our son, who lives there, on weekends and are finding it harder to drive down West Dene as there are many cars parked at the side of the road. Any additional cars added to this would create a hazard. There are currently 8-12 cars parked in the area at all times, including those that have been forced to park there because of the units built on the other side of West Dene forced them out!! These would then have to find their own parking area. I would think that the council would take care of their existing tenants rather than force them into what could be a dangerous situation if an ambulance or fire truck could not make it through. This would include my parking wherever I could whenever I visited my son.

33 West Dene:

I would like to strongly object to the planning permission of building 3 x 2 bedroom houses in our parking area. The effect of granting permission would be to push all of the residents to park on the road and make it almost impassable for any ambulances or fire trucks when needed. You have already removed the parking area on the other side of West Dene and the residents are now parking in this area. Looking at the Architects design document, they included pictures that are at least 4 years old, and painting a picture of a very unused area, where the reality is vastly different. The amount of cars in the area has grown tremendously and this would only get worse with no parking available to your existing tenants. I have sent many pictures taken at different times of the day showing the use of the area. Even during the daytime when everyone is at work, there are still 4-5 cars in the parking area.

They also make a ridiculous claim that this was never supposed to be a parking area, just garages. DUH! What is a garage used for? Parking your car in a secure area; so this was indeed intended as a parking area!!! You also need to look at the long term effects of this. When I submitted the application for my flat, I was the only one applying! This would only get worse with no parking area. You would then have derelict flats and no income from them. I also object because I would be losing the privacy of my back garden as they would be overlooking this area. This is a very bad idea and I will continue to oppose any application to build in this area. Submitted 23 June 2019 12:43

21 West Dene:

I would like to register my strongest objections to the proposed development in West Dene, Gaddesden Row.

Unlike the previous development on the disused garages, now Johnson Court, this land is a car park and is used every day. It primarily serves the residents who live in the 8 flats, who, according to your plans should be allocated 2 spaces per flat. Many other houses who don't have driveways or spaces for 2 cars also park there, so where are all these vehicles going to park if the building goes ahead? There is no room in the road for cars to park at the side of the road and it will lead to ill feeling and issues amongst an otherwise friendly and supportive community. The small parking bay at the top of West Dene is always full so will not be able to cope with the number of cars that would be ousted from the present car park. No doubt the people who come up with these plans, who don't live in or know the area, have come during the day and looked at a fairly empty car park. If the same people got to know the residents and visited during evenings or weekends, they would see a very different picture. The car park is well used and vital for not only the people who live in the flats, but many other people too. The garden land in front of the flats would not be large enough to park the flat residents cars and would detract from the surroundings and well being if the gardens were converted to a concrete mass. There is not the capacity along West Dene for additional cars to be parked along the sides of the road either. It would also make it hazardous and difficult for emergency vehicles to access or dustcarts.

There is also access to the public footpath from the car park which looks like will be blocked if the houses are built. The houses will also obstruct the beautiful view that residents have of the fields, which is something that cannot be replaced or compensated for. West Dene is a small residential area. It is safe for our children to play out in. The development will bring more traffic to the area and more cars to the road. This will make it less safe and much busier. One of the main reasons for us choosing to live in a village was that it provided a safe area for our children to play and

explore. This will not be the case with the increased traffic and building paraphernalia. As there is no public transport to the village for working residents or school age children, why are you encouraging more people to move to the area that will have to rely on cars to get about?

Gaddesden Row is an area of outstanding and natural beauty. By increasing the number of houses and traffic in the area you are adding to the pollution and destruction of the area and therefore not adding to its value. The previous constructions were supposed to enable local residents to remain in the area, but only one of the houses in Johnson Court was given to someone with ties to Gaddesden Row.

Historically, there has been an ongoing issue with drainage. The drains at the end of West Dene, near the flats are often unable to cope and get blocked. Adding more dwellings to the system is only going to add more stress to an aging outflow.

We do not need the houses. We do not want the houses. We also do not want the inconvenience and mess of months of building traffic. The car park is an essential area for existing residents and should not be tampered with and our views should be listened to.

For the reasons outlined, please reject the plans.

35 West Dene:

I would like to object to this planned building as it will cut out a lot of the natural light I receive in my garden as the sun rises on that side so with the build there we would get no light at all. There is also an issue with privacy as it will really overlook my garden and will be a visual intrusion when sat out there if there is a house sat next to my fence line.

