

RIDGEWAY FARM, COMMON PLATT, PURTON – BRIEFING NOTE JULY 2013

Introduction

The attached briefing note has been prepared by Wiltshire Council Highways and Planning Officers to respond to a range of queries that are being raised in the context of the Reserved Matters Applications now submitted and under consideration. A range of queries have been raised by local residents, residents groups, Local Members and Parish and Town Councils and Officers of Swindon Borough Council particularly in respect of highways matters. The briefing note below aims to provide some context, information and responses to the queries being raised. It is, however, essential for all parties to note that Outline Planning Permission (N/10/04575/OUT) was granted by the Secretary of State for Communities for the proposed development in November 2012. The principles of development have been considered and established and the current applications submitted by the developer (Taylor Wimpey) relate solely to matters of detail.

Issues Decided and Issues to be Decided

At this stage, it has to be noted that the site has an Outline Planning Permission with a master planning framework. Therefore the two applications need to comply with this framework. Issues raised such as traffic levels through the development and access arrangements cannot be re-addressed at this stage.

Spine Road and Width

During the consideration of the Outline Planning Application, it was agreed to reduce the carriageway width of the spine road from 7.3m to 6.5m. Considering the nature of the proposed road, a route through a residential area subject to a 30mph speed limit, a 6.5m wide carriageway gives more than adequate capacity for the predicted traffic flows. It is of adequate width for two HGVs to easily pass whilst helping to reduce speeds. Research has shown that wider roads lead to higher average speeds. The alterations were agreed prior to the lodging of the planning appeal at which all highway issues were agreed between the appellants and the Council and included in a "statement of common ground".

Capacity on a highway network is generally limited by junctions and not links and it is for this reason that Transport Assessments model the junctions and not the links between them. Capacity on the spine road has never been an issue with sufficient width for two HGVs to pass being the only determining issue.

The highway adoption will include footways, cycleways and verges as appropriate. Any swales (shallow grassed ditches with gently sloping sides) forming part of the highway drainage system will also be adopted. All highways verges will be maintained in line with current verge maintenance procedures.

Waiting restrictions

Parking will be prohibited by means of double yellow lines along much of the spine road where it is necessary to ensure clear passage for vehicles or for highway safety reasons. The prohibition will also apply to verges and footways/cycleways as these are legally part of the highway.

Purton Road

The original Outline Planning Application proposed the closure of the whole length of Purton Road between Common Platt and Mead Way. There is a small development to the west of Swinley Drive, which lies within Lydiard Millicent parish and the residents have links to the village school, church and other social activities. The closure of the western section of Purton Road would have resulted in a lengthy detour for those residents and it was agreed that this section of Purton Road would remain open. The section of Purton Road between Swinley Drive and Meadway will be closed following completion of the spine road through the new development. That closure is required by the planning permission granted by the Secretary of State. This is not a matter that can be revisited, reconsidered and alterations required through the submission and determination of reserved matters applications.

Car parking levels and garages

Since the introduction of the new Wiltshire parking standards there have been a number of applications for residential development. From discussions about these it has become clear that the provision of garages is a key issue with developers wishing to provide them as residents want them. There is also the need to minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles. Looking at developments completed within the last 5 – 10 years within Wiltshire it is clear that a number of “garages” have been provided which are not big enough to accommodate even a medium sized family car. This fact informed the thinking and reasoning behind not accepting garages as providing off street parking spaces. Research carried out during the preparation of “Manual for Streets” indicated that about 50% of garages were used for the parking of cars. Taking account of the numbers of garages that are too small to be of practical use, that figure suggests that where garages are of a suitable size they will be used for parking. As a result Wiltshire Council now generally counts garages towards parking provision where they have internal dimensions of at least 6.0m by 3.0m. This was agreed at the pre-application stage for the reserved matters application and the Developer’s Design Statement and proposed phase 1 site layout is prepared on this basis.

Another issue arising from Wiltshire Council’s new parking standards is that 4 bedroom dwellings now require 3 parking spaces. Ideally these would be provided by a double garage with two spaces in front. However, in this case the site has permission for 700 dwellings, already reduced from an original proposal for 800 dwellings and given the space constraints on site the required parking to serve the 4 bedroom dwellings can only be provided by “triple banking”, that is a garage with two spaces, one behind the other fronting it. The provision has been critically examined but no other solution has been identified. The Council and Developer have worked and continue to work on the detailed layout of the development to minimise the use of such parking provision wherever possible. In particular the detailed layout seeks to avoid concentrations of triple bank parking in any one location within the development site. As such the parking standards have been complied with and Officers consider that there are no grounds for a refusal of the Phase 1 Residential Reserved Matters Planning application on this basis of the adequacy of parking provision.

It has been commented that some dwellings have no nearby visitor parking. This applies primarily to properties fronting the spine road and the situation is little different from that existing elsewhere on main routes in urban areas throughout the country where parking is restricted.

Planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that garages and parking areas are retained for parking purposes and not converted for other uses.