my reference

ask for Jenny Hudson

date Monday 7 February 2022

to Mr M Taylor
Development Management

Council Offices, Vicarage Lane
Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX
T: 01323 443362
E: Jenny.hudson@wealden.gov.uk
W: www.wealden.gov.uk

your reference WD/2021/2356/MAO

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

LAND AT OLD ORCHARD HOUSE, HOREBEECH LANE, HORAM, TN21 9DZ
Parish: Horam
Grid Reference: 558399 116795

Thank you for consulting the Housing Service on the above Planning Application. The Housing Service would like to comment as follows.

This response is provided having regard to the Wealden Local Plan 1998, Core Strategy 2013, Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2016 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

Policy AFH1 of the Affordable Housing Local Delivery Plan 2016 requires a 35% affordable housing contribution. The Application acknowledges this by proposing a policy compliant 13 units of affordable housing on the indicative site layout document.

A recent breakdown of the applications on the Housing Register in terms of the size of accommodation that applicants' require is set out below and is indicative of the need for smaller affordable units. The proposed affordable housing mix has also been included for comparison.

Size of unit	Number of applicants	Percentage of register	Proposed with application	Percentage of units proposed
1 bedroom	261	52%	4	31%
2 bedrooms	139	28%	6	46%
3 bedrooms	78	15%	2	15%
4 (+) bedrooms	27	5%	1	8%
Total	**505**		**13**	

The Housing Service is satisfied that the proposed mix of unit sizes provides a mix that appropriately meets the needs of those seeking affordable accommodation in the District. There is a greater need for 1 bed units across the District and we note the reduction in the number of 1 bed units proposed in the current scheme to 4 x 1 bed flats (compared to previous applications, which included 8 x 1 bed units), however a small block of 4 x 1 bed flats is acceptable. The Housing Service is pleased to see that the proposed indicative site layout includes 2 bed affordable houses, as opposed to flats as they are more suitable for households with children who are most often

eligible for 2 bedroom accommodation. We also welcome the inclusion of some larger 3 and 4 bed affordable units within the scheme.

In terms of tenure, whilst the NPPF 2021 states that 10% of total number of units on major development sites should be made available for home ownership, Policy AFH1 of the Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan 2016 seeks an 80/20 rented/intermediate housing tenure split, which would equate to 10 rented units and 3 units of intermediate (shared ownership/shared equity) housing. The preference would be for 3 x 2 bed houses to be allocated for intermediate housing.

The Housing Service is happy with the positioning of the affordable housing units within the development and is pleased to see that most of the affordable units meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards. In respect of the 3 bed houses it would be anticipated that these would meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for a 3 bed, 5 person unit of 93 square metres (as opposed to the 84 Square metres proposed) to give more flexibility for larger families requiring 3 bed properties.

Horam, like many areas of Wealden District has an acute shortage of affordable housing. In addition to this, the rate of turnover of affordable homes there is very low which results in long waiting times for people that need affordable accommodation.

Applicants with; 1) a connection to the parish, or 2) a connection to an adjoining parish would be given preference over those with no connection to the area. The data in the table below is taken from the Housing Register. It shows the number of applicants currently seeking affordable rented accommodation in Horam and the adjoining parishes.

Parish	Number of Applicants with a Local Connection.
Horam	21
Heathfield and Waldron	47
Chiddingly	2
Hellingly	24
Warbleton	1

In recent years there have been occasions where it has been difficult for developers to find Registered Providers that are willing to take on affordable units on smaller sites. Where none of the Council's preferred Registered Providers are in a position to offer on such sites the Council has recently started working with some alternative affordable housing providers. In this instance the applicants are encouraged to contact the Housing Service should they wish to explore this further. If it is not possible to identify a Registered Provider for the units, an off-site affordable housing contribution by way of a commuted sum would be considered.

It would be expected that any Affordable Units or commuted sum would be protected by way of a Section 106 legal agreement and that any commuted sum payable would be index linked.

Other design requirements of Affordable Housing- Guidance:

- Security - The affordable housing should meet Part Q Building Regulations and observe Secure by Design principles as recommended by the Police

Architectural Liaison Officer. Doors and windows to be certified to PAS 24 standards.
- Sustainability - Comply with Part L Building Regulations.
- Sizes The affordable homes should meet or exceed the minimum sizes as required by the Nationally Described Space Standards based on:
    1 Bedroom (2 person) units @ 50m^2
    2 Bedroom (4 person) houses @ 79 m^2
    3 Bedroom (5 person) houses @ 93 m^2
    4 bedroom (7 person) houses @ 115 m^2
- Meet any Design and Quality Standards that may be required by Homes England or the Registered Provider.
- All affordable homes should meet current local and National Standards/ Part M Building Regulations with preference for M4(2) standards.

Other requirements for the affordable housing are that:
- Private outdoor amenity space must be provided in the form of gardens for houses and balconies/terraces or landscaped communal areas for flats with facilities for households to dry washing outside.
- Open plan kitchen/lounge layout is only acceptable for one bedroom homes.
- The affordable housing units should be owned and managed by a Registered Provider who is approved by the Council, and has entered into a nomination agreement with the Council.
- The developer/landowner should dispose of the affordable units to the Housing Association either on a freehold basis or on a long lease of at least 125 years.

Definition of Affordable Housing:
“Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).”The full definition of Affordable Housing can be found in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Definition of a Registered Provider (Housing Association):
A landlord registered with Regulator of Social Housing as defined in Chapter 3 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, which is approved by the Council and has entered into a Nomination Agreement with the Council.

The Council will receive 100% nominations on initial lettings with 75% on subsequent lettings.

There are a number of approved Registered Providers currently working in Wealden District. They include:

- Saxon Weald Housing Association
- Orbit Housing Group
- Clarion Housing Group
- Town & Country Housing Group
- Stonewater Housing Association
- Hastoe Housing Association
- Optivo
- Golding Homes
- Hyde

- Legal and General Affordable Homes
- Sage
- St Arthur Homes
- Heylo
- Wealden District Council

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss any aspect of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Jenny Hudson
Housing Development Officer