

## **OBJECTION TO APPLICATION DC/22/06294 SITE ADJ PADDOCK GROVE, HARPERS HILL, NAYLAND, CO6 4NT.**

The Conservation Society objects to this application.

It is accepted that it comprises previously developed land, is situated in a sustainable location, within the Development Limits in the DLP, and National and Local Planning Policy provide for the best use for such land. It is also common ground that there are no highway objections, the Highway Authority having responded positively.

### **BACKGROUND.**

To provide context for the development, it is necessary to appraise the recent development of 'Paddock Grove'. This is because it is against this that the proposals will be viewed, and the Paddock Grove development is helpful in assessing the impact of the proposals on the immediate area and the wider landscape. In the planning statement accompanying the current application, the architects, who acted on the Paddock Grove scheme also, commented as follows in respect to the outcome of that development:

*'We would like it to be known that we are disappointed with these changes.'*

The Conservation Society too is disappointed with the Paddock Grove development. It is known that this cannot be revisited, but it imperative that the same mistakes are not replicated on the current site. Effectively the important historic village of Nayland in a national designated important landscape area, the AONB, has been permanently blighted by a development that would look poor on an urban housing estate.

Similar claims in respect of that application by the agent have been made in the current application. There was a Landscape and Visual Appraisal accompanying that application and I quote some of the report as follows:

*'The characterising effects of residential development here are considered to be localised, affecting land and areas immediately adjacent to the site.'*

*'...development of this site would not have an adverse effect on the wider landscape.'*

*'(it) provides an opportunity to positively enhance the 'sense of place' in this part of Nayland village through careful design and layout...which reflects some of the qualities of the Conservation Area.'*

*'The site is not widely visible in close proximity or wider views from the surrounding landscape.'*

Nothing needs to be said to demonstrate that the development has failed to achieve the above on all counts other than to provide these photographs, taken of the site close up and from viewpoints further afield. The demonstrable harm it has caused to the village and the special quality of the AONB is very evident and the village rightly feels let down by the Council and the parties involved.



It is also moot to note that the western side of the A134 in the proximity of Nags Corner has gradually been denigrated, through authorised and unauthorised uses. This incremental creeping development that is occurring is altering the approach to Nayland, the attractive setting of the village and the river at Caley Green, as well as the quality of the AONB. This is aggravated by the fact that it is situated in a dip with land rising to the north and south affording clear public views, especially when travelling along the A134.

## **OBJECTION.**

Within this backdrop the Conservation Society raises the following objections/comments and urges the Council to seek the high quality of layout and design that National and Local Planning Policies require.

## **MARKETING AND RETENTION OF EMPLOYMENT USES.**

- The marketing report accompanying the application states in several paragraphs that potential purchasers did not pursue the site due to the restrictive opening hours.
- Any opening hours relate to the existing commercial uses at Nags Corner. However, any redevelopment of the application site would require planning permission whereby extended opening hours could be put forward.
- It should not be presumed that the planning process would not allow an extension of these hours, particularly as there would be no impact on residential amenity.
- The comments made in the marketing report suggest that undue restrictions were imposed on the purchase details that had the effect of turning away potential end users.

- Nags Corner is an important employment generating area of Nayland. The NPPF and the Core Strategy recognises that: '*Sustainable new development supports economic growth in rural areas, and appropriate employment opportunities in these locations provide local employment, and offer opportunities closer to home, rather than relying only on the larger urban centres,....*' (Core Strategy quote).
- It is considered from the level of interest generated in the marketing process that with flexibility of opening hours that may well be scope to retain a commercial element, supporting local employment opportunities.
- Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS15 and CS17 of the Saved Local Plan and LP13 of the DPL.

