

Proposal: Application for approval of reserved matters (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale) following outline approval for 70 Residential Dwellings, together with the provision of a New Access from High Street, Open Space and New Footpath/Cycle Ways and Doctors Surgery

Site Address: Land West Of 26 To 34 High Street Stilton

Reference: 21/01808/REM

STILTON PARISH COUNCIL – RECOMMENDS REFUSAL

Stilton Parish Council recommended refusal to the unrevised version of this Reserved Matters application and disappointingly sees little evidence of our concerns being addressed in this subsequent application.

Tilted Balance

Stilton Parish Council feel the harms caused by this planning application will significantly outweigh its benefits and as such, as detailed in paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF, it should be refused upon consideration of the material considerations we outline below, despite titled balance status.

Small Settlement?

Stilton is a determined a Small Settlement in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (LP) where it is detailed, 'development in Small Settlements will typically comprise smaller sites providing a range of opportunities for small builders and those wishing to build or commission their own homes' (point 4.102). Is a development of 70 social houses with the separate application 21/0810/OUT, for 16 additional properties, a smaller site? The Parish Council believes this is not the case and it directly contradicts the LP.

Over intensification of the site is also documented heavily on HDC's Planning Portal where many Stilton residents have strongly and convincingly vocalised their objections to a development of this size in a village where the necessary infrastructure is lacking.

The LP states development will be balanced with local services, focusing on sustainable travel modes however Stilton has no Sunday bus service and a bus company who recently threatened not to service Stilton given the difficulty of getting through the streets with cars parked on both sides of the streets. Given that in 2015 the Office for National Statistics found that 16.7% of the workforce worked on a Sunday, this is clearly a sizeable issue. The Travel Sustainability Report claimed that residents will rely on public transport (and not cars) to get out and about. How will this be possible with no Sunday bus service either for work or leisure purposes and how would employment be affected by a complete withdrawal of public transport should that transpire?

Point 4.106 of the LP focuses of the need for a development to fit in with the immediate environment and maintain the wider settlement's character. We argue that squeezing the 70 homes detailed in this application (alongside the proposed additional 16 properties) is both awkward and incompatible with the current character of Stilton. Rather than fitting it, it stands out and again, directly violates guidance set by the LP.

However, is Stilton really still a Small Settlement?

The LP details a Key Service Centre (KSC) as having a primary school, doctor's surgery, public hall, bus service operating Monday to Saturday, a convenience shop with at least one other shop and a public house. With the above application encompassing a doctor's consultation building and all

other criteria met, is Stilton now to be considered a Key Service Centre? If so, as stated in point 4.98 of the LP, opportunities for development within a KSC will, 'be limited to redevelopment opportunities, intensification of use of land which relates wholly to existing buildings rather than the surrounding countryside.' This application takes a former golf course on the outskirts of the settlement and pushes the residential area to cover a currently unpopulated area. This application does not adhere to either Small Settlement or KSC designation and being inappropriate for both terms, should be refused accordingly.

Condition 4

We reiterate, condition 4 of the original outline consent states: This development hereby permitted shall not exceed 70 dwellings'. There is no rider to say that the Local Planning Authority can vary it. Therefore the 70 affordable homes should not be condensed to free up land for an additional 16 homes – as stated in the separate application 21/0810/OUT. This issue has not been addressed and the Parish Council would like clarification on how this situation has been enabled. We echo the sentiment of Stilton residents who have taken their time to respond to these applications, sounding an alarm that the Local Planning Authority seemingly does not wish to listen to.

Flooding

Data shows that Stilton is having more rain and larger peak flows. The LP in point 4.69 details how the district will have increased susceptibility to future climate impacts beyond the plan period and during 'the lifetime of most developments, the effectiveness of flood and surface water management assets is expected to reduce'.

In alignment with viewpoints of residents, some of whom have provided photographic evidence highlighting the flood risk at the site of this application, the Parish Council echoes its previous concerns on the design strategy calculations currently used ...

1. Summer storm design criteria have used a return period of only two years, storm duration of 30 minutes and a maximum rainfall of 20mm/hr. A minimum return period of 100 years would be expected with rainfall in excess of 100mm/hr. Looking at the results of the winter storm condition one would expect correctly applied summer storm conditions to overload the system.
2. Winter storm design criteria have used a return period of 100 years, storm duration of 720 minutes with no maximum rainfall defined. Under these conditions more than 50% of the drain runs are become surcharged which is, in the view of Stilton Parish Council, not acceptable. A concern here would be that backing up of water could force water to escape overland and/or via uncontrolled routes thereby causing flooding.
3. The proposed storage basins seem to have been sized to accommodate the winter storm conditions, which they appear to do, there is no analysis of summer storm conditions for a 100-year return period.

Street Scene

NPPF (2021) 2.2 sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving well designed, beautiful and safe places; conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. This application does not adhere to this.

LP11 design context – this application does not respond positively to its context and has not drawn inspiration from key characteristics of its surroundings to help create the distinctive, high quality and well designed places that people would find attractive as homes.

LP12 – design implementation – this application does not contribute to the area’s character and identity (a) nor does it provide garages to ‘provide parking and protection for cars as well as storage space’. The lack of parking space will not allow for ‘discreet’ parking as detailed in point 5.18.

Newts

Pond surveys to determine GCN presence and population size should be carried out between mid-March and June but the Parish Council can see no evidence of these surveys being done. In addition, multiple surveys are required from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 6 with at least half of these visits during the period between mid-April and mid-May. The required ecology surveys must be carried out to an adequate level to ensure protection for resident newts.

LAP Play Area

This is inadequate for the proposed housing development.

Previous unanswered concerns

- * The Parish Council’s previous comments to this application also included concerns regarding the financial relationship between HDC and the housing provider (Cross Keys)
- * The deadline to commence building by the first quarter of 2022 - we are already into February. We encourage full consideration be given to this Reserved Matters application despite the time restraints
- * The mix of houses does not include bungalows and therefore discriminates against the needs of elderly and disabled occupants which should be considered. LP12, point 5.13 powerfully details through the *Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013* the number of households aged 65 or over will grow as a proportion on Huntingdonshire’s total population. It is a failing not to address this in a development of this size
- * Condition 19 requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan which as of yet, appears not to have been implemented as part of the application
- * Infrastructure support is lacking – no CIL funds due to 100% affordable housing
- * Inadequate parking spaces
- * Lack of clarity over the proposed doctor’s surgery
- * Sustainable development – firm detail sought over the indicative 3 solar panels per home
- * Healthy living conditions (NPPF, paragraph 117) – many homes have no access to outside space to dry clothes while vented driers are expensive
- * Energy efficiency – this application fails to take advantage of the energy saving advantage conferred by the site. There is a lack of vision which would benefit future residents.

Until the above issues are addressed, Stilton Parish Council, in accordance with the overwhelming majority of residents comments on the Planning Portal, continues to have serious concerns about this Reserved Matters application, continues to RECOMMEND REFUSAL and continues to request this application goes to the Planning Committee to allow greater discussion.