



5 October 2020
(by hand)

Mr Lewis Oliver
Planning Officer
Planning Services
Havant Borough Council
Civic Centre Road
HAVANT PO9 2AX

Dear Mr Oliver

Planning Application: Ref. APP/20/0618

Site Address: Land off Elizabeth Road adjacent to 118 Stakes Hill Road, Waterloooville

Proposal: Erection of 4 x 2-bedroom flats

I am writing to lodge a formal objection to the proposal (as revised) to construct flats at this site. I will raise some new issues and will also summarise those I have already made on the planning website.

1 The Revised Design

As far as I can see the applicant has not included a Street Scene or Context Plan, which should be provided for a new constructions that will be visible from the road, especially if close to a neighbouring building or the boundary with it, or if there is a notable difference in height between the new construction and the neighbouring building. All of those prerequisites clearly apply in this case.

While the revised design is a marginally more in keeping with the existing street scene, it is still far from compatible. It is unclear to me whether "red multi-brick" means that *actual* bricks will be used or whether this is a form of cladding.

A further attempt at compatibility has been made by adding new roofs to the design, so there is a reasonable presumption that these increase the height of the building, a fact which has not been mentioned in the architect's letter of 8 September. It is surely unacceptable to change the design in such a radical way without drawing your attention to dimensions. This particularly (but not exclusively) raises an issue for the occupants of the flint cottage at 118 Stakes Hill Road, which is already at risk of being overlooked because the relevant section of Stakes Hill Road is a downhill stretch – another fact that the applicant has neglected to mention.

The mesh balcony frontages are clearly out of keeping with anything in the vicinity, and one frankly wonders why, in a cramped construction such as this, balconies are necessary anyway. Mesh balcony fronts are ugly and deteriorate rapidly through rust-staining. This is exacerbated by the change from off-white weather-boarding to off-white rendering: the latter is susceptible to staining in a relatively short timescale, as will be apparent from other buildings in and around Waterloooville and in the Borough generally.

I have responded to the rearrangement of the car park at some length on the website. To summarise, it seems clear that dimensions of the proposed allocation do not allow for the number of parking spaces envisaged, taking account of average car widths. This is relevant not only to residents' parking but also to the current traffic and parking situation in the immediate vicinity, to which I will refer later.

In the light of these concerns about the accuracy of the car park dimensions, I would urge you to validate the dimensions of the *entirety* of the proposed building: a cursory view of the site casts much doubt over the accuracy of the measurements and thus the integrity of the plans.

The concerns and requirements of the HBC Landscape Architect, lodged on 1 October 2020, have not been satisfied and, frankly, within the current design it seems difficult to envisage how they will be satisfied.

While the revised plans include a hedgerow along the frontage of the property, it does not include the trees which the HBS Landscape Architect has required (see above). Indeed, as with so many aspects of this design it is incomprehensible that hedgerows, trees and a paved area could be squeezed in between the boundary on Elizabeth Road and the front of the property. This is a major issue with many aspects of this application: this is a small plot of land, and the original proposals and the variations made seem, in relation to their dimensions, wholly unrealistic.

2 Traffic and parking in the vicinity

This is a high-volume traffic area, with Stakes Hill Road particularly witnessing heavy volumes of traffic including heavy goods vehicles and (every seven minutes in each direction) buses, because it is a major artery into the shopping centre. The stretch of Stakes Hill Road alongside the proposed development is a straight downhill run, which sees vehicles frequently exceeding the 30mph limit. For this reason, Hampshire Constabulary's 'Community Speedwatch' volunteers are often deployed on this stretch of road and are located right outside 118 Stakes Hill Road. The issue of speeding traffic along Stakes Hill Road is frequently a topic of debate on the Waterlooville community Facebook pages.

This is relevant not just because the volume of local cars emerging from Elizabeth Road will increase, but also because an already problematic parking issue will be made worse if the application is granted, as I will now explain.

The design of the properties in Orsmond Close is such that there is very limited residential parking available. As a consequence, parking on the pavements is the norm even for residents. Add to this visitors and delivery drivers, and the road becomes easily clogged with parked vehicles. Delivery vans that drive into Orsmond Close find nowhere to park, so they stop in the middle of the road and then have to reverse back out into Elizabeth Road (a dangerous and probably illegal manoeuvre) because there is no space for them to turn.

Ambulances are frequently in the immediate vicinity. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It would be totally wrong to create a situation that would increase the amount of anti-social and often illegal parking by residents and visitors, thus exacerbating the difficulties faced by the emergency services.

More of the parking bays along Elizabeth Road opposite Orsmond Close have recently been designated for disabled drivers: this is perfectly understandable, but it has reduced the number that are available to other drivers. More and more cars are parked on pavements and verges.

These photographs have been taken at random times and days during the past week or two, and illustrate the somewhat chaotic nature of parking in Orsmond Close and its junction with Elizabeth Road – exactly where the new build is proposed:



3 The 'eyesore'

It has been stated by supporters of this application that there is a need to address what is described as an 'eyesore', and a neglected and derelict piece of land. The fact is that this was not an unattractive piece of land until the current owner destroyed all of the shrubs and hedges that had grown there for decades, many planted by schoolchildren at the school which once occupied the land on which Orsmond Close was built, and which had provided a rare and attractive piece of greenery in the midst of a heavily congested area. This is how it looked before the destruction:



It is clear that even in the unlikely event that the applicant could satisfy the HBC Landscape Architect's requirements, he would not be able to include anything on this scale, or anything nearly as attractive. Waterlooville has precious few green spaces close to the town centre, and here is a wasted opportunity to preserve one.

4 Biodiversity, wildlife and trees:

The applicant has ignored completely the significant and protected tall trees on Elizabeth Road, immediately opposite the proposed development, and considerably less than 50 metres distant. I have detailed the arguments on the planning website.

5 Relevance to the Borough Council's own plans

Havant Borough Council has published its proposals for new housing development in the borough up to 2036 and its Adopted Local Plan and Local Plan Housing Statement (December 2016). This application is inconsistent with the principles set out therein, and approval of the application will not contribute in any meaningful way to the housing targets for the borough, nor (by virtue of its size) will it contribute any meaningful amount by way of community infrastructure levy.

Furthermore, the site which is the subject of this application does not form any part of the designated sites contained in the plan or the Statement. These issues are addressed in detail in my comments on the planning website.

6 Heritage

The flint cottages at 116 and 118 Stakes Hill Road will be overshadowed by the proposed development. I believe that they are not 'listed', which is perhaps surprising, but nevertheless the cottages are designated by Havant Borough Council as 'Properties of Historical Interest', rightly so as this 19th Century photograph shows:



I raise this not out of sentimentality, but because the Council list comprises only a handful of such sites within its boundaries, and I submit that nothing should be done that diminishes their character and surroundings. The garden has significant trees and is a known habitat for wildlife (including the rare albino squirrel), yet the proposed development would considerably overshadow the cottages and gardens, especially because, as mentioned, Stakes Hill Road is a downward stretch at this point and this, combined with the addition of the gabled roof in the revised plans, would exacerbate this problem for the owners.

For all of these reasons, along with the many rational and sustainable objections lodged by local residents on the planning website, I urge the Council to reject the application.