I would also like to bring attention to the fact that there is always 10 or more cars parked there everyday in which if everyone had to park in the road it would cause a massive disruption to the rest of the residents on West Dene as there would be no where for these vehicles to park as the proposed buildings would have allocated parking this would cause chaos in the road if there was ever a need for emergency vehicles to gain access with said cars having to park on the street.

28 West Dene:

Letter of objection received with concerns regarding:

- Parking
- Foul water drainage

29A West Dene:

This is a utterly unacceptable idea, it will turn the already crowded road into a giant car park, this will be unsafe for children that are in the area as well as pensioners, I myself am disabled, I cannot walk past my path, so please explain to me how am I supposed to get to my car if I cannot park outside my property, you will ruin a small rural community, you have already built opposite the proposed site, enough is enough, while I understand the need for housing, there are plenty of derelict land waiting to be used,

with out the need to ruin peoples lives and it would.

31 West Dene:

I live at 31 West Dene in one of the sheltered flats of which there are eight. When I first moved into West Dene, there were sets of garages on one side of the road, and concreted parking on the other. The garages have been developed into properties, and now you are planning to develop the only remaining parking for the eight flats. The access is bad enough at the moment as some people park in the road outside the flats, but once the parking is gone, where are we supposed to park.

36 West Dene:

I write to object to the above proposal for threetwo-bedroom dwellings. The site is an inappropriate location for the proposed development, will remove parking for existing residents, will not be easily accessible despite alterations to the access and is ultimately contrary to certain elements of national and local planning policy. As such, we feel the proposal should be refused.

Site context

The site is currently used as a parking area by existing residents. Parking is already restricted within the village, and the site is a valuable parking and communal area for existing residents. The submitted Design and Access statement states that '*the development site is a former garage site and is not a designated parking area for residents / visitors; however some residents have been using this area for parking*'. Imagery from Google Earth Pro demonstrates that the site has never had garages—please see Appendix 1 for these images, which depict the true use of the site as an area for parking by local residents, *not* including any garages.

National Planning Policy

NPPF

The following from the NPPF is relevant to the proposal, and needs to be *thoroughly* considered for proposals such as this:

Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

P.78. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

We feel the proposed location will not be fully sustainable due to the need for private transport (the bus service link is only available once daily, so locals rely on private vehicular transport).

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

P.124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The buildings are significantly smaller than the surrounding buildings in the area –so will not ‘create better places in which to live and work’ for the new residents – and subsequently is not well designed.

P127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

None of the above will be created /achieved by the proposed development.

P.130. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

The proposal will not improve the way that the area functions –in fact, it will do the opposite and have an adverse impact on the way the area functions.

Building for Life

The Building for Life document is included within the NPPF –and indicates the standards that should be incorporated into all planning applications. The following is important and needs to be thoroughly considered by the applicant:

‘1 Connections–We recommend that you avoid: not considering how the layout of a development could be designed to improve connectivity across the wider neighbourhood’.

The layout of the development will decrease, not increase, connectivity –access and parking will be adversely affected.

‘5 Character–We recommend that you avoid: using the lack of character as a justification for further nondescript or placeless development. Too many identical or similar housing types’.

The housing, whilst smaller in size compared to the other houses in the street, appears to mimic the housing of the area and is somewhat ‘nondescript’.

‘7 Creating well defined street spaces. We recommend that you avoid: over reliance on in front of plot parking’.

The proposal certainly relies on in front of plot parking –which should be avoided.

‘10 Car parking. We recommend: anticipating car parking demand taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport sufficient parking for visitors.

Designing streets to accommodate on street parking. Prevent anti-social parking. Using a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination’.

All of the above has not been properly considered by the applicant. The proposal does not heed this guidance.

Local Planning Policy

Dacorum Core Strategy 2013

The Dacorum Core Strategy is one of the main guiding local policy documents. The following is considered to be relevant to this proposal –and as such, ought to be more fully considered.

‘Sustainable development strategy—to enable convenient access between jobs, homes and facilities, minimise the impact of traffic and reduce the overall need to travel by.’

The proposal will be contrary to this objective –it will increase the impact of private vehicular traffic.

‘Areas of Development Restraint –other small villages and the countryside–these are the least sustainable areas of the borough where significant environmental constraints apply. These include areas of high landscape quality, such as the Chilterns AONB...this needs to be protected to ensure its rural character is retained and settlements keep their separate identities’.

We question the location of the development -it is in one of the ‘least sustainable areas’.

