HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

Application WD/2021/2356/MAO

Expiry date for comments: 15th February 2022.

Address: LAND AT OLD ORCHARD HOUSE, HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9DZ

Description: OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 38 DWELLINGS, ACCESS, LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE.

The application was recommended for refusal. Members of Horam Parish Council's Planning Committee made the following comments with regard to their decision:

1. Members expressed their frustration at having considered a similar application and would refer WDC to their comments made in August 2020 on application **WD/2018/0509/MAJ** even though there are less units, the reasons for refusal are listed below.

2. This application should be refused in accordance with Wealden District Local Plan saved Policies EN12 -The Council will seek to retain and enhance the contribution of trees and woodland areas to the landscape character of the District. Resisting development proposals which would result in the loss of trees which make a valuable contribution to the character of the landscape, a settlement or its setting. EN14 - Seek to retain existing trees, significant hedgerows and other valuable site features. EN 27 - Layout and Design. EN29 - Light Pollution. TR1 - Environmental Impact of new roads proposal and TR3 - Traffic Impact of New Development

3. Parker Dann have not commissioned updated Reports apart from the 2021 Great Crested Newt Report. In particular, the Transport Report of 2019 does not reflect the increase in traffic generated by new developments in Hellingly.

4. The Horebeech Lane junction with the A267 was already at its capacity before the development at Rosemead. The Traffic Survey that refers to the amount of vehicles using Horebeech Lane is out of date. Traffic movements have increased significantly due to subsequent development in Hellingly.

5. The increase in traffic would blight the area and have a detrimental effect on air quality. This is overdevelopment of the area between the bridge and Laundry Lane.

6. There will be an increase in traffic from the new development in addition to that from Rosemead.

7. WDC's Climate Change Statement identified car usage in Wealden as being the majority of the cause of emissions (46%) resulting in poor air quality. This contradicts the statement by the developers' submission that there would be no impact from this development.

8. Pedestrians will have to cross the road to get to the footpath.

9. There is a primary school in Maynards Green which is currently over-subscribed, so there is no guarantee that any future residents would be able to attend the facility which would lead to them having to travel elsewhere.

10. There is insufficient infrastructure in the village. The Surgery is run by locums, no bank or post office.

11. Although the number of dwellings has been reduced from 51 to 38, the percentage of three, three and four bedroomed houses, has increased from 66% to 75%.

12. There is not enough provision for parking, for the 4 bed houses.

13. There is no accessibility to local services and facilities. The proposed development is too far to walk to local services ".....is beyond an 800 metres (m) walk as recommended in Manual for Streets...".
(Appeal Decision Ref APP/C1435/W/19/3227196 paragraph 10 refers).

14. The Planning Inspector commented (Appeal reference: APP/C1435/W/19/3235754 Land adj Old Orchard House, Horebeech Lane, Horam TN21 9DZ dated 7th August 2020)

Inspectors Comments

"Paras 15 & 16
(15) Furthermore, in addition to one and two-bedroom dwellings, two thirds of the proposed 58 dwellings would have three or more bedrooms. As such, the proposed development is likely to generate a range of needs for its various residents to travel outside the village to access services and facilities including employment, healthcare and leisure.
The above combination of factors is likely to constrain access to facilities by means other than the private car.

(16) I therefore conclude that the proposed development would lead to reliance on the private car by future occupiers. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policies SP07 and SP09 of the CS. Together, the policies seek to ensure that, amongst other things, development minimises greenhouse gas emissions, and it is easier to travel by more sustainable modes of transport. "

15. Although the revised plan has reduced the number of houses to 38 the hedge at the front of the development, will still be removed, the clustering around cul de sacs has not been addressed and three quarters of the proposed dwellings would have three or more bedrooms so the inspectors comments still apply.

Inspectors Comments

"Paras 23/24/26
(23) The following combination of factors would contribute to a noticeable urbanisation of the 'green break' between Horam and Marle Green: the proposed removal of the site's northern perimeter hedge; the centrality and scale of the proposed access road which would approximately bisect the site, north to south.

