



SDNP/23/04659/REM: Old Malling Farm, Old Malling Way, Lewes:

Reserved Matters application for approval of scale, layout, external appearance and landscaping following grant of Outline Planning Permission for erection of 226 dwellings including affordable housing public open space and associated infrastructure including vehicular and pedestrian access from Monks Way (SDNP/18/06103/OUT).

The Friends of Lewes strongly object to these reserved matters for the following reasons:-

Part 'A': Scale, Layout, External Appearance and Landscaping:-

- (1) For the record, the applicant, TopHat Communities Limited, organised a public exhibition in Lewes in June last year at very short notice, which as a result few interested parties, including the Friends of Lewes, were unfortunately unable to attend.
- (2) Whilst appreciating that this project has outline planning approval, the Society is still concerned about certain unsustainable aspects of this scheme and in particular the location of the main vehicular access off Monk's Way at the most point northern, and most remote part of the site.
- (3) The Society also notes that the existing access to Old Malling Farm will be used for pedestrians and cyclists as well as by emergency services, which is to be welcomed.
- (4) However, the Society considers it essential that a practical third access point at the most southerly part of the site must be included within the development. This will enable the occupiers of the new development to adopt more sustainable journey choices by significantly improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists to the town. Ideally such a 'link' should be provided in the vicinity of 'Deanery Corner' and the northern part of Malling Field. In this respect, the suggested ramp, illustrated on the overall site plan, linking to Old Malling Way is not considered to be an acceptable solution and indeed is not considered to be within reserved matters.
- (5) This provision needs to be available from the time of occupancy of the first building of the development in order to ensure that sustainable transport habits are established from the outset in order to achieve a modal shift in order to reduce the dependency on vehicular traffic.
- (6) Furthermore, in order to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to use this route, proposals throughout the site need to be amended to incorporate a dedicated public footways and cycleways in order to provide safe routes free of conflict with circulating vehicular traffic.
- (7) With regard to the proposed layout, the Society is concerned about the dominance of the proposed road layout incorporating what is effectively a 'ring road' around the whole site, rather than incorporating a suitable road 'hierarchy' that would encourage traffic to slow down within the denser parts of the proposed housing areas.
- (8) Indeed, the proposed layout does not engender any sense of a community, as there is no provision of any focal points within the site that could both encourage outdoor group activities provide locations where residents could gather.

(9) In contrast, most of the dwellings are arranged in terraces, with vehicular access directly from a distributor road, and as such effectively act as barriers for the residents to be able to integrate across different parts of the site.

(10) Furthermore, as the development will be visible from afar these terraces will appear as a 'wall' with no attempt to break down the form of development into smaller groups, which would be more appropriate for this location.

(11) Although some existing open spaces on the site have been retained, there is a distinct lack of trees, and overall the proposed landscape design is considered to be very poor for an edge of town development. Surely on a development of this size, there should be long term commitment to providing a sufficient number of trees in order to enhance both the individual groups of built form and to provide an overall 'sense of place'.

(12) Generally, the proposed density of buildings seems to be significantly more than the original outline application.

(13) Indeed, the overall density of housing is considered to be very high for an out-of-town development and raises the question whether the push for affordable rented homes has resulted in lowering the overall quality of the development. Surely it would be desirable to have a balance of properties to buy as well as properties to rent, and in this respect it would be interesting to see the available data that determined the mix of housing units currently proposed for this site.

(14) It is understood that all of the houses will be pre-fabricated offsite and transported to Lewes for erection. It is also understood that the housing units will incorporate a number of 'standard finishes'. The Society strongly recommends that all external finishes should use locally sourced traditional materials, as the site is located within the South Downs National Park.

(15) The Society also questions whether the widespread use of pre-fabricated units, which have to be transported possibly long distances, are indeed 'sustainable'.

Part 'B' Drainage Comments:-

(1) As outlined in the Southern Water consultation section of the report, Southern Water have confirmed that there is currently capacity in their network for only 50 houses from the development, the design team is exploring methods to use a flow restriction system to negate the requirement for a full pump system with attenuation storage to be installed as a temporary measure until Southern Water undertake reinforcement works to allow the site to operate by gravity. This is very concerning and development should not take place until full capacity is provided by Southern Water.

(2) The Society notes the considerable challenges of dealing with both the foul and surface water drainage of the development in its proposed location.

(3) The Society has serious concerns about the proposed treatment of runoff from impermeable surfaces and would like to see further measures at source, for example domestic rainwater harvesting systems, and, in addition, would support a SuDS system which could be adopted by Southern Water and or ESCC Highways and maintained by an experienced organisation.

(4) Similarly, the Society requires, as a matter of principle a foul drainage system of a standard able to be adopted by Southern Water and notes the current quoted Southern Water capacity, which falls far short of that required.

(5) Finally, there should be no overflows, of any kind or frequency, of foul drainage to the River Ouse.

Ruth

Ruth O'Keeffe
Chair of Friends of Lewes

Roger

Roger Maskew
Chair of Friends of Lewes Planning Committee

REM: Old Mallig Farm Reserved Matters: 25th January 2024