

Proposed Development Review Forum 29th November 2012

1. Land South of Harbury Lane (Harbury Gardens)

Presented by:

Greg Mitchell – Framptons

Pete Brown – RPS

Alistair Clark – A C Lloyd

Q: Cllr Linda Bromley: What is the density per hectare? How many parking spaces are there per dwelling? Where is the primary school to be located?

A: The primary school is identified on the map. Parking will be on plot, adjacent to plots and there will also be visitor parking in accordance with the Councils parking guidelines of 2 spaces per dwelling. Density will be 30-35 units per hectare, down to 25 units per hectare at the development edge.

Q: Cllr Anne Mellor: The 200 homes stated will generate 400 more cars, is the junction proposed the only way in and out? There is concern that it will cause congestion/pollution. There is also no public transport.

A: It is correct that most homes will have two or more cars but by embracing garden town principles there will be lower densities on site. The consultation leaflet showed a roundabout access to Harbury Lane; however the Highway Authority's clear view was that the most appropriate form of access is a traffic controlled junction. There is a benefit in highway terms by having traffic lights as it does create the opportunity to lower traffic speed limits to a more sensible 30mph.

Q: Cllr Richard Brookes: We have heard about the principles of garden suburbs, which is good to see and the provision of a shop, but where is the principle of local process and preferred options? Is this site supplemental to or instead of those options? The second question is you refer to the potential for a new school and not actually the building of a new school, could you clarify?

A: In terms of policy the local plan is at an early stage, there are unresolved objections and it is clear that there is no 5 year land supply. National policy is clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, subject to the benefits outweighing the disadvantages. It is no different here to Stratford District. The development of 200 homes will not require a primary school but there is a perceived need for a new school to serve not only this site but the wider area. The school is the heart of the community. The choice on location will be with the County Council but we are happy to agree to a S.106 for the provision of a school at the stage that the application is decided.

Q: Cllr Judith Falp: When will the school be built? What about secondary schools? Will cycle ways be provided from the site to secondary schools?

A: It is partly in the hands of the Education Department and depends on spare capacity at secondary schools. If there is not capacity the County Council will seek contributions. The applicant has no control over where the money is spent. It is also complicated as so many schools are converting to Academy status outside of the County's control. An answer cannot be given on cycle routes, the scheme is at a primary stage but certain matters such as safer routes will be considered.

Q: Cllr Linda Bromley: Where did the information that there is less than a two year land supply come from?

A: It came from officers.

Q: Town Councillor Andre Davis: Developments are built before amenities are built all too often. Were you expecting to build 50 houses per year without having funding to build the school? It happens all too often, there are five developments in the area, 100's of houses have been built and at the moment the facilities do not exist. You may be able to show there is no 5 year housing supply, however amenities do not exist and there is a worry that developments are being built before amenities exist. These should be in place ready for the development. The traffic impact worries me there are known rabbit runs/race tracks in the area and this is the shortest route for people going to Shire Park. With another development at Woodside Farm this could create a gridlock effect. Warwick Gate has struggled to maintain flora and fauna, for experience that area becomes overgrown. I have lots of severe concerns with the development, how can you appease my concerns?

A: Learning lessons from the Sydenham application, come and talk to us. You raise lots of interesting points but if we are serious about garden towns it is a shift in how maintenance is done. AC Lloyd is happy embrace the challenge and other garden towns have been researched. There are a variety of issues to discuss with the Highway Authority, again I make the point that we want dialogue, it can make a better development.

Q: Councillor Bernard Kirton: Tachbrook Road may be adequate but not at peak times, the biggest deadlock is the bottom end of Tachbrook Road with rat-running in the area. It seems that we need a study of the whole area with traffic flows conducted by the County Council, as it is already at saturation point.

A: Hopefully we have made clear in the presentation that consultation with the Highway Authority does show that access is appropriate in the context of current traffic levels. Congestion affects large parts of the urban area, and this matter that has been taken on board.

Q: Cllr George Illingworth: One problem not using the local plan as a basis for development is that the infrastructure is not there. If development areas are different or several areas are developed together it needs the Highways Authority to look at the developments as a whole. Garden suburbs are nothing unique, it is interesting that some parts of the town verges are cared for and in other parts they are parked upon. A shortage of parking will ruin verges. Being realistic people will have cars and this should be to be considered. For a development of 200 houses I am astounded that there is only one access point into the development and not even an emergency access, especially with a school on site.