Moreover, the proposal would, in combination with the nearby Rosemead Farm development cumulatively substantially extend the built-up character of Horam east of

the Cuckoo Trail. The above effect of the proposal would be particularly noticeable from the north along Horebeech Road on the approach to the site, and within the site.

(26) However, for the reasons described above, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and identity of the rural setting of Horam and Marle Green. As such, it would conflict with Policies EN27 of the LP1 and SP013 of the CS, which together seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development respects and promotes local distinctiveness

Para 46/47/48 are still relevant
(46) Nevertheless, I have identified significant harm in relation to suitability of location, the character and appearance of the area.

(47) I appreciate that the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development but even where the tilted balance is engaged, the benefits of additional housing do not necessarily outweigh all other concerns.

Moreover, case law has found that even where policies can be considered out of date, this does not mean they carry no weight. The balancing exercise remains a matter of planning judgement.

(48) As such, given the totality of harm identified above, I conclude that the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

The proposals would fail to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan and national guidance."

These comments in Chailey Homes 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' report in Jan 2018 endorse the Inspectors comments

"Landscape Character Assessment – 2014
In paragraph 4.27.5, the key characteristics of the landscape around Horam are summarised as follows:

i) Remnant Historic Landscapes: Pockets of Ancient Woodland of varying size (with the largest to the north and west) are scattered around the settlement within a patchwork of a predominantly ancient field pattern. The principal field types present are cohesive and aggregate assarts, with areas of regular piecemeal enclosure.

ii) Urban Edges: The settlement edges surrounding the village are all considered to be sensitive (lined with trees or hedgerows)

iii) Watercourses/Waterbodies: The landscape is bisected by a stream, the Waldron Ghyll, which flows past several farmsteads to later join the valley of the Cuckmere River. This is a key landscape feature within the setting of the village. Several ponds have formed along the course of the stream.

iv) Footpaths/Bridleways: The Cuckoo Trail, a major route for recreation, follows the former Eastbourne to Tunbridge Wells railway and passes through the middle of this settlement contributing to its tourism. A number of other footpaths connect with the Cuckoo Trail and also connect the village to its landscape setting.

2.47 The application site is identified as having a high sensitivity to change with remnants of historic landscape (Ancient). It has a water body on its eastern corner.

2.48 The site adjoins a sensitive urban edge.

The access road will be a significant feature within the visual scene. It bisects the development, generally from north to south across the contours, providing potential views of vehicle movements, which will be especially prominent during dusk to dawn with the sweeping of headlights.

These visual impacts will be accentuated during the winter months, due to deciduous nature of the trees on the embankment which filter the views into the site during the remainder of the year.
However, the majority of the trees are deciduous in nature and thereby screening will be less effective during the winter months, relying on the mass of branches and twigs within the crowns of the trees to filter views.

The views from the public footpath Horam 16 is a case in point, where the site boundary itself provides the only screening and is effective during the summer months and will be reduced following leaf drop

From Horebeech Lane visual receptors will perceive a change in character of the road side landscape with the removal 110m of the roadside hedge and the opening up of views in to the site and the new development as a whole.

The proposed layout for the site, will result in vehicle movements being apparent during dusk to dawn, as a result of vehicle light sweep.

This combined with lighting emanating from the new dwellings, will result in an increase of light pollution; in what is a currently an area of limited light pollution."

15. Members expressed their concern that all of the hedge will be removed.

16. HPC are concerned about this development's impact on Climate Change and light pollution.

17. HPC asks WDC, when reviewing this application to take these into account and apply conditions.

18. There should be no further development in the area until it has been demonstrated how Southern Water Authority has the capacity to deal with the sewage without any discharge into the sea or rivers.

Date: 15th February 2022.

Sally Blades, Clerk (on behalf of)
Horam Parish Council.