

Site:	Lidsey Road, Woodgate
App. No:	AL/57/18/OUT
Status:	Outline permission with aspects of appearance reserved for later determination
By:	D. Edwards
Date:	29 th October, 2018

General:

- Site area: 1.53 ha
- Developable area: 1.22 ha (HELAA)
- Projected quantum (HELAA): 37 homes at a net density of 30 dph.
- Proposed quantum: 30 homes (14 market homes; 16 market and affordable apartments) at a net density of 25 dph.
- Existing character: Predominantly low density, edge of settlement.
- Neighbouring heights and massing: Single storey commercial units to the south; 1/ 1.5 storey bungalows to the north and west; caravan accommodation to the east.
- Proposed heights and massing: 2 storey buildings with flat roofs.
- Status: Greenfield site. Considered by the Arun Local Plan Viability Study 2016 to be viable and achievable. Potential constraints (HELAA) representing groundwater flood risk and being adjacent to a site of potentially contaminated land.
- Additional potential constraints: No PROW, badger setts, bats, listed buildings or watercourses appear to have been identified. However, from the tree survey, there are a number of mature trees and hedgerows predominantly located around the edge of the site.

Overview:

- According to the DAS, the intent is for a model development that represents a diversion from a 'typical' estate and provides a strong sense of community, communal open space, co-working accommodation and energy efficient buildings.

- While these are certainly desirable aspirations, there are concerns regarding the proposed quantum, mix and arrangement of new homes.
- Additionally, it is unclear how the proposed building form, appearance and arrangement relate to the wider settlement context.
- As a result, the overarching impression is more akin to a relatively self contained community for a particular lifestyle choice rather than representing the extension of the village, a robust and flexible arrangement and the provision of a broad mix of unit types.

Comments:

Mix and Quantum:

- Overall, proposed development achieves almost 20% less (7 units) than the projected HELAA capacity. This generates a net density of approximately 25 dph and a site density of less than 20 dph.
- It is unclear how the proposed mix relates to local needs and requirements, especially the provision of +50% apartments.
- At present, all detached homes appear to be open market while the affordable provision is 1 and 2 bed apartments.
- Affordable homes are clustered adjacent to existing commercial activities rather than being evenly distributed across the site.
- It is assumed that the 'working hub' represents a communal space rather than an employment generating activity.

Access and Circulation:

- It is assumed that direct access from Lidsey Road is not possible and consequently, this is from the existing drive to the north of the site.
- It is unclear if this drive is adopted and as such, if proposed roads would be adopted.
- At present, the proposed access appears close to the existing junction while the radius appears excessive, suggesting that the existing access road may be diverted into the site.

- The location of the proposed access appears to require the removal of mature trees and hedgerows while also, focussing a long view to the gable end of the existing bungalow.
- It is unclear if parking provision in the south-east corner is sufficient for the residents of proposed apartments and detached family dwellings in this area and also, for visitors.
- The geometry of the second entrance junction appears more akin to a three-way junction than a T-junction, if this is the intent.
- Across the site, the ROW of roads appears to vary with some sections being wider/narrower than others. Additionally, it is unclear if turning heads allow sufficient space for the sweep path of service vehicles.
- Across the site, sections of pavements are provided that do not appear to connect while conversely, the linear park appears to be bisected by a road that connects parking areas.

Layout:

- The sweeping nature of the proposed layout appears a little alien compared to the wider settlement context, which broadly appears to follow a linear arrangement along Lidsey Road.
- Owing to the site's location at the edge of the village, it is assumed there is a little tolerance for a varying urban grain than an infill site would present. However, when coupled with other unique aspects, there is a concern that new development might become a self-contained entity rather than being well integrated with the wider context and community.
- The overall layout appears to have been determined by the intent to provide south-facing units for passive solar gain. However, as a result, this has generated a number of unconventional arrangements;
 - Units to the north of the site are positioned at the back of the plot. As a result, these are closer to the existing driveway to the caravan park, have no private rear gardens and will require high/ dense front boundary treatment to achieve a meaningful area of private open space.

- While units in the middle row are arranged closer to the road, these appear to provide a more generous area for parking than required, thereby negatively impacting the street scene and developable area. Private gardens are minimal for detached family homes; it is assumed that an allowance of private open space has been accommodated within the communal gardens. Additionally, it is assumed that tall/ dense boundary treatment will be required for private rear gardens.
- While units to the south of the site appear to be dual aspect, it is assumed these are also south facing. However, in this case, there is some concern for the lack of passive surveillance of the central open space. As a result, this may become used as a semi-private garden for residents of the apartments. In addition, these units are orientated towards neighbouring commercial activities rather than the central park.
- The overall impact is more akin to homes being distributed within open space rather than following a conventional residential arrangement with clearly defined fronts and backs. However, if this were the intent, it is recommended to strengthen boundary planting, particularly along the west and southern edges.
- There is limited opportunity for change or adjustment by future owners while it is assumed that a management strategy would be required to ensure that communal area and public/ private boundaries are maintained.

Open Space:

- Principally, the layout is based on the provision of a central area of open space for community activities, allotments, play and recreation.
- However, the extent of this appears to have reduced the allowance of private gardens, boundary planting and the overall number of units/ density.
- Conversely, in its existing arrangement, the open space creates an active area that may be poorly overlooked and maintained if this is at the rear of adjacent homes.
- It is unclear if the proposed scale and location for SUDS is sufficient.

Building Form and Massing:

- While the contemporary building style and sustainable design features are certainly interesting, in reality, these have a limited relationship to the character, style and massing of neighbouring buildings; all neighbouring buildings appear to be 1 or 1.5 floors with pitched roofs while all proposed buildings are two stories with flat roofs.
- Similarly, it is unclear how the proposed treatment of new homes relates to the wider built form context.
- If a principal intent is to maximise solar gain and minimise heat loss, there appears to be limited variation between the proposed north and south elevations.
- West elevations have limited openings, which, given the visibility of these across the plan, negatively impacts passive surveillance of areas of open space.