



Kesgrave Town Council

Clerk: *Mrs V R Read*
Deputy Clerk: *Mrs J Francis*

Telephone and fax: (01473) 625179
e.mail: kesgravetown.council@btconnect.com
webpage: www.kesgrave.org.uk/towncouncil/

Ferguson Way
Kesgrave
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP5 2FZ

Head of Planning Services
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Melton Hill
WOODBIDGE
Suffolk IP12 1AU

15th September 2009

Dear Sirs

**Planning Application C09/1269
Area FF and Fentons Wood; Erection of 53 dwellings and associated
garaging/parking and access roads**

Thank you for your letter of 21st August our comments are as follows:

We object to the application and understand the District Council (SCDC) will have received many objections from residents.

1. The Woodland

1.1 Council supports the residents in their desire to preserve the wood known as Fentons Wood.

1.2 The main reason for resident objection is the loss of the woodland. While the planning application purports to be designed for the safeguarding and preservation of the wood we have reservations about this.

1.3 By proposing to erect five dwellings within the wood it will inevitably lead to calls from the owners of the newly purchased properties for lopping and felling to give more sunlight, to relieve them from the hazards of tree roots and leaf drop in their gardens and their private drive, and for greater security for themselves. There are other instances of this happening in Kesgrave, where dwellings have been placed close to large mature trees. The newly erected dwellings in Ferguson Way, only occupied for a few months, have already resulted in calls for tree works. It is difficult to justify a negative response to tree works when the resident sites safety and quality of life as supportive reasons. It is far more positive for the woodland for the trees not to be placed in the position of threat.

1.4 The developer stresses in the Design and Access Statement (D&AS) that by erecting dwellings within the wood this will provide passive surveillance and security by new residents (D&AS para 3.5 and 11.2.2 and 11.2.3). There have been no instances

of a call for surveillance and security in this area. It has been well used for many years by children and dog walkers without incident. The greater number of these users, the more secure it becomes, but introducing dwellings in the wood will deter many casual users.

1.5 Residents may well decide to erect more screening around their properties. Post and rail fencing does not afford privacy. By erecting further screening from the users of the wood this will also reduce any passive surveillance.

1.6 It is suggested that landscape value will be retained and enhanced in ecological value (D&AS para 5). The parish treewarden believes that taking the heart of the wood out for the erection of dwellings in the centre, the reverse is true. While light may be brought to those trees immediately surrounding the dwellings, they will grow stronger, but as stated at 1.1 above this will in turn lead to calls for lopping and felling. At the same time it cannot be construed that by reducing woodland this will be to the advantage of wildlife, indeed by making a doughnut of the wood the depth to which wildlife can retreat is reduced and species movement will be impeded.

1.7 A number of species of animal life dwell in this wood, including bats which are a protected species, and while habitat movement may be possible, this displacement is believed by many to be unnecessary. AP14 applies. It is noted the Bat Survey states that T18 is a known bat roost for the brown long-eared bat and that at least 6 species of bats use the woodland for foraging and commuting.

1.8 Dwellings in the heart of the wood brings with it the introduction of family life on a 24 hours basis. Noise, traffic, pets and artificial light will all pollute the area. Privacy for animals in their natural habitat is as necessary as for humans.

1.8.1 Not only will this intrusion be detrimental to the wildlife but it will also alter the external appearance of the wood.

1.9 The Full Re-design (D&AS para 7.2) contains a criticism (bullet point 3) raised by SCDC about the proximity of the houses to the woodland on its eastern edge. The suggestion was that these would be severely overshadowed and dominated by trees. Subsequent designs have provided larger gardens for those dwellings and moved the dwellings away from the woodland edge. We would reiterate our objection to placing dwellings within the woodland as they would be surrounded by trees and direct sunlight will be severely impacted throughout the day, not just (as it would be on the eastern edge) from the afternoon sun.

2 The Town Council also have objections to the following

2.1 The proposal is for an additional splay to that constructed some years ago. While the majority of the site is accessed from the splay, six dwellings are proposed to be accessed from a new entrance to the north eastern corner of the site, adjacent to the school entrance. This will bring an additional difficulty at an already well used access point; yet another road junction for school children to negotiate at a busy time of the day.

2.2 Public and private areas within the development (D&AS para 4.2.2) are said to be clearly defined and the suggestion is that the public areas will in time be handed over to a management company (D&AS para 11.7). It would be preferable to only have private space or that adopted by the District Council. Management companies are difficult to call to account and areas quickly fall into disrepair.

2.2.1 We include in this comment about public areas the woodland which comprises the western portion of the site. Whether or not this has dwellings inflicted within it, if the original intention of the Masterplan of the 1980's is to be honoured this area must be handed over to SCDC as Public Open Space. If this concept is overturned it has implications for the whole development as POS provision was carefully calculated across the entire area.

