

Our Ref: A085763-6

Street Parish Council
Street Parish Rooms
6 Leigh Road
Street
Somerset
BA16 0HA

24 April 2020

Dear Sirs

**Application 2019/2946/OTS
Land West of Somerton Road Street
Response to Street Parish Council**

Introduction

Further to the decision by Street Parish Council in response to the above application at their meeting of 9 January 2020, WYG submit the following representations on behalf of the applicant.

The Parish Council decision was as follows:

RESOLVED

that Mendip District Council as the Local Planning Authority be informed that the Parish Council could not make a recommendation on the application as there was not enough information and due to the following issues and as more time was needed for residents and the Trust to hear each other -

- A. the Trust had previously indicated that the buffer zone between existing houses and new housing would be far wider than 5 to 8 metres and residents had not been aware that 20 metres of the approximate 25 metre gap referred to had been within their own garden
- B. concerns about the increased volume of traffic in surrounding small rural roads including Keens Elm Lane and also in Somerton Road which was already fast, busy and dangerous – consideration of provision of traffic calming and in Somerton Road the need for a continuous pavement
- C. concerns about adequate provision of primary and secondary school places
- D. concerns about the density of housing as initially 175 houses had been proposed but the current application was for up to 280 houses
- E. concerns about adequate provision of utilities including water pressure and of other services including doctors and dentists.

General Comments

Much of the public debate was concerned with the apparent detail of the scheme but this is outline application dealing only with the principle of development, the number of houses, and access points. All other matters of details would be reserved for consideration under a future application which would be subject to consultation. While the masterplan that has been produced is quite detailed, it is only illustrative at this stage to demonstrate that 280 homes can fit on the site, together with the access and adequate space for drainage, ecology etc and to provide an acceptable relationship with the neighbours.

During the consultation on the application, there have been 6 separate meetings with the Parish Council together with the one-day consultation event held last summer which was supported by a website. This represent a more than reasonable level of consultation.

The Ninesquare Trust have responded to comments by making a number of changes to the scheme (discussed further below).

A – Relationship with Neighbouring Properties

There was concern at the meeting that the development would be overbearing and have potential for overlooking of the existing houses as the buffer between the new and existing houses was not sufficient and should not include gardens or roads.

The way such impacts are assessed in planning terms is to look at the back to back distance between the buildings – a guide of 20 metres is commonly used – and it is acceptable for this distance to incorporate gardens, roads and other features. The indicative layout shows distances in excess of this at between 28 to 40 metres and following earlier feedback, the scheme was amended to turn the proposed buildings to be at right angles to the northern boundary to reduce the impact (see below). The scale (height) of these units was also reduced.



Original Masterplan



Revised Masterplan

The access road and retained hedgerow also creates a bigger separation on the northern boundary, as well as providing a dark corridor for bats. Additional tree planting would be carried out in this area to further enhance the buffer between the existing and new houses. It is also good practice to have retained hedges next to roads rather than private gardens so they can be properly maintained.

Another concern was the higher density at the northern end of the site, but this follows good urban design principles which would direct higher density to the existing town edge with lower densities further down the site toward the open countryside. Higher densities at the northern end also means the new residents would be closer to facilities and hence need to travel less and be encouraged to walk or cycle.

B – Highways

The main vehicular and pedestrian access for the site will be on to Somerton Road and following discussions with Somerset County Highways this has now been amended to include a right turn lane (the amended plans have been submitted to the Council).

Additional work has also been carried out to look at pedestrian and cycling routes from the development and any reasonable required improvements can be secured through the permission.

There would also be a pedestrian only connection to the west of the site on to Burleigh Lane linked to a traffic regulation order to restrict vehicle movements.

An additional access for emergencies had been requested by the Highways Authority and has also been identified as a matter of concern for Mendip's Planning Board. While this had been originally proposed in earlier versions of the scheme, it was removed following resident objection. However, in light of the view of Highways and the likely view of Members, this will now be provided with the detail and location to be dealt with through a condition.

Keens Elm Lane was also raised as a concern if people used it to go to Glastonbury, but this was looked as part of the Transport Assessment following the public consultation. Alternative journey times had been assessed and the route from Somerton Road to the A39 is quicker and shorter. Further County Highways have not raised this as an issue.

The concerns from Millfield School were noted and have been looked at but the additional traffic generated would not add a significant risk.

C – Education

Comments were made about the lack of education provision, but the application has been informed by discussions with Somerset County Education officers.

The key points to note are:

1. A scheme of this site does not by itself generate the need for a new school (a new school would only be required for a development of 400+ houses).
2. There is no need for additional secondary provision.
3. There is an identified need for provision of early years and primary places and a contribution of just under £2 million would be secured from this development for provision in Street through a legal agreement. County Education are discussing provision of the school with Mendip policy officers but provided the contribution is secured the development would have met its obligations. The timing and delivering of the school would then be a matter for the County Council.

D – Numbers

There was concern that numbers had increased on the site as the scheme had progressed, but this is a quite normal part of the design process as more technical work and assessment is undertaken. To address the features of the site and the constraints – in particular the listed Gazebo and Conservation Area – a scheme has been reached for 280 homes.

Further, even with the increase in numbers, the overall density on the site at 25 dwellings per hectare (dph) is still relatively low for a scheme of this type which reflects the constraints and locations. At more typical densities of 30 – 40 dph you would have a scheme of 340 – 450 houses.

E – Services

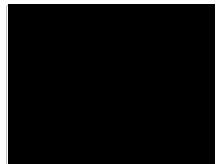
Water pressure – Bristol Water have stated that there was sufficient capacity to supply the development and so there will be no problem with water pressure.

Doctors and Dentists – This is a common concern, but the issue is a lack of GP's/dentists rather than a lack of premises and being private businesses, it is a commercial decision as to what provision they give and where. A new surgery would only be provided for a much larger development. It is also worth noting that some new residents may already live in the area.

Conclusions

We hope this addresses the Parish Council's concerns and demonstrates that the scheme has been subject to an appropriate level of consultation and reassures both members and the public that the applicant has taken all reasonable endeavours to address the various comments received to the proposal.

The letter forms part of a formal amended submission to Mendip District Council which will be the subject of further consultation.



Samantha Thomas
Principal Planner
For and behalf of WYG

Cc. Mendip District Council
The Ninesquare Trust