



Matthew Pearce
Milton Keynes Planning

15th March 2018

Dear Matthew

18/00458/OUT. LAND OFF ASPLANDS CLOSE

This is the site of an earlier outline application for 5 sizeable chalet bungalows which was granted permission. The Town Council objected to the earlier application, but the principle of development of the site is now established, and this earlier application still stands. However, the developers have now submitted a second application, this time for the construction of a block of 13 flats for the over 55's.

In many ways, this second application is more acceptable than the previous one, although that is not to say the Town Council would have preferred 5 bungalows to exactly mirror the design of the other bungalows in Asplands Close.

The Town Council's comments on this new application are as follows:

TREES.

This site is within a Conservation Area and makes a substantial contribution as a significant stand of trees, many of considerable maturity, in a town within a woodland setting. It would seem that this application allows most of the peripheral trees to be maintained, thus keeping the appearance of a development in a woodland setting which is itself screened from most of the surrounding properties by the trees. The Town Council welcomes this, whilst still concerned at the loss of the mature ash of good quality which currently has a TPO. If anything can be done to retain this tree, it would be much appreciated. The plans do not make it absolutely clear which trees are to be taken down, and we would like confirmation of this from the developers.

DRAINAGE.

The site slopes significantly down from east to west with two steep banks as well as the more gentle gradient. All drainage moves towards a ditch along the western edge, part of this ditch being within the site boundaries. The ditch is currently largely blocked by overgrown vegetation. The ditch continues from south to north along the rear of properties in Wood Street, sometimes open, sometimes piped, and goes beneath Theydon Avenue before reappearing as a water course on the northern side of Theydon Ave. In times of heavy rainfall this whole area of ditch overflows flooding properties in Wood Street. In the event of more hard surfacing and removal of vegetation from much of the interior of the site, surface run off will increase and the ditch become even more liable to flooding. It is essential that the ownership and maintenance of this whole watercourse is clarified in any permission to build, and all possible surfaces within the site should be of a permeable material.

BADGER SETT.

This is well documented in the application and permission will be sought from Natural England for the relocation of the sett. However, a great deal of further work needs to be done by the developers as indicated in Natural England's response to the earlier application before they will consider any application. In the meantime, this application does allow a little more space for the badgers which again is welcomed by the Town Council.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH.

The Town Council requested that this be included in any application to allow easier pedestrian access to and from the Asplands Medical Centre from the High Street and all the properties to the east of it. The route shown on the plans does not reflect the ground conditions which include a steep bank and the north east boundary fence on the plans is inaccurate making the footpath route also inaccurate. The footpath needs to emerge in the middle of the boundary fence that will be erected on the eastern boundary as there is a car park on the Council land adjacent. It will also need to be part fenced to protect the badgers. Consideration should be given to a slightly longer footpath route by the car park area on the east of the proposed flats to the southern boundary where it could be located on a much gentler gradient to the aforementioned car park area. It would need to be fenced off from the rear of Chapel Street properties.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.

The design of this block of flats is modern and does not in any way reflect the surrounding buildings. However, much has been built into the design to keep the height of the building to a minimum and to break up the building lines. This is appreciated. The Town Council would like further consideration to the building materials and colour of any wash used to minimise the scale of the building. Therefore, not a large white/off white expanse and use of bricks and timber would be more in keeping.

TRAFFIC.

Whatever development is on this site, the addition of more traffic in Asplands Close will be a significant problem, since the road is frequently full of parked cars accessing the Medical Centre, as are parts of Wood Street. It is difficult to judge the traffic generation from 13 flats versus 5 chalet bungalows, but given that only four of the flats are three bedrooms and the rest two beds, it could be argued that the volume of traffic from both applications will be about the same. What is absolutely essential is that a condition be attached to any permission regarding access of construction traffic. There are times when large construction vehicles will bring traffic in the Close to a standstill and restrictions on both the size of construction work vehicles and hours of access to avoid working hours at Asplands and possible emergency ambulance access must be considered and inserted in any permission.

CONCLUSION.

On balance, the Town Council prefers this application to the previous one which established the principle of development. The footprint of the built up is less than in the earlier application and it is assumed a maintenance contract will be produced to ensure the maintenance of the surrounding grounds remains in keeping with that of Asplands Close itself where there is also a maintenance contract for the frontages. So, although a block of flats of modern appearance is not in keeping with the surrounds, it will in other respects retain much of the existing character of the site. Consideration can also be given to enhancing the already well established wild life in the trees by the addition of nesting boxes and the like. Woburn Sands Town Council looks forward to receiving clarification on all the above points from the officer and developers who we are more than willing to meet.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Stapleton
Town Clerk