

Stoke Fruit Farm
77 Havant Road
Hayling Island
Hampshire
Po11 0pt

26th April 2017

Dear North East Hayling Residents Association

I was disappointed to read your Objection to the planning application at northney cottages. I did want to put a personal note to villages outlining our position and illustrating the reasons behind the proposal.

1 Northney Cottages has been part of the farm estate for many years, creating a home for farm workers. Due to modernisation and change in working contracts it has now become redundant in its role as a farm cottage. We (Stoke Fruit Farm) realised that it was essential to renovate the old cottages and spent in excess of £25000 repairing it so it continues to stand as a village asset. We then asked an agent to let the property. It was his professional opinion that led to concern with renting the property with the large garden as this could either devalue the rent from property due to maintenance obligations and the tenancy was unlikely to attract a keen gardener particularly with no protection of their works for more than 6 months. We were also advised that we should be cautionary about people using the land for storage of boats cars etc. So the decision was made to let the cottage without the garden. The undergrowth and mish mash of sheds were cleared to allow the now redundant garden to be maintained easily.

So that's the history. Looking forward we were met with decisions that had to be made on the future of the land. The options included.

1. Selling the garden to a cash offer received. We did not want to do this as we felt intentions may have an adverse effect on our property at number 1 Northney Cottages.
2. Sell the site with development potential. We had been informed that a large single dwelling would make a nice self build project but by doing this we could jeopardise the property at number 1 (3 story and spanish looking houses are not unheard of in northney)
3. Develop the site keeping the properties in the farm estate.
4. Keep the plot as it is with maintenance costs insurance, administration etc at a cost of some £1500 per year.

It was decided as a family that the 3rd option was the most convenient, not just for ourselves but the site in general taking neighbouring properties etc into consideration.

We therefore appointed an architect on a brief to "Design a pair of semi detached cottages to be in keeping with this part of the village" and to submit it for planning permission. We chose semi detached properties as they fit in well with the buildings along the road and would be easy to let and maintained. We had talked about 1 house but felt that a single dwelling would stand out being different and possibly larger 5 bedrooms would not be as easy to let.

There are a number of properties in the village that sit nicely in redundant gardens which is precisely what this piece of land has become. I can see no reason that this property will not blend in with the road and in no way do i feel it is inappropriate which the legislation you quoted in your objection insinuates.

Nehra did welcome building in the garden at the site of land adj to Mandi in 2014 by responding to an application "we would have no problem with an application for a dwelling on this site" How is the gardens of Northney cottage any different apart from being genuine infilling and not on the end of the village?

I would not like this site to become tatty and overgrown or to be used for other means which happens to so many other plots on the island, they become a isore so people then welcome their development.

There are a number of benefits the village receives from the farm estate and I would like to think that one of the major attributes is the open countryside it strives to maintain and keep for the enjoyment of many as well as the network of footpaths, permissive paths, playing fields as well as keeping the farm alive in general. I go to farms on a weekly basis that are now no less than industrial sites. We are extremely lucky that our unique diversification projects allow us to continue to farming at north hayling.

I would also like to stress that the farm properties do bring youth to the village and i think that some of the youngest members of the village community are lucky to live in ex farm properties myself being one of them and i would really consider letting these properties to younger families to help with this.

Of course if we were to build these houses we would be using local trades and i would be keen to support any trades in the village that wish to add to our current selection of workman. Again this would help with employment in the village.

I will be addressing the other concerns made i.e timber window positioning on the plot etc in a response directly to havant borough council planning department.

I would of hoped that the committee would have realised that the farm wanting to put this area forward for development would have been met with some understanding towards reasoning for this action.

I think NEHRA committee should be considering. Which option would they pick if the land was in their control??

Perhaps NERAH should be asking for development contributions from this project be used locally on the Hall, Park or Footpath?

I am concerned that your Objection may unnecessarily tarnish relationships between NERAH and ourselves which have always been very strong. However i do understand that it is not necessarily the members that is objecting rather the greater majority of the committee.

It is our current intention to keep hold of the properties as part of the farm estate which must diversify in order to protect its moral roots which include maintaining a vast area of the countryside we take for granted in our everyday enjoyment of the village. If the properties were ever to be sold it is extremely likely the money would go to fund other projects on the farm estate.

I would therefore ask that after reading this personal note, you reconsider your objection and welcome the change to the village in a way that will hopefully house another 2 families in the lovely village we have.

Kindest Regards

Sam Wilson

Stoke Fruit Farm