

Horsham Society

with David Griffiths



Developers on manoeuvres

Is May the start of the open season for developers disturbing the peace and tranquillity of Horsham residents, with their approaches to purchase properties, develop rear gardens and try their hand at gaining approvals for developing green field sites?

At the town end of Worthing Road a developer is presently making approaches to residents regarding the possibility of purchasing their properties, with a view to building.

This would undoubtedly result in a high density development, which would include back land and probably require the demolition of existing mature houses.

The result, whilst lining the coffers of the developer would in no way serve to enhance the area.

Interestingly enough several years ago another developer approached residents and in the same road.

The application was rejected by Horsham District Council. The developer then appealed the decision

and the Planning Inspector thankfully rejected the proposals, advising that they would not enhance an important entry into Horsham.

I wonder if both Horsham District Council and a Planning Inspector would come to similar decisions now?

At the southern end of Worthing Road, land to the West side of the road is being proposed for development by Thakeham Homes.

The greenfield site is immediately below Tower Hill and links with Denne Hill and Barrack Fields, to form a green strategic gap between Horsham and Southwater.

Furthermore, the scheme proposes to utilise land that is excluded from the Horsham District Council Local Development Framework Plan.

The land, presently used for agricultural purposes is situated just to the South of the railway, which forms the town boundary.

Thakeham Homes have submitted an outline application - DC/18/0944 - for the erection of some 90 dwellings.

Prior to making the submission to HDC, they circulated a letter drop to many residents in the vicinity of the proposed development.

In it they suggest that they are a caring developer, retaining the site's natural features which will be incorporated into their scheme, which will make a positive contribution to the community and of which the residents can be proud!

Let's be honest the developer only has one aim and that is to make a profit and if they have to pacify the residents of Horsham in some way, so be it.

Indeed, if they were a sensitive developer, they would in no way consider developing this site and disturbing the flora and fauna.

The scheme is proposing 90 dwellings, being a mix of 58 private homes and 32 affordable homes.

Some of the proposed apartments would be accommodated in 3 storey buildings, which would be seen from a distance, affecting privacy which many residents have enjoyed in the area.

The development would change the character of the town and would be contrary to policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework which seeks to 'retain the existing settlement pattern over the plan period' in order to 'protect the rural character and landscape'.

Whilst we applaud the proposal to construct 'affordable' housing, surely this is not possible where the current market dictates such high land prices and this can only be a sop to get Horsham District Council on side to approve such a scheme.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 259038.