A: The access reflects discussions with the Highway Authority; we can take this away to look at. You are right that there are fine examples of garden towns, it's a bit back to the future but they do stand the test of time and that's what people throughout the country want to get back to, the consequence is that it is a much lower density.

Q: Cllr Michael Doody: 200 houses will provide 80 affordable houses; I am very pleased but not so pleased that we have spent so much time doing the local plan, which looks at providing 34 million in traffic improvements. The local plan is the way to progress any development. This development is outside of the local plan and is a carbuncle on the plan whether liked or disliked we cannot control where the district wants housing, as seen in Shottery. This jumps on the back of highway money to be paid and this plan should not go any further.

A: A whole host of issues are raised; the status of the local plan has already been mentioned. Stratford [regarding Shottery] is not a good example as it has had several local plans, which has put it in this position.

2. Foundry Park, Leamington Spa

Presented by:

Patrick Stones – Trilogy

Ken Simms – Architect

Q: Cllr Jane Knight: I am disappointed that a nice entrance was offered; now it will be a car park and cars.

A: Don't just think of the car park, you will see the buildings beyond which feel a lot closer to the junction, plus there will be strong landscaping. We would have loved to provide an iconic building.

Q: Town Councillor Andre Davis: Why can't an iconic building be provided serving the purpose you want in the position of the office, or a store with an office above?

A: We would not dismiss this if occupiers wanted to go above a shop. Morrisons [the building] has tried to be designed as an all round pavilion and when inside the building you get a good view looking out. Retail buildings of this sort have a frontage that has to face out onto where you park your car, if the building is placed on the roundabout where do you place the frontage? Cars are parked to the railway side so even if designed as a pavilion building it would have its back to the roundabout. There are still service requirements and deliveries. I understand the car parking point, a wide bank of landscaping will be provided to the frontage.

Q: Councillor Nick Pittarello: I am impressed how Trilogy has handled the development and I am surprised by the Morrison's building, it looks great from the roundabout. I always saw the HQ as part of the package so it is massively disappointing that this will not come to pass, particularly given the site's location next to the station. There must be more that can be done to find another employer. Another shopping centre outside of the Town Centre and petrol station is a real come down, we need a statement that says Leamington is here!

A: That is what we are here to hear and we do not disagree. It's not an economic argument, its finding an employer to come to the area with 600 plus employees, they always want to locate to office parks with plenty of car parking. One opportunity for a sustainable office building may come when Travis Perkins move off site and Jewsons could move soon after, if there is demand for an office development on 5 acres nearer to the station. As for iconic architecture you are more likely to get this from retailers. New offices want functional buildings so it looks like they are not wasting money; it is the nature of the world we live in.

Q: Parish Councillor Ray Bullen: You cannot find an office/retailer, there is a nearby retail premises that has been closed for a long time. Is it not a good residential site? You could have an iconic residential building.

A: It is a good point. You cannot have houses as the site is not appropriate for gardens, but you could have flats. The site proposed is permeable [allowing movement through] and the residential use would have to become a contained area with fences.

Q: Town Councillor Andre Davis: Statistics show that single occupancy housing is set to increase by 30% by 2025. There is an opportunity to provide, and also a need in the area for retirement units. I would have thought this is the way to go. There is also a park nearby to use. The office building would have had a curved facade, why could the back of a retail building not have a curved facade?

A: It would be pretending to be something else, but it could be done. Pulling the building back would be the better alternative.

Q: Cllr Anne Mellor: Will anybody look at the flooding? Can a drain be put in?

A: An attenuation tank has been installed underneath the car park at the Morrisons store. We cannot do much about the discharge of brooks running across the site, but we can help it.

3. Land at Woodside farm, Harbury Lane.

Presented by:

Julie Cross – Andrew Martin Planning

Andrew Martin – Andrew Martin Planning

Tony Hagger – Transport Planning Consultant

Roger Goodland – Thomas Bates and Sons

Q: Cllr Bernard Kiton: There is concern from the road engineer's comments that the County Council Engineer is happy, but the number of children using the existing crossing to Whitnash School is still awaited at the Engineer's department. The County Council are interested in how children will get across the road. Children don't always wait for lights, when will you submit to the County Engineers the full details?

