



Whitchurch Town Council

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Shropshire Council
Planning Dept.
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury

23rd April 2014

Dear Sir

Please find enclosed written objection to planning application 14/01264/FUL by resident of Whitchurch.

I have explained to the resident that the Town Council is not the authority for making the decision on this planning application and I have agreed with them to forward their objection to you.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Wilson
Town Clerk
Whitchurch Town Council

RECEIVED 17 APR 2014

For the Attention of Whitchurch Town Council

Michelle Wilson, Clerk

David Wilson
Council

15th April 2014

Dear Councillors

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Objections to Planning Application ref: 14/01264/FUL by David Wilson Homes & Landowners - Mount Farm, Whitchurch, Shropshire.

I am writing to express my concern at the provision of 100 new homes on such a very exposed site at Mount Farm, Tarporley Road, Whitchurch in the above application. I should like to be kept informed of the progress of this application and the dates of relevant council meetings.

The SAMDev document for Whitchurch is not yet finalised and, although a restricted area of land at Mount Farm is proposed for inclusion in this document, David Wilson's application appears to cover a larger area of productive greenfield land and only a very small area of "brownfield" farm buildings. Worse still, their draft proposal includes 3 storey homes (euphemistically called 2½ storey!) which are not in keeping with an elevated site of this sort. Their draft plans clearly show how tightly packed 100 houses would be on the Mount Farm site. I hope the council will visit the site and see for themselves the open nature of this greenfield site, and consider the impact that such a development would have on our so far unspoilt market town. Whitchurch people are proud of their town, and it is to be hoped that our councillors will do their best to keep it a typical market town.

I agree that more dwellings will be needed in the small towns of North Shropshire, especially affordable homes and accommodation suitable for older people, many of whom would prefer bungalows. However, the developments in each area should be managed and phased, so that the unique character of the market towns, and the provision of employment opportunities and infrastructure, are given the same consideration as the overall needs of Shropshire for new homes.

To sum up, please register my objection to the current plans for developing the land at Mount Farm, and to the 3 storey houses which are out of keeping with this area of Whitchurch. For those approaching the town from the North, such houses will create the impression that Whitchurch is a characterless and over-developed town when, in fact, it is recognised as a small market town that is proud of its heritage and unspoilt character.

Yours faithfully,

Joyce Farmer (Mrs)

Michelle Wilson
Clerk to the Whitchurch Town Council

16th April 2014

RECEIVED 17 APR 2014

Dear Ms Wilson

Mount Farm, Tarporley Road, Whitchurch

Planning Application Ref: 14/01264/FUL

We have recently been notified that David Wilson Homes have submitted an application to build 100 new homes on land adjacent to Mount Farm, Whitchurch. Prior to this, local residents and the Wellfield Way Residents Association had submitted both individual and collective objections to this proposed development to the Shropshire Council under the SAMdev plan for Whitchurch.

At this point in time we are not sure whether the Mount Farm development has been discussed within the Town Council, but if it has, we are not aware of any opinions expressed by the Council. I would be grateful if you would let me know the answers to the above so members can be kept informed.

I attach the collective views of the Wellfield Way Residents Association for the information of members of the Town Council, as we feel this should be brought to their attention before any recommendations are made to the Planning department.

Yours sincerely

John A Farmer

On behalf of the Wellfield Way Residents Association

Representation on the soundness of the SAMDev Plan

The reasons for objecting to the soundness of the document which has included the Land at Mount Farm (WHIT046) Schedule S18.1a in the SAMDev.

It is important, and very relevant, before considering the inclusion of Mount Farm in the SAMDev as a preferred site, to look back at the Government Inspectors report on his findings after the public inquiry on the North Shropshire Local Plan 2000-2011.

He was concerned at the lack of a primary school in the vicinity of the site, and no proposals to provide one.
He also had a firm view that

“ the site is elevated and development would be prominent in views from the north and north-west. Viewed from the direction of Tarporley Road the development would occupy open ground above the level of The Grove, extending southwards from Wellfield Way. Much of this land has an undeveloped appearance and is of high visual amenity value.

The character of the landscape in this area at present displays an attractive pastoral quality of relatively small scale fields, with a network of hedgerows and trees. The landscape generally falls from the higher ground by Haroldgate towards the northwest. I consider that it would constitute a substantial area of new development in a relatively sensitive landscape, occupying an elevated position. This is a relatively unspoilt approach to Whitchurch which in my judgement contributes strongly to its character and setting as a rural market town. The impact of existing development on the skyline is limited and the predominant characteristic is of a well maintain rural landscape “.

Nothing has changed in the area which would alter this opinion. The Mount Farm land was deleted from the Local Plan.

Infrastructure

Bearing in mind the proposals for **500** houses at Tilstock Road together with a school, **86** houses to be built next to the Hill Valley Golf Club, **76** houses going on Mile Bank Road brown field site and the **100** houses going on Mount farm, who will pay for the increased infrastructure needed to service the extra population eg Doctors, District Nurses, Schools, Police, Fire etc etc? When will these increased services be provided – day 1? Is there any commitment for this and who will provide it? Such provision is conspicuous by its absence. This is totally unacceptable

There are **currently** insufficient places available in local junior schools for existing residents, and the local Doctors surgeries are also full to capacity. A contribution (the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy of £40 per square metre, ie £500,000) to the local authority is totally inadequate to enable them to improve the necessary services which will be required by the new residents.