‘9.3. Travel demand needs to be managed in a way that is more sustainable and delivers carbon reductions. This approach includes: ...managing existing road capacity; carefully locating development so that it is accessible to all users; controlling and managing new car parking spaces; encouraging fewer car journeys.’

The proposal contradicts this objective –it will encourage more car journeys and will result in poor management of car parking / road capacity.

‘Policy CS8: Sustainable Transport. All new development will contribute to a well-connected and accessible transport system whose principles are to: b) ensure good access for people with disabilities; f) improve road safety and air quality; h) provide sufficient safe and convenient parking based on car parking standards’.

We feel the proposal will not provide sufficient safe and convenient parking.

‘Policy CS9: Management of roads. The traffic generated from new development must be compatible with the location, design and capacity of the current and future operation of the road. In villages and the countryside, special regard will be paid to the effect of new development and traffic on the safety and environmental character’.

The proposal directly contradicts this objective.

'Policy CS12: Quality of Site Design. On each site development should: a) provide a safe and satisfactory means of access for all users; b) provide sufficient parking and sufficient space for servicing; integrate with the streetscape character and respect adjoining properties in terms of layout, security, site coverage, scale, height, bulk, materials and landscaping and amenity space'.

The proposed site will not provide satisfactory access or sufficient parking.

'27.12. Adopting a local approach. The availability of infrastructure capacity will play a major role in determining the phasing and exact location of future development'.

It is felt that the proposed location of the development is not suitable concerning road access and infrastructure.

Local Planning Precedent

A planning application was granted in 2016 for four two-bed dwellings south of 30, West Dene:

Planning Application 4/03282/16/FUL –*Four two-bed dwellings at Land South of 30, West Dene, Great Gaddesden –Grant*

This application has provided 4 of the proposed 6 units that are referenced in the Affordable Housing Need document –submitted as part of the application subject of this objection. It therefore seems inappropriate to construct the remaining dwellings for this quota (and an additional dwelling to this quota) in *this* village¹ and location. It also appears very similar² to this application –and will create further similar, nondescript development in the village.

1 West Dene residents constitute approximately 8.5% of the Great Gaddesden parish population (2011 Census)

2 Both plans are done by the same architectural practice; ground/first floor plans identical and front/rear elevations very similar –please see Appendix 9

The proposed site is referenced in this application as being parking space for residents –please see Appendix 3 for snapshot of architectural plan which depicts 20 clearly demarcated parking bays. Using the site for housing instead of parking will therefore mean parking availability is substantially less than is required for the local residents.

Material Planning Objections

Parking

This village has limited parking availability. Whilst the site is designated as a 'semi derelict former garage site', there have never been any garages and it has always been used for parking by the local community. Further to that the proposed site is referenced in the application as being parking space for residents –please see Appendix 4 for snapshot of architectural plan which depicts 20 clearly demarcated parking bays.

Numerous residents park at the site –ourselves included –and this parking area is normally at least half occupied. The proposed provision of only 3 unallocated spaces is insufficient and will cause significant problems for existing residents trying to park /

visitors for existing residents. The site is in a rural area and so naturally private vehicular transport is the main/sole method of transportation for residents.

We also question the accuracy³ of the parking survey that has been submitted as part of the application –as it indicates that there is greater availability for parking than is known by local residents to be the case. For example, we believe the estimated availability of 92car parking spaces to be a gross exaggeration of how many cars can be safely accommodated on West Dene Road. Furthermore the parking survey for aforementioned 4/03282/16/FUL calculates 464 available parking spaces(44771041.pdf)if weexcludethespaces on the proposed site which will not be available anymore.

3 Besides the accuracy of the road capacity estimate we also call other aspects of the survey into doubt –see Appendix 8for more information

4 Our calculationusing Google Earth imagery also estimates 45 spaces and details can be found in Appendix 6

Removing parking space without sufficient replacement of this space is unfair on existing residents –particularly as parking is already limited / difficult for residents –and could have safety implications for pedestrians and road users alike.

We note that there is a further erroneous assumption that most dwellings have ‘off street parking’. As an example, our property does not have off street parking and neither do theflats adjacent to the proposed site.

We also note that it is uncertain where any necessary parking provision will be located for existing residents.

Given the above and local planning precedent, the accuracy of the parking survey submitted therefore seems somewhat misleading /potentially erroneous.

