

Widford Parish Council

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By email to: planning@eastherts.gov.uk
Hard copy delivered by hand to Wallfields

29 September 2015

Dear Ms Izod

Re: Application 3/15/1793/FUL Land West of Wilmoor, Ware Road, Widford

Thank you for extending the comments deadline to Widford Parish Council so that parishioners' views could be taken into account.

Having examined the application and its accompanying papers, the Parish Council objects to the development and makes the following comments to support its position:

1. The Development: GBC3 and OSV2

GBC3. The application site lies within the Rural Area as defined in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan in which there is a presumption against development other than required for agriculture, forestry, small scale local community facilities or other uses appropriate to a rural area. The proposed development would represent an unsustainable form of development in the Rural Area and would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character of the site and surrounding area. The benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the policy objections to the development and the proposal would be contrary to and prejudicial to policy **GBC3** of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

OSV2. The Parish Council rejects the assertion made in Shire Consulting's Planning Statement (para 20) that Policy OSV2 can be considered out of date because EHDC has acknowledged that it does not have a 5-year supply of housing land. Should EHDC planners accept this argument, it would expose all East Herts Category 2 Villages to unbridled development. For clarification, Widford Parish Council asks EHDC for a definitive statement on its attitude to the current relevance of OSV2.

OSV2 (II) (i). The developers (Shire Consulting, para 6) are suggesting that this development is "infill" when clearly it is not. To approve the application on these grounds would be a violation of **OSV2 (II) (i)** and open the door to ribbon development - and such a ruling would presumably set a precedent for all Group 2 villages.

See:

OSV2 Category 2 Villages
Shire Consulting para 20

2. Mix of Housing

ENV1(b), OSV2 (II) (c), and HSG3, 4 & 7. In the opinion of the Parish Council, all three houses are too large and are not in keeping with the character of Widford, which is a small rural village. Shire Consulting para 21 quotes the Widford Parish Plan of 2011 which says that 29% of respondents expressed a preference for family homes (3 bedrooms or more) and 39% expressed a preference for starter homes.

This development is entirely focused on very large family homes and does not meet the need for starter homes, which may be affordable homes or low cost homes.

See:

ENV1 (b) ...does not complement the existing pattern of development (the grain of development.)

OSV2 (II) (c) Affordable housing in accordance with HSG3, HSG4 and HSG7.

Shire Consulting para 21

3. Conservation Area: Important View

OSV2 (II) (f), OSV2 (II) (h), and BH6. Policy **OSV2 (II) (f)** protects the amenities of the adjoining area against the detrimental effects of development. In the policies it applies to TPOs, for example, EHDC acknowledges that views have definite amenity value. Policy **OSV2 (II) (h)** protects important views or vistas within the village or of open countryside beyond from being unacceptably blocked. Immediately to the west of the site is an Important View over the River Ash valley and the development would certainly detract from this view. **BH6** states that developments are to be sympathetic to and not detract from the character and appearance of the area and **BH6(d)** that important views within, into and out of the area are to be respected.

In the Planning Statement submitted by Shire Consulting para 31 it is argued that the view from the road is not relevant as it is not directly from the development site. However the proposed development will certainly be detrimental to and will obstruct to some degree the "important view". The Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2011 (adopted October 2013) para 6.16 identifies the area opposite Abbots Lane as especially important as it introduces expansive pasture into the village scene with views over the Ash valley.

See:

BH6 New developments in Conservation areas

Widford Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2011 adopted in 2013 para 6.16 and Plan 3

Shire Consulting para 31

4. Traffic

Neither the application nor HCC's comments appear to take any account of the approved application **3/14/0629/FP** for five dwellings on land to the East of Wilmoor. East Herts District Council should be aware that the present application is part of a larger development. The land on the eastern side of Wilmoor is very similar and was granted planning permission in June 2014. The Parish Council would like to ensure that the review done by HCC Case Officer Bob Meadows (ref EH/580/2015, see email of 23rd September 2015) was undertaken in the full knowledge of both developments. All issues relating to congestion and parking etc. must take into account the combined impact of both developments and cannot view them in isolation.

When 3/14/0629/FP was considered, a lay-by for parking was suggested but this proposal was ignored. In view of the proximity to the blind bend and the 40mph zone this development would certainly benefit from a lay-by. Widford Parish Council, taking account of the concerns for safety expressed by local residents, again requests that the danger caused by vehicles waiting to gain entrance to the developments (in particular delivery vehicles that would not

have enough room to clear the highway when entering the developments) be fully addressed.

The Parish Council must also bring to your attention the sharp left hand turn as you come up the hill from Wareside that has created difficulties for visitors to Ash View nursing home and the owners of The Lodge when attempting to turn right into the properties. There have been several near accidents. One solution might be to reduce the 40 mph speed limit to 30 mph at the bottom of the hill, which, together with the aforementioned lay by at the entrance of the estate, would improve the sight lines for vehicles coming out of the new development.

5. Section 106 (TCPA 1990)

By considering the individual applications (3/14/0629/FP approved, and 3/15/1793/FUL) as part of a larger whole, the planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), would at least be fulfilled in mitigation of the impact of development. If viewed as two individual projects, the Section 106 mechanism is not triggered. This would be in violation of the spirit of S106, whereas if the full picture is taken into account, the developer's contribution can also be seen in conjunction with highways contributions as set out in the preceding three paragraphs.

See:

Highways letter of 23rd September 2015

3/14/0629/FP in conjunction with 3/15/1793/FUL

TCPA 1990 s106

6. Concluding comments

Parishioners believed that the comments they made about the previous application (3/14/0629/FP) were ignored by EH Planning and sincerely hope they will receive more consideration this time. The Parish Council wishes EHDC to understand that it is not opposed to development that meets local needs, particularly for low cost housing and that is compliant with the full range of current Saved Planning Policies. However, the application under consideration does not meet those criteria.

Yours sincerely



Colin Marks

Clerk to Widford Parish Council

cc to Widford Parish Councillors