

- Safeguarded Site (Between Urban Area & Green Belt)
- Local Plan Proposals Site 13/H
- Flood Zones 2 and 3 (part of site only)
- There are Statutory Listed Buildings at Moor Lane Farm

RECOMMENDATION

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Grant planning permission subject to conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to land at Quartermaine Avenue, Westfield Way and at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue where it is proposed to form accesses to the safeguarded housing site at Moor Lane in Westfield.

The Moor Lane site itself forms an area of 9.75ha and is bounded to the south by Moor Lane, to the west by Westfield Way and Westfield Common, to the north by Balfour Avenue, Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue and to the east by open countryside within the Green Belt.

The site is currently largely open nursery land with Oaklands Nursery in the north west corner of the site and buildings associated with Lanhurst, Ena Cottage, Rosecot, Withay and Little Moor Lane Farm along the southern side of the site.

A public right-of-way crosses the site north-south from Newlands Avenue to Moor Lane.

The Moor Lane site has been designated as a proposal site for a residential use under the current Local Plan (H13) and previous Local Plans. The size of the site designated was established by a Planning Inspector's report into the Local Plan in 1989. The Report advised that the size of the site should be extended to include the immediate curtilage of Little Moor Lane Farm and the whole of OS parcel 8534 to its north.

PLANNING HISTORY

06/0399 Outline application for the erection of residential development on a 9.75 hectare site, to include a minimum of 60 percent affordable housing. (All matters reserved). Recommendation to grant subject to signing of Legal Agreement 23.06.06

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This is a full planning application for the creation of two main access points and a secondary emergency access point into reserved housing land at Moor Lane, Westfield.

The access at Westfield Way is proposed to be located to the front of No.42- 45 Westfield Way, located on common land. It has a width of 5.5m, with 2m footways on each side. Existing pedestrian and vehicular accesses are to be formalised to the front of no.42-45. 9 trees are proposed to be removed to facilitate this access and would comprise of 6 C category trees, 2 B category trees and 1 R category tree.

The access at Quatermaine Avenue is proposed to be located between Quartermaine House and no.1

Quartermaine Avenue. The demolition of no. 3-5 Quartermaine Avenue is required to facilitate the access. The access has a width of 5.5m, with 2m footways on each side. Indicative tree planting is shown within landscaping strips shown to either side of the access.

The emergency access is located at the east of Quartermaine Avenue and at the southern end of Newlands Avenue directly abutting the reserved housing site. Any emergency vehicle traffic wishing to access the site from this point would have to go via Balfour Avenue. The access is proposed to follow the existing road and has a width of 3.7m, with 2m footways either side. Collapsible bollards are proposed to restrict access to the reserved housing site and the access is proposed to be restricted to emergency, pedestrian and cycle access only.

CONSULTATIONS

Highway Authority: No objection subject to conditions on basis that application is solely seeking permission for three accesses to a potential housing site Identified under Policy HSG5 of the Local Plan 1999

Surrey Wildlife Trust: No objection although great deal of work required in any future housing development

Arboricultural Officer: No objection subject to conditions

Leisure and Community Services: No response received

REPRESENTATIONS

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126 letters in total have been received in respect of this application. The objections include letters from Westfield Common Residents' Association and Sutton Green Residents' Association.

A Transport Statement has been submitted on behalf of the residents, commissioned by the Director of the Willow Management Company Ltd commenting on the Transport Statement forming part of the planning application; this will be considered further under highways considerations.

Access/Highways Considerations

- Three access points are identified but all routes connect through the same junction between Balfour Avenue and Westfield Road
- Highway safety issues from proposed accesses
- Mayer Brown Report on behalf of Council deeply flawed – could be open to Judicial Review
- Confused regarding application's purpose
- Vital that Planning Committee request independent audit of analysis and conclusion of traffic report made to support application (*Note: SCC Highways consulted in this respect*)
- Goes against conditions contained in outline Planning Permission granted in June 2006 (*Please note: the 2006 outline planning permission has not been granted as the legal agreement has not been signed*)
- Using Westfield Way as construction site access road unsafe (*Please note: this would be for consideration under a future application when a full transport statement is submitted*)
- Public consultation on accesses did not take place- against Government Guidance