A: The final design has not been submitted and is in draft form. In terms of managing children the design would have to be safety audited, there may be some form of guard rail. We cannot absolutely control what happens, but as far as we are able to we will provide what we believe is safe.

Q: Cllr Linda Bromley: Can you identify flood risk areas on the map?

A: A full drainage assessment has been done. Balancing ponds are to be put in, which are depressions in the ground that fill up with water. The whole site will have sustainable urban drainage (SUDS).

Q: Cllr Linda Bromley: Bearing in mind National Planning Policy Framework guidelines they don't support development of agricultural land or in flood zones?

A: It is not a flood risk area, contours make it boggy but not a flood risk, the site is Zone 1.

Q: Cllr Judith Falp: We have heard about the gateway to Leamington, this is the gateway to Whitnash. I am concerned at terraced houses, there are very few in Whitnash. Where are the amenities for up to 320 homes?

A: This is an outline proposal, details are to be dealt with but there will be a wide mix of units. It is agreed that it is a gateway and careful design and key points for buildings to stand out will be needed. In terms of amenities we are fully aware of this matter, which came out at presentations, and expect Section 106 contributions; but the site would not warrant a school and contours make it unsuitable.

Q: Cllr Anne Mellor: You have discussed the positive comments from the local consultation, are there negative comments you can tell me about?

A: We are fully aware of the education issues and contributions needed. This will be a problem for meeting all growth requirements in the district. It is a normal process and we will be running the application in parallel with the local plan.

Q: Cllr Anne Mellor: What plans do you have to cope with extra traffic? We are just getting “we are talking to County”, we are in a very congested area and traffic and pollution is a concern.

A: This point came out in local consultation. There is capacity in the system and the impact of our development is marginal. We have looked at local traffic levels also; we are proposing to treat the section of road as a single entity to manipulate timing of traffic through lights, which will be discussed with County. This may enable us to reduce queues but we will not cure traffic. We will have an impact upon traffic but this will be very small indeed and we can make improvements on hot spots.

Q: Town Councillor Andre Davis: The Government Inspector’s review made damning points that development should not happen on this site. It is on a high point, a particularly high density area worries me and the Section 106 can pay as much as possible but damage to the vista won’t repair that. 320 houses will be a larger area with more cars, up to 1000 cars. Traffic impact data is confidential but traffic impact did not include Ashford Road, which is a main road. From the diagram the road to the northwest of the development is a flooding area. There is concern that with existing flooding that another entrance to Leamington on a main arterial road will be flooded. What can you do in terms of reducing the impact upon the commanding view?

A: In terms of flooding an environmental assessment will contain a full Flood Risk Assessment. There are not considered to be any off site problems, three balancing pond will help the site deal with its own problems. In terms of traffic Ashford Road has been modelled as part of consultation and it is clear that it is a big issue. It will be signalled as a solution but the County Council will need to confirm this. In terms of visual impact it is important to stress the inspector’s report was in a different context, there was no need to release green field sites last time. It is now a different ball game, there is a shortage of housing nationally and more is needed than the last local plan Inspector was considering. The proposal to release green field sites is all relative. Planting matures rapidly and additional planting can be achieved. This is filling in a visually contained area; there will be some visual impact.

Q: Cllr Tony Heath: A traffic system question, I am still concerned regarding three sets of traffic lights within 500 yards, plus children from the school. I can see children trying to cross independent of lights. My second concern is that 250 houses originally put forward have gone up to 320. It does not look like a garden village but a large density development.

A: I would stress it is not a high density, we have assessed 320 dwellings on 28 hectare site will give a very moderate density and is more likely to go down given the comments you and the public are making. There will be no high rise, 2-storey only, low density, maybe flats depending on the affordable housing provider, but the site is not high density.

Q: Cllr George Illingworth: Did you say that a second access was not allowed? Was that part of the preferred plan?

A: It was the preferred option, it is not unusual to have a single access for 150 units, however access was limited by protected hedgerows and visibility on the hill, so the only real option was an emergency access.