Access

Whilst the proposal includes the objective of ‘widening the access’, it is questionable whether this will actually improve the access orbe sufficient for existing and new residents.

The existing pavement will be removed, meaning that residents of flatsadjacent to the sitewill have to walk on the new road access to be able to get to their place of residence.

Additionally, the proposed plans include the removal of our side steps and gate. We cannot relocate this to a safe location on our property; the steps and gate would have to be moved to the front of our decking –which is elevated by 40cm over an area that already requires 4 high steps to access grass level. The plans state that ‘*access to 36 can be accommodated to an agreed location*’ –but we cannot see how this can be achieved safely and appropriately–please see Appendix 5to see why this proposed location cannot work due to the decking and site level.

Public Footpath Accessibility

The proposed site is located adjacent to a Public Footpath (Great Gaddesden 009) andvery close to other Public Footpaths (Great Gaddesden 010 and 075). These form part of the Hertfordshire Way. As such, existing residents’ access to these paths will be

restricted and passersby will overlook / look into the new dwellings. The proposal will therefore have an adverse impact on the amenity of the new residents of the new dwellings.

Suitability of the proposed site

We appreciate the need for more affordable housing in the borough and within England –however, the proposed site is not the *right* location for this development. The site, regardless of provisions for increasing the width of the access, will not be sufficiently accessible. It is too small a plot for the number of proposed dwellings. Jockey End is located within the AONB –as such, whilst this does not preclude affordable housing from being erected; the design is all the more important because of this AONB designation.

Moreover, whilst the Design and Access statement notes that the site is sustainable due to bus services, the majority of locals rely on private transport and subsequently frequently rely upon the proposed site for parking.

We also note that the parking area is also used by the community as a play area by children and by local residents to access the local public footpaths.

The applicant has also referenced the bus links / service –this is an infrequent, once daily service and so residents rely on private vehicular transport. The proposal will therefore require new residents to use their own private transport rather than more sustainable public transport.

The site therefore appears unsuitable for the proposed development.

Size of the proposed dwellings

The proposed dwellings will be significantly smaller compared to other existing properties in the neighbourhood and will likely provide insufficient amenity space for the new residents.

Street scene

The proposed dwellings do not include any enclosed front garden space compared to the existing properties in the village and will subsequently be dominated by ‘front parking’. This is also contrary to section 7 of the building for life document which stipulates that ‘*over reliance on in front of plot parking*’ should be avoided.

Other considerations

Whilst we acknowledge that a drainage report has been provided by the applicant, it should be reiterated that the Design and Access statement states that ‘*consultees commented that there have been historic issues with foul drainage*’ (page 14). It is also worth mentioning that the Design and Access statement also notes that ‘*the existing sewer run passing under the car park entrance will be adopted by Thames Water since it collects the foul run-off from more than one property*’ and ‘*making relevant assumptions about the route of the proposed drainage run, it would need to be pumped into a private manhole before discharging into this run under gravity*’. Hence a significant amount of work is likely to be required to ensure sufficient drainage for the new dwellings –and as, historically, drainage issues have been prevalent in the area, it is likely that these proposed dwellings would also be affected. It is also worth noting that

the pump could be very noisy –which would have an adverse impact on residential amenity for existing residents.

It should also be stressed that the strategy to discharge surface water via two 20 meter deep borehole soakaways with the provision of a 25m³ attenuation tank is advised by the Environmental Agency only as a measure of last resort⁵. Furthermore although we trust that the porous pavement system proposed will enable filtration of surface water contaminants from discharging into the borehole soakaways we are concerned about the environmental impact in case of miscalculation or extreme weather conditions.

5 From the PRP Report (44838433.pdf): “The appended EA advisory note states that borehole soakaways are only acceptable where it is the only viable option. This report finds this to be the case as the soil in the top 7m below ground level has a very low permeability, meaning shallow soakaways would be ineffective. There are also no public surface water sewers in close proximity to the proposed development.”

Finally the bin collection point for all the dwellings will be adjacent to our fence and in close proximity to our window and front door. We feel that the smell from there could have an adverse impact on residential amenity—please see Appendix 7 for images.

Conclusion

We trust the above has outlined why the proposed scheme in its current guise should be refused. If the above can be addressed and mitigated then it would make the proposed scheme more acceptable to the local community and we would be more supportive of the proposal. However, at present, the proposal will have an adverse impact on existing residents concerning parking and access and is contrary to the majority of policies mentioned in this document. Accordingly, the application should be refused.