Whitchurch is a dormitory town without employment available locally to sustain the proposed increase in the number of residents. Where is the proof that there is a demand for additional housing of this type in Whitchurch? It is not just employment, but what facilities will be provided for the children and teenagers to keep them occupied and grow up responsibly. Youth clubs etc will have to be provided, but by whom and when.

The Design and Density of the proposed Development

Wellfield Way and Tarporley Road are areas with high end and prestige housing and the proposed site is not in keeping with the character of the area. It will adversely impact upon the open aspect of the landscape and the proposed development will be outside the present designated area for building. Placing 100 houses on Mount Farm **is far too high a density of housing** with no acknowledgement of the detrimental impact it will have upon the residents of Wellfield Way and the value of their properties. Residents of Wellfield Way will then have three storey properties sited within 10m of their boundary. It would make far more sense to have the 10 metre environmental wildlife buffer zone between the existing development of Wellfield Way and the proposed houses, instead of between the new development and the fields.

Phasing of all housing Development in Whitchurch

In policy H2 Housing land and Phasing the District Council state that they will keep the supply of housing land under review with the aim of ensuring that at any time sufficient land is available to meet the planned needs of the District Council for the next 5 years. The Council will require the phased development of sites listed under policies H4 and H5. This is to assure that the total planned provision is not exhausted in the early years; that an excessive amount of land is not made available at the outset; that a settlement is not swamped by over development and ensure the availability of infrastructure or adequacy of other services in a particular area.

Problems with Access

The access road Haroldgate is unsuitable for any increased traffic flow. Despite conforming to general transport regulations of width etc, a closer and

more detailed inspection will show from where the hazards arise. Many of us have used this road through all weathers for 14 years and are acquainted with the problems, but the proposed increase in traffic movement of 700% will provide lethal conditions for all road users.

We understand that all access for agricultural vehicles servicing the remaining fields of Mount Farm will not be using Haroldgate. We have been told the farmer has acquired another access off the Chester Road. Can the Council please confirm that this is the case, and put a condition on the planning permission (if it gets that far) that this is required?

The road has very tight bends as it goes down to Tarporley Road, and slopes sideways as it turns. The gradient is very steep - at the maximum allowed of 1 in 12. This means that during icy conditions it is very difficult and often impossible to access Haroldgate from Tarporley Road as one cannot gain sufficient traction before wheel spin takes over. When descending Haroldgate in frosty weather it is very easy to slide sideways out of control often resulting in one sliding across Tarporley Road. We have all experienced numerous incidents as it only takes icy conditions to set it off. The bends are so tight it is hard for 2 vehicles to pass at all and only made more perilous during bad weather. It is totally unusable for longer vehicles such as a service bus, or vehicles with a trailer or caravan.

If it is intended to service 100 extra houses it will result in a minimum of 180-200 additional cars exiting Haroldgate. It will become a bottleneck at peak times - the morning and afternoon school run for example. Cars will be used as there are no schools currently within what parents will consider a safe walking distance from the proposed site, with the majority of traffic turning right across Tarporley Road. This will result in excess pollution whilst engines are still cold, increased noise and extended journey times at peak periods while vehicles queue to exit Haroldgate.

The risks associated with using Haroldgate during bad weather will be exacerbated by the massive increase in traffic volume. Vehicles exiting the proposed Mount Farm development will also need to negotiate the considerable gradient to reach the apex of Haroldgate.

Conclusion

There are other sites which would present greater opportunities to include the necessary provision of infrastructure resources to support increased housing provision in Whitchurch. All in all our concern is that this is a Housing estate which is **not** needed in Whitchurch at the present time. As there are over 150 homes currently for sale in Whitchurch, will all these houses sell, and where are the jobs to sustain the influx population? There are no substantive proposals for how this population increase might be sensibly sustained.

It is clear that Whitchurch has been allocated an unreasonable and unsustainable level of new house development, culminating in the proposed Mount Farm development which is not required and should be deferred until the new build housing in the pipeline has been built and sold.

It was rejected by the Government inspector in the last round of the North Shropshire Local Plan 2000-2011 mainly due to the high visibility of the site on the approach to Whitchurch, and ***the lack of a primary/junior school on the North of the town.*** This will inevitably mean many journeys to transport children to schools away from the site, at least twice a day. This is not sustainable development.

The lack of schooling was highlighted in the SAMDev background evidence : Whitchurch Housing Sites Assessment, page 212, together with electricity and sewage upgrades required, and including the need for a flood risk assessment.

The junction of Haroldgate to Tarporley Road was also included, with the need for safety improvements provided to facilitate development . *This document was obviously produced as a desk top exercise, lacking the local, on the ground knowledge, which makes the resultant decision dubious and unsafe. The site was rejected by SHLAA in 2009 as being contrary to existing policy.*

We ask for your support and judgement on our concerns and reject the inclusion of Mount Farm as a preferred site from the SAMDev as the inclusion is unsound for the above reasons.