



**21 residential units & 6 retail units in Phase 2
17 residential units in Phases 3&4**

**Dukes Meadow, Hambledon Road
Waterlooville**



Planning Statement

November 2012

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**21 residential units & 6 retail units in Phase 2
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Waterlooville**

Planning Statement

1. Introduction

1.1 The concept of including an element of Live/Work units (LW) in the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area was embodied within the January 2008 Outline Planning Permission (OPP); an approval which reflected an application made in early 2005 and a development mix which established itself well before that. The idea of LW here is almost 10 years old. It is not a proposition rooted in the reality of 2012/13. This proposal effectively replaces the LWs with residential units.

1.2 The more recent Reserved Matters applications for Phases 2, 3 and 4 of Dukes Meadow had to follow the line of the OPP to enable progress to be made on the majority of the scheme and to accord with over-arching Section 106 and conditional requirements. It is fair to say that the small LW content within those RM applications was always proposed by Taylor Wimpey with the best of intent and commitment but with no great sense of optimism.

1.3 The current proposal is based on viability, the wish to prevent 'holes' being left in the Dukes Meadow scheme, and the drive to provide additional much needed market and affordable housing. It is effectively to 'replace' the 24 non-implementable LWs stemming from the dated and unrealistic original concept with homes which can be delivered in the near future. This application, submitted to both Winchester and Havant Councils, is made as a full detailed scheme; given its nature compared to the OPP, and the lack of any buildings on the relevant parts of the site, it cannot be made as Reserved Matters or Change of Use. The intention is that the submissions are sufficiently comprehensive to not trigger a raft of planning conditions requiring follow-up details and that the impacts on the existing Section 106 are, effectively, neutral.

1.4 This brief statement, to be read alongside the Design and Access Statement, Noise Assessment, Planting Schedule and Landscape Plan and other elements of the application bundle, seeks to set the application and LWs in a practical and policy context, point to its wider benefits and draw together why approval should be forthcoming.

2. The Proposals

2.1 Details of the scheme are set out in the Design and Access Statement. In summary:

- a) the Hambledon Road frontage block of Phase 2, instead of comprising of 7 affordable flats and 7 'duplex' LWs and retail below, would have 21 affordable homes (52% rent, 48% shared equity) with retail below;
- b) 17 two storey LW 'mews style' units shown in the Phase 3 and 4 RMA would become 17 individual market dwellings with garaging and some living accommodation at ground floor and most habitable space being at first floor as before;
- c) Relevant elevations would be slightly modified, simplified and enhanced;
- d) The provision of parking and amenity spaces for the would-be residents would be enhanced; and
- e) The proposals would not impact upon the wider layout, residential amenity or design principles which have been set by the Design Code and RMAs.

3. Planning Policy

Local Policy

3.1 The genesis of the LW concept for Dukes Meadow (and indeed the wider MDA) is somewhat lost in the mists of time but what is clear is that it was not, and is not, a specific requirement of relevant planning policy.

- The Winchester Local Plan 2006 over-riding policy MDA1 made no mention of LWs.
- The Winchester Local Plan Part 1 2012 makes no reference to LWs in either of its 2 relevant strategic policies SH1 and SH2.
- The Havant Local Plan 2005 policy MDA2 did not require a LW content.

- The Havant Core Strategy 2011 Waterloooville Site 4 (policy CS18) has no LW element set out or stated as being part of the job generating floorspace required for the MDA.

3.2 This is clearly reflected in the fact that the more recent OPP granted to Grainger for the larger southern sector of the MDA does not comprise or require any LWs.

3.3 Neither of the Council's 2011 and 2012 policy documents place precise ceilings on housing number, both using "about 3,000" – there is nothing contrary to local policy in an increase on the TW parcel by 7 homes. Furthermore, the development plans all make the case for striving to achieve maximum viable affordable housing provision (eg HBC CS9 and WCC CP4). This scheme does that through planning for 14 additional affordable homes beyond the previously envisaged totals. Additionally, it should be noted that in the context of this application, the affordable provision is at the rate of 45% of the total newly planned units – above that called for in any policy of either Council.

3.4 It is very debatable whether 'retention of employment' policies would apply to the case in hand. The LWs are not in existence, are not an employment allocation and, notwithstanding the OPP Condition 34 breakdown, taken as a whole LWs are always taken as Sui Generis rather than a specific use class. In Winchester CC's case LP policy CP8 has a permissive and supportive attitude to LW accommodation not a protective one. Furthermore the Council's CP9 'retention' policy is unambiguously only related to the loss of existing employment and floorspace with Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 (our underlining). In Havant, CS policy CS2 refers to overall floorspace delivery in very round terms and there is no specific component within it or explanatory text dealing with LW. The provision of employment land *per se* is noted as significant at the MDA. The Council's stance on 'retention' is found at CS policy DM3 and here the focus is on land or premises currently or last used for B use class employment purposes and the series of employment cascades and marketing requirements which this has to be gone through before consideration will take place of non-employment uses.

3.5 Whilst efforts have been made to bring the LW units and concept to market at Dukes Meadow *there is no development plan policy requirement that sets the tests for when it might be 'changed' to another use or indeed gives rise to the need for LWs in the first place.*

3.6 The development plan policy assessment has to be made against the current scheme on its own merits – in summary, is the design acceptable, is the use acceptable, and are there any technical or environmental problems arising? The development proposed, for the reasons set out in the application bundle, passes all the tests.

