

**Minutes of a meeting of STANFORD IN THE VALE PLANNING AND FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE held
remotely on
Tuesday 8th February 2022**

Present: Cllr. Middleton (Chair) Cllr. Isaacs Cllr. Lewis Cllr. Dixon
Cllr. Bailey (until 21:00)

Apologies: Cllr. Warren

PF/01/02/22 P21/V2334/FUL – Land at former Seven Acres Nursery, Faringdon Rd - Full planning permission for 82 dwellings (amended plans)

ON THE RESOLUTION OF Cllr. MIDDLETON

SECONDED BY Cllr. ISAACS

IT WAS RESOLVED that Stanford in the Vale Parish Council OBJECTS to the application on the following grounds. All in favour.

Housing mix

We note the provision of home offices and recognise the importance these have recently acquired. However, as presented in the plans they are simply a renamed bedroom. In our view it is unacceptable to put forward all house types with a reduced number of bedrooms on the sole basis that the room is simply repurposed as office space, given the knock-on impacts on parking, schooling, healthcare and other socio-economic factors. In consequence, while we note the presentation of the SHMA figures, if these were corrected to reflect the true bedroom/office proportion they would raise significant questions about alignment to the SHMA mix.

Parking

Given the planned phase-out of fossil fuel engines by 2030, we are extremely concerned that there are still 20 plots which do not have EV parking provision. We believe that all plots should have provision for an EV charging point in light of this. Some of this could be achieved very easily by laying cable across an existing plot's land (e.g. 53 and 75, plus others). Other plots may require crossing neighbouring plots (e.g. 41 and 42). Alternatively the developer could assume a model of employing only semi-detached rather than terraced housing, which would alleviate this problem entirely. We note the changes to visitor parking. We are still concerned about the arrangements for visitor parking and the lack of provision in the southern half of the site. We believe that this could be improved by a more imaginative scheme. For example, the stretch of tarmac footpath on the south-western boundary could be removed, allowing creation of additional spaces along a narrower hoggin footpath such that the amount of green space is still conserved. In the south eastern corner there appears to be a disconnect between the layout of the private and adopted roads, combined with an awful lot of tarmac versus usable road space. If the layout were to be reimagined there might be an opportunity to create additional parking, again without consuming green space.

In general there are insufficient visitor spaces in the eastern sector, which we suggest the applicant revisit.

Furthermore, we suggest that the parking arrangements for numbers 5 and 6 should be revisited as the disconnect between the parking space for number 5 and the plot is inappropriate for a village setting.

Site design

As previously commented, we note that the 2.5 storey dwellings are still present.

To reiterate our previous comments:

"The proposed 2.5 storey dwellings are out of keeping with the local vernacular – and the neighbouring sites. We have previously highlighted to the applicant and the LPA that there are very few 2.5 storey dwellings within the village, with the majority of dormers found within 1.5 storey dwellings. The quantity and massing of these dwellings in a single terrace is therefore inappropriate

and, contrary to the applicant's assertion does not aid legibility of the site, nor would they serve a focal purpose due to the sight lines/massing of dwellings in the vicinity."

Within the context of the wider village, these dwellings are not appropriate, and by extension, not suitable for this development.

We note that the applicant has removed the timber knee-high rails and the gateway pillars and has enhanced the eastern boundary and we thank them for their attention in those matters.

House design

We reiterate our previous objection:

"Flat roof dormers (house types D1, D2, F1) – are at odds with the Design Guide and the limited local examples that can be found within the village.

Fenestration – there are various house types which demonstrate a very poor design/consideration for the alignment of fenestration, also contrary to Vale's Design Guide. These include M1, M2, N (which has an odd front arrangement, and an additional rear window that doesn't align with any other feature), P (front elevation ground floor windows), Q (small window alignment at both front and rear does not work with any other architectural feature).

House type K - Vale's Design Guide (Principle DG52) encourages the use of simple rectangular elements, whilst DG53 recognises the need for appropriate design for corner plots. However, the use of house type K in a single location, for a less than 90 degree turn is difficult to justify.

House type D2 – we believe that there is a risk this will in fact become a de facto 4-bed property, albeit of small proportions, potentially falling below space standards (both internally and externally). Given the points that we've already raised in relation to their massing as a group of 4, with limited parking spaces, this feels to be a problematic design in the overall scheme."

This ties in to our earlier comments about home office provision, which appears to permeate all house types.

Play areas

We note and encourage the LPA to attract a substantial contribution towards leisure facilities within the parish in addition to any statutory contribution, as suggested the applicant.

We note the applicant has taken on some of our concerns around making the proposed kick-about area boundaries safe and secure but we would like to see detailed plans for this, including boundary treatments, come forwards before any planning approval. This is of particular importance given child safety is involved around the A417 and the wildlife pond.

Ecology

Although we have been supplied with an bat survey as private correspondence we note that it has not been submitted as part of the application and has a number of methodological shortcomings as highlighted in the report itself. In particular:

- One of the two bat detectors failed during two months of the survey.
- One of the bat detectors was incorrectly placed during one month of the survey.

