

Design Access Statement

Land to the East of Redlands Lane, Westbourne, Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 7UT

Development of Four detached dwellings on site known as Hampshire Farm.

Re-submission of formerly approved planning application

Basis of Application

Background

The application is being re-submitted following the outcome of an administrative pre-hearing for judicial review. It was felt that a technical issue raised by the review was better addressed via the submission of a new application.

The site referenced at Redlands Lane lies within the Northern tip of the Hampshire Farm site which was released under saved policy H4 as a reserve housing site. Policy H4 remains relevant until the Havant Borough Council local plan (allocation) is formally concluded as part of the core strategy planned for mid-year 2014.

The site is also located within the urban area under the local plan (submissions) document which was submitted to the secretary of state on December 13th 2013. The consultation for the above process was finalised in November / December 2014. A formal demonstration of need has been defined and agreed by Havant Borough Council to approve the release of this site.

The specific area of proposed development is approximately one acre in size and is bordered by mature trees many of which have TPO orders assigned to them.

It is felt that the plot provides a unique opportunity, to create a well-balanced development which takes advantage of the natural tree-lined boundary and the aspect that this could create.

Particular attention has been paid to maintaining a low density development with special consideration given to the proximity of the surrounding properties and the general character of the area.

Considerations

There were discussions with Havant Borough Council to look at maximising the potential of the site in terms of the number of properties that might reasonably be accommodated and with the incorporation of a level of affordable housing. This aspect was carefully considered with a view to developing between 8-10 properties ranging in size from two to four bed units and was discussed in detail with HBC. This option was felt to be non-viable for the following reasons;

1. The site layout in terms of the density of houses when assessed in terms of the existing tree root systems was prohibitive and crowded.
2. There would be unreasonable traffic, disruption and pressure on the access to the site.
3. It was anticipated that there would be major local resident objections to the scale of that type of development as it related to the character of the surrounding properties.

Proposed Scheme

The scheme supported by this application of four detached, five bedroomed dwellings set in a spacious well preserved landscape it is felt best addresses the above issues and we feel serves as a more sensitive and most appropriate way forward.

The access to the site will be from Long Copse Lane via the Redlands lane track. The implications of this have been more fully addressed in a later section of this application.

Environmental assessment

The site lends itself well to a relatively sympathetic low level of development which takes advantage of the valuable mature trees that surround the entire site and which provide it with a unique aspect in terms of its natural beauty and the opportunity that exists to embrace this with an appropriate development.

A great deal of attention has been given to this proposal with regard to the protection of the surrounding trees and the impact on wildlife both during the development phase resulting in the site layout shown.

The following sections along with supplemental supporting material has been reviewed in advance of this application with the Hampshire County Council Ecologist and agreed as appropriate to satisfy the interests of the site.

Trees

Particular care has been taken to the protection of the tree root systems as well as the tree canopies and specialist arboricultural expertise has been commissioned as a key aspect of this application and a detailed report is included with this application.

This expertise will be retained to work closely with contractors to ensure continuity and adherence to due process as it applies to those areas of perceived risk.

Wildlife

An environmental impact report has been commissioned as part of this application concluding that the development site itself does not constitute any significant risks in terms of potential impact to wildlife.

It is recognised however that the surrounding boundary area, whilst not being affected itself by the development, will be sensitive to birds, bats and possibly other species and so a risk assessment along with recommendations that mitigate disturbance to wildlife during the building phase are a key component of this application.

Landscaping

The site benefits from a well matured tree and hedge lined boundary area which will in itself form an outstanding natural landscaping feature. These areas will not be interfered with as part of this project but the areas within the more immediate vicinity of the properties will be sensitively set to lawn. The northern boundary will be lined with an appropriate selection of shrubs and in general the site will incorporate the use of natural materials as far as is possible.

Site layout and topology

A topological survey has been conducted prior to devising the site layout, details of which are included in this application. There are a number of significant challenges that have had to be overcome in terms of the site layout and design of each of each individual unit to achieve a balance of interests for all parties involved.

Special consideration has been given to the views, aspects and functionality of the proposed dwellings not just in terms of their own interests, but to the interests also of the surrounding properties and to the trees, wildlife, access and boundary constraints as well as an existing main sewer line that runs across the site.

Other mains services to the site are also already in place so disruption in terms of outlying boundary crossing with services provision in this respect will be minimal.

Access

Disabled access will conform to Part M of the Building regulations and as the site is basically flat there will be no issues with steep gradients or steps.

The new houses will have mobility thresholds to external doors and passageway and door widths internally will be suitable for wheelchair users. There will also be a toilet on the ground floor also suitable for wheelchair users and all electrical sockets and switches will be at the recommended heights for disabled use. Each property will have enough space for parking of at least three cars, two spaces will be available in the garages and at least one further space on the driveway. The garages will also be large enough to accommodate at least two bicycles.

Access to and within the site will be suitable for service vehicles to manoeuvre and turn round.