- Have the emergency services been consulted as part of the application? *(Please note: Emergency access is a consideration under Manual for Streets)*
- Would expect that should WBC produce an amended transport statement/revised transport analysis a decision is postponed to allow further professional analysis *(Please note: a detailed travel assessment will be required to accompany any future planning application)*
- Application does not address issue of traffic management in wider context – surrounding roads will not be able to cope with additional traffic *(Please note: a detailed travel assessment will be required to accompany any future planning application)*
- Out of date data being used to calculate and predict future traffic impact
- Access cannot be considered independently of proposed full development
- Residents of new development will use parking on Moor Lane to bypass proposed exit routes.
- Seek assurance Moor Lane will not be reselected for accesses to the site
- Where will construction workers park their vehicles whilst construction of the accesses occurs? *(Please note: a method of construction statement can be conditioned)*
- Expect to see a revised planning application taking into account resident's objections
- All traffic now proposed to enter Westfield Road in its busiest and most dangerous junction, Balfour Avenue.
- Parking problems will occur in new development *(Please note: the development is not for consideration under this application)*
- Drainage and roads would not take this much heavy duty traffic
- Site traffic would coincide with rush hours
- Access road along side Quartermaine House will cause a danger for vulnerable residents
- Concerned Quartermaine Access will cause disruption as directly opposite residential driveway
- Understand will be no bus routes through the site *(Please note: would be considered in full application)*
- Hundreds of cars next to new playground
- Traffic lights should be installed at Westfield Road junction before commencement of construction *(Please note: a full transport assessment would be required to accompany any future application)*
- Access off Newlands Avenue and not Balfour Avenue *(Please note: it is noted that the emergency access is off Newlands Avenue however the emergency route that would be taken by emergency vehicles would be via Balfour Avenue)*
- Will Newlands Avenue Access be boom or bollard controlled?*(Please note: the applicants show bollards are proposed and these can be secured by condition)*
- What measures will be put in place to ensure access to all current footpaths maintained?
- Traffic movement should be shared between Moor Lane and Balfour Avenue

Impact on Amenity

- Higher densities lead to social problems *(Please note: density is not for consideration under this application)*
- Abhorrent that people's homes are being compulsory purchased
- Health effects on residents of estate
- Noise and pollution
- Loss of value to surrounding houses *(Note: this is not a planning consideration).*
- Do residents of dwellings to be demolished get priority in housing register for housing allocation in new site?
- Council should delay demolition of no.3 and 5 Quartermaine Avenue until decision reached
- Loss of privacy to properties
- Construction of development will cause stress and worry and disruptive force for people who have

very special needs

- Unhappy regarding loss of laundry drying area at Quartermaine House (*Please note: this is being relocated within the gardens*)

Impact on Area/Wildlife/Trees

- Loss of wildlife - foxes, badgers, deer, mice, newts, bats, tawny owls
- Ecological and Arboricultural surveys have not been carried out (*Please note: surveys were submitted as part of the application*)
- If Balfour Avenue has to be widened it will affect trees (*Please note: this is not proposed under this application*)
- Loss of trees on common land
- Lost SNCI land should be given back to Westfield Common
- Local infrastructure currently oversubscribed
- Reptile survey, newt survey should be carried out before permission considered
- Land is subject to flooding (*please note: the location of the accesses do not fall within the flood plain; however any further applications would need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment*)
- Country area will be destroyed
- Common land will be destroyed to provide access routes
- Small rural community cannot sustain such an enormous development
- Demolition of existing houses is counter productive
- Council should withdraw plans for housing on Moor Lane
- Welcome decision to preserve rural aspect and special characteristics of Moor Lane
- How will building more houses benefit Woking residents and how will it bring more jobs to the area
- Option 11 is now not a preferred option due to a mature oak tree - surely better to sacrifice a tree than demolishing two good family homes
- Woodland management should be made a condition
- Scale of development not sustainable (*Please note: density is not proposed under this application*)
- Area cannot sustain number of houses proposed (*Please note: this application relates to access to the site only*)
- Development on green belt land (*Please note: the accesses are not on green belt land*)

Comments on Application /Public Consultation

- Flaws, issues and concerns regarding the documents submitted in support of the planning application
- Residents in Willow Bank did not receive notification of open meeting in March 2009
- Lack of transparency serious barrier to local taxpayer engagement
- Seek compensation for the damages
- Development poorly conceived and should not be given consent until all other available sites in borough have been exhausted (*Please note: Moor Lane is a reserved housing site*)
- Council should provide cash to "buy out" ransom

These matters are addressed where appropriate under "Planning Issues"

