



The Planning Officer
Waverley Borough Council
Western Planning Committee
BY EMAIL

14 August 2020

Dear Sir

Land west of Hedgehog Lane (WA/2020/1048) - objection

The Haslemere Society wishes to object to application WA/2020/1048 on the grounds set out below.

Damage to the AONB/AGLV site and mature trees on it

The land covered by the application is that described as 'Area A' in the 2016 application WA/2016/1226. That application was rejected, as was the subsequent appeal. That decision is now apparently subject to a legal challenge, due to be heard in November this year, relating to the interpretation of AONB policies. However, unless and until the Inspector's interpretation is overturned in court, the basis of the appeal decision stands. The current application gives no explanation as to how the concerns raised in this decision have been overcome. The site is still a mix of AONB and AGLV and the protections afforded such land remain. The Inspector's concerns over the avenue of trees and the trees around the boundary of the site remain valid even with the reduced number of dwellings proposed. In particular, the line of trees along the southern boundary of the site would throw considerable shade over at least two of the five proposed self-build sites (and possibly all the dwellings, given the slope of the land), making future pressure to fell or reduce these trees more likely.

This planning application most definitely does NOT conserve or enhance this AONB-designated land and does NOT comply with National, Local or Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan policies; NPPF Para 172 and Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan Policies P1, P2 and P3 refer.

Damage to 'green fingers'

A further issue, which does not appear to have been raised before, is the importance of the site as part of one of the most significant 'green fingers' which penetrate into the built-up area of Haslemere and which contribute so much to the character of the town. Such areas also provide much-needed wildlife corridors as well as supporting biodiversity in their own right. The loss of this benefit cannot be made good by the provision of green space elsewhere and makes any urbanisation of this site more damaging than would otherwise be the case.

Balancing affordable housing and AONB land

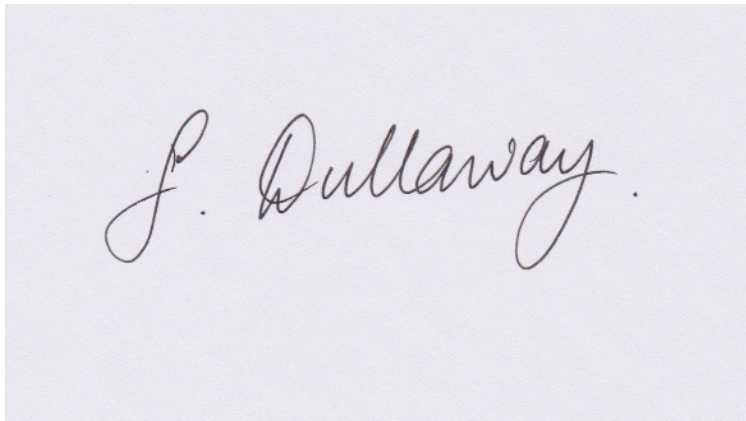
The applicant makes an emotive call for affordable housing for key workers in what he describes as these extraordinary times. THS strongly supports the provision of affordable housing across all significant developments and we have been regularly disappointed to see developers withdraw their offer of such provision late in the planning process. However, this is not the right site. AONB and AGLV designation is not some arbitrary piece of bureaucratic red tape but a reflection of the real and lasting value of such land both to local residents and the wider community. Once built upon, the natural beauty of this area would be lost forever, to this and all following generations.

Whole-site perspective

Separately, as with previous applications relating to the Longdene estate, we note the approach taken by the applicant of seeking planning permission on a piecemeal basis. Such applications make it impossible for either the public or the planning authorities to properly assess the eventual overall impact of the proposed scheme. Consequently, we respectfully suggest that Waverley planners ask the applicant to put forward a detailed plan showing their intentions for the entire Longdene site to enable the local community to engage constructively with the proposals.

We strongly urge the Council to reject this application.

Yours Sincerely

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "J. Dullaway" in a cursive script.

Sonja Dullaway
(on behalf of The Haslemere Society Planning Group)