Appearance

The new houses will be in a conventional style using traditional materials in keeping with the local vernacular with a mixture between the plots to give each property an individual character.

Conservation of fuel and power

The houses will be designed to a minimum of Code Level 3 for sustainable homes and will be constructed to at least the standards required for heat conservation by the current Building Regulations. Water usage will also be controlled to comply with the requirements.

Additional Supporting information.

The summary clarification areas below have been agreed as addressed with relevant local authorities;

Planning Based Concerns	Compliance
Topological site - including track survey	✓
Approved Development Site	✓
Rights of Access	✓
Footpath use and right of way	✓
Increased traffic flow	✓
Passing Point	✓
Surfacing of access track	✓
Legal compliance in all areas	✓
Disruption to nature and aspect	✓
Ecological Survey	✓
Bat Survey	✓
Tree Survey	✓
Screening	✓
Service Vehicles Usage	✓
Ongoing Maintenance	✓

Rights of Access

As part of the resubmission process a review of the applicant's legal right of way has been undertaken. The applicant has a private contractual right way of enabling the use of the full length of the Redlands Lane track to a width of 36ft wide as a roadway, this includes vehicle usage.

Although the applicant would have a legal right to use this full 36ft width of track, by way of access, it is intended that just the current width be maintained along its length to the development without any disruption to the existing verges, trees and vegetation thus maintaining the rural aspect of the lane.

Footpath and Rights of Way

It is noted that the general public have access rights to the track also in its designated use as a public footpath and this development will not interrupt that right or the ability of the public to use it in that respect.

The Countryside Access Team at Hampshire County Council has been consulted in this respect and are satisfied that the proposals are acceptable

Increased Traffic flow

Prior to the submission of the original application, consultation and advice was sought through Havant Borough Council, from their Highways Department with regard to the level of development that was considered, in their view reasonable for Redlands Lane, in its present state, to support as access to the proposed development.

It was based on their professional advice and guidance as to what they felt was acceptable in terms of increased traffic flow via the track and the surrounding roads, including Long Copse Lane and other related infrastructure which underpinned the level of the density of this development.

Passing Point

A suggestion was made by the Highway Consultant that, with the increased use, consideration should be given to the provision of passing point allowing vehicles to pass.

A facility has been agreed by way of an enlarged turning head at the entrance to the development at its junction with Redlands Lane. This will not only provide a passing place but also facilitate the manoeuvring of any large service vehicles attending the properties.

Track Surfacing

The Countryside Access Team together with the Highways department of Havant Borough Council have prescribed a gravel surface as being most appropriate to the combined needs of pedestrian use as a public footpath and vehicular use as an access to the residential development.

The applicant has recently improved the gravel surface of the access track, in line with these recommendations, however a finer more compacting gravel surface will replace the current surface upon the completion of the site with a view to improving its general usability.

At the head of the track as it fronts on to Long Copse Lane there is an existing area of approximately 3 metres in length of tarmac which has served in the past as a buffer point for the gravel placement, this will be retained.

Legal Use

As part of the clarification and review process, the planning department asked for confirmation of the rights of the applicant to interfere with the surface of the track as required in this application. This has been provided.

The track itself is un-adopted and has no registered ownership in the land registry.

The applicant however by use of the track as the primary access to the site does have a legal and contractually defined right and obligation to maintain and repair the track to the level that is proposed in this application. With further implicit rights dependent on its future ongoing lawful use.

This contractually defined right would remain regardless of any legally claimed, assumed or registered third party ownership.

Disruption to Rural Nature

Some concerns were raised by residents that the track might be dramatically widened with trees and hedgerows displaced and with the surface being tarmacked, all of which might affect its rural nature and its appeal to the people that both use the track and to those whose properties front onto it. The track will however be maintained at its existing and consistent width and in its current and originally intended form.

Bats and Trees

In the original application the Hampshire County Council ecological officer raised a concern around the impact that might be imposed on potential bat colonies, should they exist, as development was undertaken in particular where that involved the pruning of trees where bats may be impacted.

With regard to this a further joint survey on site involving our designated tree and bat welfare representative was conducted with feedback directly to Hampshire County Council.

This has resulted in an agreed procedure to be adopted regarding supervision and agreement of tree pruning works and continued during the construction process.

Services Vehicle Access

The question of access by larger vehicles such as the waste collection vehicles has been considered and the previously mentioned turning head, at the junction between Redlands Lane and the development has been agreed as adequate by the Waste Strategy Team.

General ongoing Access Maintenance

The ongoing maintenance of the track, subject to the approval of this application, will be arranged through a management company that will take responsibility to maintain the track and the access routes into the new development. This will be funded by contractually agreed contributions from the owners of each of the new dwellings when completed and sold. In the meantime the responsibility for maintenance remains with the applicant

Costs of maintenance of the track will be legally conferred to the ownership of the four dwellings, with no request for contributions made to other properties that front the track, unless they specifically wish to claim ownership rights and responsibilities.