## DESIGN AND APPEARANCE.

The Design and Access statement makes some bold assertions regarding the design as follows:

- '*The proposed development sits comfortably in its surroundings.*'
- '*The form, ridge and eaves heights sit comfortably between the Nags Corner site and the Paddock Grove development.*'

The proposed design is objected to on design grounds for the following reasons:

- The D and A Statement states that the original Nags Corner development '*is architecturally designed to pay compliment to its agricultural past and setting*'.
- With the above in mind, it is not considered that the introduction of a modern, architecturally poor pair of semi-detached units adjacent to the Nags Corner development accords with local context and character.
- The proposed pair of semis are plain, modern, very ordinary houses with no interesting design features, heeding no reference to local context.
- The proposed adjacent larger building seeks to make reference to the Nags Corner development. However, its dominant scale and massing, with no projecting gables or other features to break down its bulk, other than the 'midstrey', in conjunction with its poor design and detailing fails to achieve this.
- There is a proliferation of fenestration in the 'midstreys' and the returns, aggravated by the rooflights randomly positioned.
- Should the building be seeking to reflect the '*agricultural past and setting*' of the original Nags Corner development it fails. Agricultural buildings are characterised by large areas of interrupted mass on the elevations and roof form. They are not characterised by a proliferation of fenestration and rooflights.
- The spacing between the proposed two blocks and on their outer boundaries is minimal, leaving no space for landscaping. It would create a solid, cramped, dense built form along the frontage, uncharacteristic of the area.
- The blocks are located in close proximity to the road. The Nags Corner development is set back from the road, other than a modest gable end. The massing, height and amount of development proposed, stepping forward of the 'building line' here, will appear incongruous and monolithic.
- The proposal amounts to overdevelopment, consolidating the built-form along the A134 frontage to an unacceptable degree.

- The layout plan shows planting in front of the wall. However, this is not reflected on the proposed street scene. It is not clear if the applicant owns and controls the land where planting is proposed, leading to a false impression of the impact of such landscaping. In any event the space between the front of the wall and the pavement is minimal, see photograph below.



- The green blobs shown on the street scene plan above the wall are again misleading. It is unlikely that any planting would be visible above the wall as it would have to be of such a height, bearing in mind the drop in ground levels behind the wall, that the impact on the proposed units would be unacceptable, there being a minimal gap between the wall and the dwellings.
- The lack of opportunities for landscaping to soften the monosyllabic buildings from the public viewpoints would further exacerbate the visual harm.
- The height of the proposed units is excessive and will render the development intrusive and harmful. The northern block is higher than the Nags Corner development and similar to Paddock Grove.
- It has already been demonstrated how harmful visually a development of this height is to the immediate and wider area, rendering it prominent and intrusive.
- The visual harm caused by Paddock Grove will only be aggravated by this proposal, consolidating the urban and dense appearance, jarring with the rural surroundings.
- The D and A Statement fails to justify what design aspirations both of the proposed blocks seek to achieve and how these accords with local context.
- The result is a mixed-up scheme, with no coherent design perimeters, failing to achieve a high quality of design and appearance as required by the NPPF and Core Strategy Policies CS15 and DLP Policies CP26, Sp09, LP17 and LP19.

### IMPACT ON THE AONB.

The D and A statement states in this respect:

*'...through good design and suitable landscaping (the development) enhances the AONB'*

It has been demonstrated how the Paddock Grove development has impacted negatively on the AONB, despite the findings of the Landscape Appraisal accompanying the application.

The current application does not include such an appraisal. However, much is dependent upon the quality of such an appraisal as it can be argued that the original report was flawed.

The construction of a far denser development of greater massing, with no space for landscaping, and of the same height as the Paddock Grove development would undoubtedly have an injurious effect on the quality of the AONB. It would be highly visible from the A134, virtually abutting it, and from the wider area.

It is not considered that it would be of a 'good design' and neither would the landscaping be 'suitable'.

The development would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS4 and DLP Policies SP09, LP17, LP19 and LP20.

#### OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS.

The application shows the parking for Nags Corner butting up against the entire southern boundary of proposed Plot 1. This extends along the extent of the rear garden, the dwelling and its front garden. There is no landscaped buffer between the two. This would result in loss of residential amenity by way of noise nuisance and disturbance through cars manoeuvring, car doors slamming, people generation, as well as a loss of air quality through fumes.

There are noise implications for all of the dwellings due to their location so close to the A134. An acoustic report should accompany the application.

The proposal would be contrary to DLP Policy CP26.