

Planning Department
Warwick District Council
Milverton Hill
Warwick

18 December 2013

Dear Sir

Proposed Development at Hatton Station - Shrewley Parish

Some five years' ago, six properties were built at Oakdene Crescent as affordable housing supposedly for people with a connection to Hatton Station. I can say quite categorically that from the outset, no one who occupied those houses have any connection with the area. Thus the first objective of building those houses has not been met.

The Planning Inspectorate very kindly moved the criteria to enable the developer to submit extra evidence whilst refusing the same privilege to those who objected. I think, in the circumstances, I can hardly be censured if I view this consultation process with some cynicism.

However, I would submit the following points:

Land off Station Road adjacent to the M40

This is an area of Green Belt, which I have always understood to be a measure of protection from development. My comments with regard to Green Belt can apply to all the proposed sites. Thirty years' ago, my husband and family chose to live in a Green Belt area, knowing the disadvantages in lack of facilities attendant upon such a decision. My understanding of Green Belt is that this provision affords a measure of protection; it seems somewhat unprincipled to change this at will, it means that we purchased a property under false protection from development.

Land to the rear of Antrobus Close

There has always been the threat of development of this land, but previous applications have been refused because of the difficulty in access. Since the building and occupation of the additional six houses in Oakdene Crescent, this difficulty has worsened.

Firstly, again this was supposed to have been protected Green Belt land, it was remarkable how easily that protection was removed with no proven local need.

There are very few facilities in this small development; much was made of access to transport, but this is a fallacy. I will deal with the road and traffic first:

- The train service is not as frequent, nor as accessible as it is thought. There is no disabled access to/from platforms 2 and 3 (the reason I cannot use the station). Examination of the timetables will show that trains to/from Stratford on Avon are very restricted, and to/from Leamington Spa and Birmingham are not as often as are supposed, except at peak times.
- The bus service is very infrequent and does not coincide with school starting and finishing times. Not every school, particularly the local infant/junior

schools, have a dedicated collection service, thus throwing a greater need on car ownership.

- Oakdene Crescent has been rendered single track by kerbside parking along its entire length.
- An unmarked junction, coupled with heavy kerbside parking, has rendered entry and egress to Station Road hazardous in the extreme. The provision of a car park at the Station has not eased this situation.
- Very few households in either Oakdene Crescent or Ash Close have the projected two vehicles; one household has FIVE vehicles with a possible sixth in a couple of years' time.
- Station Road itself, with the increased traffic to/from the Station, has become hazardous to all users, vehicular and pedestrian. People who are unused to rural lanes use excessive speed on a road which is barely wide enough for two vehicles to pass alongside each other and indeed, if heavy vehicles are used, it is single track.
- It is also now used as a "rat run" for drivers leaving the A4189 to reach the A4177 and onwards to Solihull etc.

Limits of 30mph may well have been introduced, but there is no means of enforcing these limits and indeed, in places that limit is too high. Pedestrians using Station Road are at risk, as are cyclists and horse riders. It is, after all, a rural area where these pursuits can be expected to be encountered.

Flora and Fauna

When my family and I moved here in 1981, the land to the rear of Antrobus Close provided a much needed green space for children to play and for dog walking, there being no play area or other facilities. Parents accepted the responsibility for making sure children did not stray too close to the railway, and the old orchard was greatly valued for its play opportunities (and often for the fruit it yielded). My two children gained their current love of the natural world from this space.

There are different species of bats which roost there and, following the construction of the properties in Oakdene Crescent, great store was placed by the District Council on the work which was done to protect slow worms. It is entirely possible, although I have no means of proving this, that other endangered species are there, including a strong possibility of a badger sett.

However, given the facility with which the District Council and other bodies seem to have with regard to removing protected status, I cannot see that this will provide any protection.

Building Operations

As already stated, the traffic flow along Station Road, Oakdene Crescent and Antrobus Close is already at saturation point. The heavy vehicles needed to deliver materials etc. would present an ever-present danger. Given the need for fuel oil deliveries, refuse collection and other household deliveries, the whole area, from the Hockley Road along the whole length of Station Road and its surrounding roads, there would be a considerable risk posed to residents.

The properties themselves

When the houses in Oakdene Crescent were built, they were found to have problems in connecting to the sewers, which led to a large tank and pumping equipment needed to be installed. The excavations for that tank has led to land

slippage in at least one neighbouring property and sewage problems, none of which have ever been properly accepted or investigated by the water authority. It has long been accepted that public sewers are already at full capacity, and problems occur on a regular basis.

Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Oakdene Crescent are on a private sewer; should any further problems occur within that private sewer as a result of any more development, I for one would hold the District Council and/or the developer fully accountable for any work needed or loss incurred.

We have to endure the blocked road and nauseating smell associated with the clearing of any blockage to the sewers of the new houses on Oakdene Crescent. This is a regular occurrence, and is a huge nuisance to everyone. Further properties would entail wholesale reconstruction of the drainage system.

There is also a distinct possibility that the proposed development is on contaminated land. Even if local rumour of an entire locomotive being buried there is unfounded, the fact that it was used as a forces' ordnance depot should give rise to some concern about what is buried there.

Other issues

This small area is at the outer limit of the British Telecom exchange at Claverdon. Internet facilities are not always reliable, there is no possibility of the high speeds which rural areas have been promised, and telephone services are often disrupted, to the point where many inhabitants rely solely upon mobile phones and mobile broadband. However, many organisations *require* the provision of a landline as a means of identification, creating additional expense to living in a rural area. These are downsides accepted as being part of living in a rural area. However, if we are to be made into a small *urban* area, then the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages of living here.

There are no amenities here whatsoever. I cannot see, whatever the District or Parish Council may fondly hope for, that there will be any provision of a play area, any community meeting place, better roads (or indeed better care of the roads) or of any improvement of transport links. Another 20-40 houses would not make the area large enough to warrant any investment in any of these facilities.

Since the construction of the houses in Oakdene Crescent, the quality of life here has diminished greatly, mostly from the difficulties with access and the sewage/drainage problems. The removal of Green Belt status, more or less at will, gives rise to huge concern about what reliance can be placed upon Government and local government's integrity, and I no longer have any confidence in officialdom's duty of care to people who have already invested in property here.

Yours sincerely,

Norrie Moore