APPLICANT'S POINTS

The applicants have submitted a Design & Access Statement, A Site Access Transport Statement, Tree Survey Report, Arboricultural Method Statement and Arboricultural Implications Assessment, the content of which are considered, where relevant, under 'Planning Issues' below.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIESWoking Borough Local Plan 1999:

BE1, Design of New Development
 NE1, Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 NE2, Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
 NE5, Species Protection
 NE9, Trees within Development Proposals
 NE10, Landscape Design
 GRB6, Safeguarded Sites
 HSG5, Moor Lane Westfield
 HSG21, Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight
 MV1, General Principles in Evaluating Movement Related Proposals
 MV3, the Movement Implications of Development
 MV4, Improvements to Transport Infrastructure
 MV5, Environmental Impact of Traffic
 MV7, Access to Class A Roads

The South East Plan 2009:

H1, Regional Housing Provision 2006-2026
 CC4, Sustainable Design and Construction
 CC7, Infrastructure and Implementation

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Other Relevant Guidance:

Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 Planning Policy Statement 9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 - Transport
 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Circular 06/2005 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 (and 2000 Amendment)

SUSTAINABILITY

Location: 3 accesses are proposed at Westfield Way, Quartermaine Avenue and at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue.

Density: None specified at this stage

Mixed Use: The proposal is accesses to a reserved housing site

Parking: Not for consideration at this stage

Building Techniques: Not for consideration at this stage

Heating and Energy Initiatives which reduce CO² emissions: Not for consideration at this stage

PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues under consideration with this application are the principle of the creation of the accesses and loss of common land and urban open space, highways considerations, impact on neighbouring properties and character of the area, trees and ecology.

Principle of the Creation of the Accesses and Loss of Common Land, Urban Open Space and impact on Westfield Common Site of Nature Conservation Importance and Protected Species

The proposals are for the creation of two main access points, and a secondary emergency access point into the reserved housing site designated in the Local Plan 13/H and known as Moor Lane. Therefore under this application consideration must be given to whether these accesses are suitable to serve the reserved housing site in principle. Detailed plans for the housing development are not for consideration at this stage. The site is a long standing site reserved for housing therefore the principle of the development to provide access to the site is acceptable subject to the detailed considerations below.

The Quatermaine Avenue access results in the loss of two houses. Policy HSG8 of the Local Plan advises that proposals for the change of use of any existing or proposed residential land or buildings or part of any building which can still reasonably be used for residential purposes will not normally be permitted. Where redevelopment of existing housing is permitted, the Council will normally require a number of units at least equivalent to the number currently on the site.

The loss of these houses is to provide an access road for a reserved housing site, which the Local Plan requires to be developed for 200 dwellings therefore under planning, objection could not be raised to the loss of the two houses.

The proposed emergency access at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue is located within the urban area and follows the existing road to the reserved housing site. It is therefore not considered objection could be raised.

The Westfield Way access is proposed to be constructed over Common Land, Urban Open Space and Westfield Common Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Policy REC4 of the Local Plan advises that development which would result in the loss of, or reduce public access to land used for informal recreation will not be permitted unless: there is adequate alternative informal recreational land nearby, and the recreational use of the land is limited. In this instance it is not considered an objection could be raised to the loss of the common land under Policy REC4 in view that there is adequate informal recreation nearby in the form of Westfield Common and that the area to be lost has limited recreational use. Under separate legislation to Planning the applicants will need to apply for a common land exchange which requires the lost common land to be replaced.

Policy BE7 of the Local Plan advises that the Council will not permit the loss of urban open land which makes a positive contribution to the character and visual amenity of the area, apart from: limited construction of buildings for community or recreational use ancillary to the open space or, educational use where a need is demonstrated, where development would not compromise the character of the site. The proposed location of the Westfield Way access is not considered to compromise the character of Westfield Common as the access is proposed in an area where an existing informal roadway is apparent and it is not considered to impact on the greater area of the urban open space.

Westfield Common is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) which is a

designation of County-wide importance and is protected for its importance on a County basis and the contribution it makes to the network of statutory sites. Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) has been consulted on the proposed accesses and do not object to the application advising that the application will have minimal impact on the SNCI and biodiversity. They do however advise that the improved management of the SNCI is not appropriate mitigation for the lost area and that a replacement area should be found within the adjacent housing land and that a suitable habitat developed. As advised above a common land exchange is required under other legislation and the applicant can be advised by an informative. SWT advise that the recommendations contained within the Ecological Appraisal should be implemented in full and that a precautionary approach towards reptiles and amphibians should be adopted, with work supervised by an ecologist and that construction is retained within a narrow corridor. These issues can be secured by condition. SWT advise that this development and subsequent residential development should include features to reduce future amphibian mortality and maintain connectivity across the site and this can be secured by condition.

