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Planning - <planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk>

AWDM/1394/22

1 message

[redacted] 3 January 2023 at 09:23

To: [redacted]

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Could you kindly confirm receipt of this submission

AWDM/1394/22 | Demolition of a single dwelling-house, creation of new onsite access road and erection of 7 new houses. | 20 Firle Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 0NZ

Dear [redacted]

This site was evaluated as a development site in preparation of Adur's Local Plan and was not included as an allocation in the adopted Local Plan 2017, the policies for which still apply.

CPRE Sussex supports Adur Planning Officers' recommendation to refuse approval under the Local Plan policy 15. The extracted relevant, bulleted points to apply from this policy we identify as shown below.

Policy 15:

Quality of the Built Environment and Public Realm Development should be of a high architectural quality and respect and enhance the character of the site, and the prevailing character of the area, in terms of proportion, form, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping. Development should:

• Enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping and layout of the development;

• Make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area; and not have an unacceptable impact on adjacent properties, particularly residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook or open amenity space;

• Respect the existing natural features of the site, including land form, trees and biodiversity and contribute positively to biodiversity;

• Have safe access to the highway network, and not result in harm to highway safety;

The proposed housing is completely out of character with the local area in design and size and will have an unacceptable impact on adjacent local properties - this plus a failure to take full account of the natural attributes of the site and landscaping and setting impacts on both the South Downs Park and the local area and views into and out of the Park.

These large 4/5 bedroom properties will predominate in these views and will be an overdevelopment with both offered designs, out of character with the housing in Firle Road and the neighbouring vicinity. The applicant's Design and Access Statement fails to demonstrate precisely these impacts on views and the setting. There will be a loss of amenity with overlooking onto the neighbouring properties in Firle road.

Previously an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Until the SDNPA boundary was finally established in 2010, this site enjoyed the high level of protection for AONB designations. Until then, the flora and fauna and wildlife biodiversity was an integral part of the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - known as The Lancing Ring - which still enjoys the high level protection of these designations within the National Park. *Despite the redrawing of the boundary and the apparent loss of AONB status, this 4 acre site is still very much integrally linked to the above protected area in the National Park and this proposal fails to respect that.*

(It is unclear why AONB status for this site has been removed after the National Park was formed and the designated boundary signed up with the Sec of

State/DEFRA in 2009)

With its levels of woodland and incumbent wildlife, although not shown as such in the application**, this site is very much still part of the Local Nature Reserve Area/LWS network for the Lancing Ring which lies immediately behind it and to the west in the National Park.** The considerable level of biodiversity recorded within the ecologist's reports submitted within the previous refused application bears testimony to the biodiversity values of the complete site.

The cynical clearance of part of the site in February 2022 has diminished the natural habitats within the site as identified by the Authority's expert advice from their consulting ecologist. It has also undermined the applicant's ecology evidence which was also carried out as a walkover in that month. The Authority's ecologist has requested further work to be carried out to establish the habitat status as in 2020. From pictorial evidence there has been clearance and a diminution of the natural habitat since 2016.

Whilst we welcome the ecologist's request to include certain conditions if ,approved, with the level of mismanagement of this aspect – a walk over report in the wrong season, a less than adequate report on mitigation and the lack of an evidenced Biodiversity Net Gain - with the level of information and data still required for this, CPRE firmly believes that to comply with the Local Authority's Plan policy 31 and the NPPF, this should also be a reason for refusal.

With the evidence of ecology reports for earlier refused applications, we construe that the level of negative impact on the natural habitats both within the site and the neighbouring National Park, is not outweighed by the benefits of this development proposal. In fact, when an AONB site, prior applications are understood to have been refused because of that denomination where the natural habitat was (and still is) a predominant feature of the character of the site.

Policy 31: Biodiversity

All development should ensure the protection, conservation, and where possible, enhancement of biodiversity, including nationally and locally designated sites, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), marine habitats and other Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat areas, wildlife corridors, and protected and priority species.

If significant harm cannot be avoided (by locating development on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), then such harm should be adequately mitigated. Where it cannot be adequately mitigated then such harm must be compensated for. Where it cannot be compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Local Designations: Proposals for development in, or likely to have an adverse effect (directly or indirectly) on a Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Sites (including ancient woodlands or wildlife corridors) or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that reasons for the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site/feature.

The concerns of the National Park regarding the lack of a sustainable natural buffer between the proposed housing where their rear gardens back directly onto the Nat. Park boundary is a particular negative planning consideration.

To develop this area as submitted will inevitably have a considerable impact on the biodiversity therein and that of LNR/LWS directly behind and to the west in the Nat. Park.

Bearing in mind that this site has been protected historically as an AONB, although not considered to be so now by the LA, it still should attract a duty of care in this respect. We believe that impacts on landscape and setting particularly affecting local residents and users of the National Park are important matters for material consideration despite the removal of the AONB classification

Irrespective of the earlier AONB classification, we maintain these matters have not been implemented to comply with the relevant NPPF paras.

Based upon the above comments and Adur policies, we believe the officer's recommendation to refuse development should be an additional reason because of non compliance with Policy 31 in respect of Biodiversity.

<u>Other Matters</u>

It should be noted that the house at 20 Firle road which is to be demolished has been renovated to a very high standard which now considerably compliments the visual aspects of the road. This conflicts totally with the applicant's comments.

'It is also of unexceptional appearance or architectural quality so there appears to be no reason why this building cannot be demolished in order to enable better use to be made of the land further up the slope - which is designated for housing in the Local Plan.'

This description of 20 Firle Road is inappropriate as is the claim that the site has been allocated in the local plan.

Whilst the application is for 7 dwellings, the net gain with its demolition will be 6 homes not 7.

Site Access and local road

WSCC Highways officer comments that the Police had reported no safety concerns for the previous 5 years for Firle Road.

We draw your attention to comment by the previous resident, [redacted] at number 15 directly opposite in the previous refused application AWDM/1942/17. This resident pointed out that when 20 Firle Road was occupied there had been incidents where vehicles using that site have careered across the road when leaving that property.

On one occasion a vehicle crashed into the bay window of no !5 with significant sustained damage – see pictures attached. Even with the proposed gradient of 1:20, in wet and particularly in icy conditions with the volume of vehicle movements for the site, this could create other such dangerous events. The road at that point at 4.8m width is below Highway Standards of 5.5m width which can only make such incidents more of a problem.

The above incident has not been taken into account by the Highways Authority. The Police reports should have been consulted to confirm these earlier events, not just for the last 5 years.. We are concerned that this Highway approval for the site access is unsafe for properties opposite, pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists using the access or the Firle Road. and fails to comply with NPPF paras 110 . 111 & 112.

Drainage

There is obviously more work to be done on drainage of the site. It should be noted that the existing run off when it rains creates pools of water at the front of 15 Firle Road as per [redacted] previous application comments. The creation of an access 20 Firle Road needs more work to prove that drainage is sustainable and will not exacerbate this problem.

In summary

CPRE Sussex believes this development application is inappropriate for the location and requests the planning committee to refuse the development because of all the comments outlined above concerning ecological and landscaping impacts, overdevelopment and concerns for public safety.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

DW Freeman

CPRE Sussex Branch

Adur District



2 attachments



IMG_1705 (002).png
501K



Van crash damage.png
683K