

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Mr Tass Amlak
Case Officer
Development Management
East Hertfordshire District Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford SG13 8EQ

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

20th March 2019 (by email)

Dear Mr Amlak,

Application No. 3/19/0408/FUL
Erection of 23 dwellings (9 affordable dwellings) including associated highway works, landscaping, utilities, drainage infrastructure and car parking on land at Stortford Road (R/O 12-18 Town Farm Crescent) Standon, Hertfordshire

This is an open greenfield site subject of longer views within the landscape and CPRE Herts objected to the development of this site in November 2016. It was however granted permission due to the lack of an up to date District Plan and a 5-year housing land supply. The outline permission granted at the site 3/16/2311/OUT approved the access to the site only but no other reserved matters. A Design Statement with the 2016 outline application suggested the following design opportunities:

- Create a residential scheme with a clear identity and character that enhances the local community and ties in with the local vernacular
- Improve the immediate setting of the adjacent conservation area
- Improve and enhance existing landscaping features and improve the biodiversity of the site
- Provide public amenity space

CPRE Herts do not object in principle to increased numbers within the same site boundaries of the outline permission, especially if this makes better use of the land and enhances the affordable housing offer. However, we would urge this to be relevant to the assessed housing needs of the local community including full provision for the most urgently needed housing types. The site must nonetheless limit built footprint and maximise the sustainable drainage features of the development to reduce flooding risk elsewhere within the village.

CPRE Herts also objected that with the building of a bypass for Little Hadham, the Environmental Statements at the time didn't sufficiently assess impacts on villages such as Standon that would see increased traffic flows with mitigation measures. This development will, like others, struggle to access the main A120 so opportunities to make this safer should be taken.

The main objection is to the uninspiring rather 'placeless' design and layout of the submissions, notwithstanding the consultations which have taken place. The proposed

layout of the application and indicative layout of the 2016 outline scheme (layout was not a detail for consideration) are both poor and the scheme fails to meet the design opportunities set out in the original 2016 application.

- Car parking areas are too dominant and the layout is inward looking.
- The development lacks a good sense of arrival.
- Residents would benefit from links to nearby rights of way integrated into walking movement around the site (note FP2 and FP4) for a site that is otherwise quite disconnected from its surroundings and the village. Is it possible for the development to fund a calming gateway feature on the A120, east of the site access, as the road comes into Standon that both slows vehicles and helps people to cross the road? A crossing point here would also help to create breaks within the traffic and safer options for vehicles trying to pull onto the main road.
- The layout should enable common views out towards the countryside to be enjoyed.
- Green infrastructure should be a strong element integrated into the design and layout to reduce flood risks elsewhere but the balancing pond may end up over engineered.
- No real public amenity space or walking routes are provided.
- Residents' back garden fences will end up defining the appearance and character of the site within the landscape, whereas a strong landscaped boundary feature, in public space, will allow trees/hedges to prosper and not conflict with private garden areas.

The proposal fails to reflect the pattern or 'grain' of the wider area nor enhance the setting of the Standon Conservation Area. The submission isn't helped by the lack of visualisation material but it is felt a more fundamental rethink is required in any event. We would urge the Council to refuse the application on grounds of poor design contrary to the Design Policies DES2, DES3 and DES4 of the East Herts District Plan and national planning policies in the NPPF. Future ideas would benefit from Design Review and assessment against Building for Life 12. We expect proposals will be assessed by your own Design and Conservation, Housing and Sustainable Drainage advisers.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Hagyard
Planning Manager