The ecological survey submitted in support of the application notes that reptiles and great crested newts are likely to be present on the site and advises that further surveys should be carried out. It is therefore proposed that these are required by condition. Furthermore additional surveys should be conducted regarding bats and badgers and these can be secured by condition. It is noted that any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season and an informative is recommended to advise the applicants.

It is further noted that the survey advises that management of the wet woodland should be considered as compensation for the development. This is noted and welcomed however it is proposed to advise the applicant of the requirement by informative and that this should be included as part of any future planning application for a comprehensive redevelopment.

In view of the above it is not considered objection could be raised to the loss of Common Land, Urban Open Land or the SNCI in line with Policies REC4, BE7 or NE2 of the Local Plan.

Highways Considerations

Under this application the accesses are proposed to demonstrate that access to the reserved housing site can be achieved via Westfield Way, Quartermaine Avenue and a proposed emergency access at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue. This application does not directly concern the future development that may come forward within the Moor Lane site, nor does it consider the impacts on the existing transport system associated with the development of the Moor Lane site. The quantum of development is not for consideration under this application. The application is therefore not supported by a full Transport Assessment. This would be required for any future development proposals to ensure highway safety and to ensure that any future development is compatible with the highways network, although not for consideration under this application.

On this basis The County Highway Authority has raised no objection to the three proposed accesses subject to conditions. Any future housing development would need to be demonstrated through a full Transport Assessment at a future planning stage and is not for consideration under this application.

On behalf of Local Residents a Transport Statement Review has been conducted by Cole Easdon Consultants (CEC) raising key issues about the Transport Statement submitted as part of the planning application. In summary the issues raised by CEC are:

- excessive distance to nearby bus stops, not in compliance with PPG13 and PPS3
- vehicular capacity of Westfield Road/Balfour Avenue junction has been analysed using incorrectly assigned development traffic, without forecasting realistic future year scenarios (year 2006 analysed)
- Questionable interpretation of PICADY output data, despite the output being based on incorrect input data
- concern over nearby junctions, such as Balfour Avenue/Westfield Common junction, where the proposed development is likely to have a significant impact
- Misleading statements regarding the width of vehicular access to the development site which do not consider the width of existing roads leading to the development and their associated vehicular capacity.

The applicants transport consultants Mayer Brown have considered the issues raised in the Cole Easdon Consultants report and do not consider the information submitted in support of the application incorrect. However, whilst these issues are noted they are not issues that are directly for consideration under this application. The issues raised would form part of any future planning application accompanied by a full Transport Assessment and it is at this point that the County Highway Authority would assess the issues raised by CEC on behalf of the residents.

In view of the above it is considered that the application for the accesses is considered acceptable, however any future planning application would need to be accompanied by a Travel Assessment considering the quantity of development and the impact on the transport network.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

In terms of an impact on the neighbouring properties it is important to consider the properties that surround the proposed access at Westfield Way, Quartermaine Avenue and the proposed emergency access at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue.

In terms of the Westfield Way access, it is noted that the road would be located to the front of No.42 to No.45 Westfield Way.

It is not considered that the proposed road would give rise to any undue impact on the amenity of the occupiers of these properties in view that the road is set at least 7 metres from the front of these properties. The road is considered to result in a normal house to road relationship which is apparent currently along Westfield Way.

In relation to the impact on the properties to the north of the Quartermaine Avenue access at No.1 Quartermaine Avenue and 15 Balfour Avenue it is not considered the proposed access would give rise to a significant impact on the amenity of these properties. The access road is located at a minimum of 10 metres from the side of no.1 and in between the boundary of no.1 and the 2 metre wide pavement a landscaping strip of 5 metres wide to 11 metres wide at its maximum is proposed. It is therefore considered that this will mitigate the impact of the development.

In relation to the impact on Quartermaine House, it is noted that a small triangle area of land from the Quartermaine House site boundary will be required to form the access application. This land forms part of a drying area for the residents of Quartermaine House and whilst this is noted the applicants, who own Quartermaine House, advise that this will be incorporated elsewhere on the Quartermaine House site. It is not considered that the loss of this small area of land would raise any issues for the level of amenity derived for the occupiers of Quartermaine House.