While we note the commitment to providing bat boxes, however, our point was that the site presents a net loss of biodiversity and therefore the applicant should spend greater effort enhancing biodiversity ideally within the site, or failing that within the parish, to correct this shortfall. We refer you to our previous comments, namely:

"The Biodiversity Enhancement Plan indicates that bird and bat boxes will be installed on mature trees. This is a challenge given the limited number of mature trees to be retained and the proximity of the majority to the A417, additionally the accompanying plan appears to indicate that boxes will instead be installed on the newly built dwellings. Given the applicant is still not conformant with the installation of bat boxes on their Nursery End development, which was initiated in 2012, these proposals need to be a) validated and b) heavily conditioned. We note that the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan refers to a bat survey, yet no bat survey has been provided (it would be unlikely that the current site was surveyed, given that it was not developable at that time). Previous bat surveys within 500m of the site have identified significant levels of bat activity, including roosts and

there is also anecdotal evidence from neighbours and parishioners of bat activity around the site. Additionally, reports of owls, deer and other species around the site are commonplace. The existing "enhancement" plan does not enhance, but destroys, as confirmed by the calculation presented. We suggest that further efforts should be employed to identify additional measures to truly enhance biodiversity rather than the approach adopted here. Bio-diversity offset should only be used as a last resort, where absolutely necessary and if used, should be invested locally within the parish."

Sustainability

We refer you to our previous comments:

"Once again, the applicant has failed to demonstrably integrate sustainability within their housing designs. There is no rainwater/greywater harvesting, no use of Solar PV, neither air nor land source heat pumps and consequently no low carbon heating. These are significant failures in sustainable design, especially given the declaration of a Climate Emergency by both Vale of White Horse District and Stanford in the Vale Parish Councils respectively. Should the application be successful, it is likely that permissions would not be granted before 2022, with groundworks alone likely taking up much of the remaining calendar year, meaning that occupations might begin just 2 years before the low carbon heating deadline of 2025. Retrofitting low carbon heating is immensely costly and it would be better for the developer, prospective buyers, the environment and future generations to provide low carbon heating from the outset. The applicant acknowledges the importance of water efficiency within their Design & Access Statement (page 85), yet again, the proposals do nothing to take advantage of the abundance of natural resources which could easily be harvested and used around the homes, significantly amplifying the eco credentials of the site. The Design and Access Statement refers to the use of electric vehicle charging points, yet the parking layout is not conducive with this in many instances and we have not found any indication as to where the applicant proposes to install these. The applicant's Design & Access Statement (page 88) reasons "New homes will be designed in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy to meet the requirements of the current Building Regulations and will take account of future changes to the Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard when these are implemented". Given this, adopting the measures outlined above would indeed ensure that the proposals are aligned to the Future Homes Standard."

Foul sewer

We refer you to our previous comments:

"We highlight that local sewage works is already over capacity, and in addition there are numerous issues with the existing foul sewer along Faringdon Road (A417), with Thames Water frequently in attendance to resolve. It is therefore imperative that the water authority provide detailed plans to accommodate the additional requirements that this development will create."

Community contributions

We refer you to our previous comments:

"Should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission then contributions should be sought:

- Towards the new recreation facilities within the parish that Stanford in the Vale Parish Council is in the process of creating (previously S106 monies have been successfully secured towards this project).*
- Towards improvements of the facilities within Stanford in the Vale Village Hall (previously S106 monies have been successfully secured towards this).*
- Towards the installation of Speed Indicator device(s) to reduce the speed on the adjacent A417 (design and placement to be agreed with the Parish Council)*
- Provision of cemetery space within the parish – we have been notified that the existing churchyard in the curtilage to St. Denys Church is rapidly approaching capacity. No alternative sites have yet been identified, the UK has an ageing population and as the strategic site as a whole will deliver in excess of 200 homes, it is reasonable to assume that a*

*substantial number of additional graveyard plots will be required in the coming decade(s).
Alternatively, a portion of the proposed site could be used to create a cemetery instead."*

PF/02/02/22 P21/V3524/FUL – Land West of Faringdon Road – Variation on application

P18/V2056/RM – changes to site layout

ON THE RESOLUTION OF Cllr. MIDDLETON

SECONDED BY Cllr. ISAACS

IT WAS RESOLVED that Stanford in the Vale Parish Council OBJECTS to the application on the following grounds. All in favour.

Housing mix

In line with our comments on the applicant's other side (P21/V2334/FUL), we note the provision of home offices and recognise the importance these have recently acquired. However, as presented in the plans they are simply a renamed bedroom. In our view it is unacceptable to put forward all house types with a reduced number of bedrooms on the sole basis that the room is simply repurposed as office space, given the knock-on impacts on parking, schooling, healthcare and other socio-economic factors. In consequence, while we note the presentation of the SHMA figures, if these were corrected to reflect the true bedroom/office proportion they would raise significant questions about alignment to the SHMA mix.

We believe that manipulation of the number of bedrooms and its consequential impact on the housing mix has a significant adverse socio-economic impact on our community and is to be discouraged at all costs.

PF/03/02/22 To discuss correspondence from Sovereign Housing

It was agreed that the Parish Council does not have an appetite for further development. Cllr. Lewis will reply.