2.3 The Outline Planning Permission has lapsed and now Full Applications such as this are expected to provide for 1/3rd Social housing. There is no such provision in this application.

3. Other comments are as follows

3.1 The density of the development is stated as 29.4 dph. This may well be true of the development as a whole and is within the expected density. However with 5 properties having significantly larger areas of private space the density for the majority is far higher than this. This statement is therefore disingenuous and should not be taken at face value.

3.2 Previous developments on the southern edge with cycle/footway links to Long Strops have quickly resulted in the need to provide both litter and fido bins. Provision is not a luxury but an essential and should not be on the public purse but installed at the outset by the developer in line with all those other necessary provisions such as street lighting.

3.3 It is appreciated that development was always to take place on the land between Fentons Wood and Cedarwood School but the infrastructure is stretched to the extreme; education and health facilities are over-burdened and the access situation continues to impact on all sections of the community.

3.4 Throughout the development of Grange Farm there have been a number of different attitudes by the developers in the way in which parking is catered for. Attempts to relieve the street scene of cars by produced parking courts, and also the reduction of parking spaces as dictated by central government, has not been successful. It has resulted in many instances of residents parking inappropriately with the inevitable result of inaccessibility for other residents. The placing of car parking spaces in front of dwellings in the urban core of the proposed development as depicted is accepted as a good way forward, however there is concern over the inadequate provision for visitors and the inevitability of yet more parking in Wilkinson Drive near to the school.

3.5 A number of revisions to the site design have been considered and are documented in the D&AS. While acknowledging the District Council comments and

desires to preserve two TPO trees on the northern boundary and to have a hedge provided on the southern boundary of the site we have reservations about this.

3.5.1 If encompassing these stipulations results in the loss of the heart of the woodland then a compromise must be considered. The hedge on the southern boundary is essential and in keeping with the rest of the development, providing a green screen to the view from the south and also privacy to the dwellings. However the preservation of the two trees and the hedgeline on the northern edge will not, as stated, duplicate treatment elsewhere. Removal of these features could surely result in a less cramped design being possible in line with drawing 312/SK1 Rev E dated 19.06.09 where the wood was not to be touched.

3.5.2 While regretting the loss of any trees it is believed to be preferable for a hedge and two trees to be lost than for the heart of the wood, and subsequently for the rest of the wood, to be threatened.

3.5.3 Hiding dwellings behind a large established hedge is not considered to be acceptable.

3.6 The developer was heard to state at their consultation that if permission is not granted for the dwellings within the wood then building will not take place as it is not financially viable to proceed. While it would be unfortunate to have an area of land fenced off for a period of time, it would be far more destructive and irretrievable to build to an unacceptable layout. **Residents and the Council should not be held to ransom over the financial implications for a commercial organisation.**

4. Conditions to be applied

4.1 Although there is an opinion that development of this site should not take place at all we wish to ask for two specific conditions if permission is given in the future.

4.2 When the David Wilson site was built to the east of Wilkinson Drive a condition was imposed that builders deliveries should not occur during the hours when school children were themselves accessing Cedarwood School. The same must apply for the proposal site.

4.3 The Redrow site to the west of Fentons Wood has a property nearest the woodland with an elevation treatment which makes it very obvious in the landscape. It is visible from Foxhall Road and Bell Lane and we would not wish this garish landmark to be repeated further along Long Strops on the site in question.

5. In summary

5.1 The D&AS (para 5) states the intention to provide a good quality design making a positive contribution to the local community and (para7) which will be well received by existing residents. This proposal falls far short of that and is objected to by the Town Council and by a great number of residents both close to the site and further afield.

5.2 The D&AS (para 2.3) suggests the new development can bring benefits such as improved access. In this instance the entire Grange Farm development can only be accessed by the two roundabouts on the A1214. In the 1980's it was anticipated that the A1214 would be bypassed and the then 3,000 dwellings would not compete with through traffic (22,000 vehicles a day). Not only did the bypass not materialise but new housing in Kesgrave has brought that additional 3,000 to nearer 3,500. Far from improving access, development of any kind further exacerbates this difficulty.

5.3 We understand the need for the developer to maximise its profitability but this should not be at the expense of poor design and long term dis-benefit for new and existing residents. There is a strong belief that an alternative design should be possible which allows the wood to be preserved in its entirety.

5.4 As stated we support residents in their objections to this development and are aware that the Headteacher, Governors and parents have aspirations for the site. There is an opinion that as the Masterplan has been altered over the years with housing placed on what had been a school site then Suffolk County Council should take action to secure the site for an extension to Cedarwood School. If the entire site is not needed then it is possible that some other complementary Community use could be put in place also.

Yours faithfully

Veronica Read
Clerk

Copies to District Councillors: Mrs D McCullum, Mrs M Neale, Mrs S Ogden, Mr M Grimwood and Mr J Klaschka