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The access road is located some 7 metres from the side of Quartermaine House, with a strip of landscaping of 4 metres in width proposed next to the proposed pavement and the start of Quartermaine House. Subject to appropriate planting that can be secured by condition it is not considered a significant impact on amenity would occur.

With regards to the emergency access proposed at the end of Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue this access is not considered to give rise to an impact on the residents next to this access as the access is proposed to continue the existing road.

It is further noted that noise, pollution and a loss of privacy has been raised as objection by residents. At this point in time the application is only considering accesses into the site and it is not considered the accesses would give rise to an undue level of noise, pollution or a loss of privacy.

Impact on the Character of the Area

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The proposed access road at Westfield Way is not considered to impact on the character of the surrounding area as it will be located to the front of the existing properties at No.42 to No.45 Westfield Road. To the south of the access is Westfield Common which is considered to soften the impact on the access in the street scene.

In relation to the Quartermaine Avenue access the access is not considered to impact on the character of the area in view that its impact would be softened by significant landscaping strips to either side of the road. The planting can be secured by condition.

With regards to the emergency access it is not considered to impact on the character of the surrounding area in view that it would continue the existing road, Newlands Avenue.

In view of the above it is not considered that an impact on the surrounding area would occur in line with Policy BE1 of the Woking Borough Local Plan.

Trees

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The access proposed at Westfield Way will require 9 trees to be removed to facilitate the access. These trees will comprise of 6 C category trees, including 5 pedunculate oak trees and 1 hawthorn tree, 2 B category trees, including 2 pedunculate oak trees and 1 R category goat willow.

Within the Arboricultural Implications Assessment the C rated trees are considered to be low quality trees, with the R rated tree required to be removed for Arboricultural management. The two B rated trees are moderate category trees with the report advising that the trees are unremarkable specimens. The Councils Arboricultural Officer has considered the loss of these trees and raises no objection to the loss of the trees to facilitate the development. A great level of tree cover will remain over Westfield Common and it is therefore not considered objection could be raised to the loss of the trees from an Arboricultural or planning point of view.

The applicants have submitted an Arboricultural Method Statement to show how the retained trees will be protected and subject to compliance with this statement it is not considered harm would occur to the trees to be retained.

CONCLUSION

The proposed accesses to the reserved housing site are considered to be acceptable in terms of highways considerations that this application poses the loss of the common land, the impact on the urban open space and the impact on the SNCI and protected species. The impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties, character of the surrounding area and trees has been fully assessed and it is therefore recommended that the application is granted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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1. 129 x letters of representation; including a Transport Statement Review submitted on behalf of local residents;
2. Emails from County Highway Authority dated: 09/06/09
3. Email from Surrey Wildlife Trust dated: 11/06/09
4. Email from Arboricultural Officer dated: 10/06/09
5. Email to County Highway Authority dated: 09/06/09

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be Granted subject to the following Conditions:-

1. 3 year time limit
2. Sample materials of roads to be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority
3. Bat, badger, reptile, great crested newt's surveys to be conducted prior to the commencement of development and submitted to the Local Planning Authority
4. Prior to the commencement of development landscaping scheme to be submitted to Local Planning Authority
5. Prior to the commencement of development scheme submitted to the Local Planning Authority advising how Emergency Access will be made available only to pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles. Scheme shall include provision of bollards.
6. Prior to the commencement of the development the plans shall be amended to include uncontrolled crossings with flush drop kerbs and tactile blister paving
7. Prior to the commencement of the development the Quartermaine Avenue access drawing shall be amended to indicate the existing property access(es) made redundant by the application closed up and reinstated
8. The Newlands Avenue access shall only be used for pedestrian and cycle use and during emergencies only
9. Prior to the commencement of the development details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority advising how the works will be supervised by an Ecologist and method of construction

statement to ensure construction contained in narrow corridor on common land

10. Full compliance with Arboricultural Method Statement

Informatives

1. Reason for approval

2. Approved plan numbers

3. Policies

4. Vegetation to be carried out outside of breeding bird season March to August

5. Any future application shall include a management scheme for the Wet Woodland (Westfield Common SNCI)

6. Design standards regarding construction of access roads and junctions

7. Adoption of roads as public highways

8. Permission not granted as authority to carry out works on highway

9. Developer reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be deposited on highway

10. Accommodation works

11. Works to be carried out outside bird nesting season

12. A commensurate size of urban open space shall be provided in any redevelopment of Moor Lane Site
ISYS REF:REPORT-07/07/09-Planning Cttee Item 5 a Land at Moor Lane Westfield