National Policy

3.7 The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) earlier in 2012 lends weight to the argument for approval of the current submission. Avoiding the oft repetition of long quotes from the NPPF this is said because, in summary, it:

- Re-affirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with development plans, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2 et al);
- Calls for a widening in choice of quality homes (9 et al);
- Introduces the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (14 et al);
- Draws Viability into the heart of all decision making (173 et al);
- Seeks a significant increase in housing supply of both market and affordable types (47 et al); and
- Reminds authorities to have a clear understanding of business needs and not to misguidedly retain superfluous employment land – if the land area for LW could be deemed that – and that alternative uses of land should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities (22, 160 et al).

“Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”

3.8 We are pleased to say that it is our belief the positive pre-application discussions indicate alignment of the Councils with the sentiment of this NPPF paragraph 187.

4. Live/Work: The Myth

4.1 Significant numbers of people will, in part or whole, work from home at Dukes Meadow, usually PC based; what will not happen is the purchase of LWs to enlarge, diversify or formalise working activity. There is a complete lack of interest in doing this because:

- Residential mortgages cannot be used – commercial ones are needed and when they can be achieved they would be at greater expense, usually with a 50-60% deposit required and an interest rate of 7.5-8%;
- Other financial disincentives apply such as Business Rates, VAT (potentially), long-term lock-in and, on sale, capital gains tax possibly applying to the commercial element;
- Generally people who could afford to outlay the levels needed for workspace would wish to live in more spacious and higher spec homes than a two bed flat;
- This is not a vibrant area for passing trade or like-minded grouping – the overwhelming sense is one of suburban residential character; and
- There is no flexibility to expand or contract or exit which one finds with leasing arrangements of commercial floorspace from third parties.

4.2 Where LW has been allowed it is often city based and on former employment sites in an attempt to reconcile 'job loss'. However even there the success of the units has been risible:

- Merton carried out 3 annual surveys of their not inconsiderable stock and found that not a single one was being used currently (2010) used for a genuine LW purpose – and all enforcement channels to seek compliance had failed;
- Hackney has stopped considering LWs and revoked its SPG which encouraged them;
- The 2010 RTPI Conference 'The Future of Live / Work in London' found it almost impossible to point to good examples;
- A number of Councils have removed policy encouragement for LW;

- The much publicised BedZED (Peabody Trust, Sutton) included 9 one bed LWs – mortgages and business rates were an issue – the Council has subsequently allowed exclusive residential use here;
- Other RSLs such as Wandle have tried and failed at occupying LWs and reverted to residential use;
- Hackney has issued over 600 Planning Contravention Notices in respect of LWs; and
- Merton, amongst others, has concluded that time has shown the rationale for encouraging LW developments was mis-guided – there is no proper take up – the Council's positive LW SPG has been revoked.

4.3 Furthermore, economic circumstances have turned even more against the concept of LW since some of these examples.

4.4 All of this is not to say that Taylor Wimpey has not tried. As evidenced by this link to the 'Wellington Park' sales website – the properties have been offered for sale at prices commensurate with their floorspace.

<http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/newhomes/southern+counties/liveworkunitsatwellingtonpark/>

4.5 The lack of interest from would-be buyers has been total. This absolutely echoes what Hampshire agents have been saying to Taylor Wimpey with no hope offered for occupation.

4.6 The LW concept at the northern sector of the West of Waterlooville MDA is not a viable one; as the NPPF makes clear, sustainable development needs to be.

4.7 We have heard anecdotal evidence that LWs can be successful in a very few well-developed artistic communities where the LW compliments the ethos of that community. However, even in these locations, it is clear that would-be users need to have access to funds beyond the normal mortgage arrangements and there is doubt whether such occupation does actually offer real benefits to the local economy in any event.

4.8 The LW concept is simply not one which can be developed at Dukes Meadow and, as the Grainger OPP has evidenced, it should not be a requirement anywhere on the MDA.

5. Other Matters

5.1 The Design and Access Statement draws out most of the 'plus points' of this proposal but we should just underline that approval of the scheme will:

- Provide a demonstrable gain in affordable housing supply in both numbers and percentage terms and accord with the wishes of the Councils' Housing Officers;
- Prevent unresolved and incomplete 'holes' in the development, the unsightly gaps where the Phase 3 and 4 LWs and the whole main frontage block would not be built;
- Bring forward the prospect of attaining retail interest once there is a marked progression with the Hambledon Road block;
- Enable the more speedy completion of the links next to this block and the freeing of the adjacent land from a construction compound to a car park to serve not only the new development but also Hambledon Parade;
- Provide good quality homes offering choice and variety within this popular development;
- Generate economic activity through their construction; and
- Be in accord with all previously approved technical and environmental details, meet noise assessment criteria, offer enhanced landscape and parking arrangements to the rear of the Phase 2 block and tie in seamlessly throughout with the developed or approved streetscene.

5.2 The application warrants approval on its own merits.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Six key points may be drawn out:

1. The concept of LW here is an outdated one from almost 10 years ago and is rightly not reflected on the recent OPP for the main southern sector of the MDA;
2. The current scheme brings forward real benefits in terms of affordable and market home provision and seamless completion of this quarter of the MDA;

3. There is no planning policy requirement to provide LWs on this site or to retain the life of the permission for them;
4. The current proposal accords with the objectives of the relevant policies from both development plans and the NPPF which clearly encourages approval of this viable and sustainable development;
5. LW development has, across the board and almost without exception, been found to be unsuccessful and is increasingly shunned by well-versed Councils; and
6. Taylor Wimpey has tried to secure sales of these units but is up against a complete lack of would-be buyers due to locational, mortgage, overhead, inflexibility and wider economic issues and disadvantages of LWs.

6.2 In all the circumstances the Council's are respectfully urged to approve the current proposals.

**DC Planning Ltd
November 2012**

