

Head of Planning Services
Waverley Borough Council
Council Offices
The Burys
Godalming
Surrey GU7 1HR

22 November 2019

Dear Sir,

WA/2019/1492 Longdene House, Haslemere

Objection to the application

The Haslemere Society (THS) wishes to object to the above application for two key reasons.

First, we object on the basis that the proposed new houses are wholly out of keeping in both scale and appearance with the existing cottages at the site.

The application is in the context of an existing outline planning approval for the site, but the proposed houses are materially larger than those shown on the outline plan. Since the site is within the AONB, stringent requirements apply to any new building, including that new development must “respect the special landscape character of the locality, giving particular attention to potential impacts on ridgelines, public views, tranquillity and light pollution. The proposed use and colour of external building materials will be strictly controlled to avoid buildings being conspicuous in the landscape” (Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan Policy LU2). Indeed, the site forms part of one of the designated Special Green Areas set out in the Haslemere Design Statement where it is described as “an integral part of the character and intrinsic value of the town” which “should be retained”.

Replacement of the two existing cottages therefore needs to be done with the utmost sensitivity. The current application is some way from this. The proposed new buildings are very different in style to the existing ones and do not fit at all well into the landscape. The existing cottages clearly form part of a harmonious overall estate with the main house, reflecting the history of such small estates in this area. The proposed new buildings in contrast, being much larger and of a very different style, are starkly at odds with the main building and overall view of the estate.

Our second ground for objection is that this application involves only a small part of the site covered by the outline planning permission so that it is not possible to understand this development in the wider context. The outline planning permission was granted to a single developer. It seems not unreasonable to expect the applicant to set out their plans for the whole site so that both the council and local residents can assess the development holistically, taking into account the balance of proposed works across the whole site. Again, the fact that the site is both AONB and a designated Special Green Area makes this particularly pertinent here. More generally, it is hard to see how WBC can be expected to

manage and maintain these special areas for the benefit of the town and the nation if each decision on planning must be made without knowledge of the wider picture. That does not mean, of course, that the development itself cannot be completed in stages but, just as outline planning permission for the whole site was sought in one go, so should permission for reserved matters be considered as a whole. This will also avoid the inevitable scope for confusion that arises where multiple, sometimes incompatible, applications are made for a single site.

We note that the second objection has wider implications for other planning applications in the Waverley area and consider this to be of critical importance given the nature of the landscape here both in terms of its visual beauty and its biodiversity and importance for wildlife.

Kind regards

John Greer

On behalf of The Planning Group,
The Haslemere Society