

**Response of the Yardley Hastings Parish Council to the resubmission of plans in relation to Application S/2019/2298/FUL**

The Yardley Hastings Parish Council considered the original application at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December and resolved to object to the proposed development on the grounds stated in its submission dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December. At its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May the Council has now considered the revised plans submitted by the Applicant, and its strong opposition to the proposed development still stands. The following comments repeat those made in December 2019, with some additional comments at the end of each paragraph in response to the Applicant's most recent submissions.

1. It is understood that the land the subject of the application is designated as "Employment Land" in the current Local Plan. With proper management there is no reason why the current garden centre business being carried on the site could not be a successful and profitable enterprise, providing employment to a number of local people, and the Parish Council is concerned that every opportunity should be given for this to happen. However, no attempt has as yet been made to market this site as a going concern or otherwise as a commercial nursery/garden centre. (May 2020:) This contravenes South Northants' Local Plan "policy EMP2" for change of use – it must be demonstrated the land is /has been marketed for at least 12 months, and that its existing use has an unacceptable impact on residents. The Council refutes the agent's comment that this village is too small to support a viable business. There are thriving garden centres within an 8-mile radius in conurbations much smaller than Yardley Hastings which do not have the benefit of considerable potential passing business from the A428. The demise of this moribund business is due to the lack of ability of the current ageing owners and lack of investment in the site. The application takes no account of the "employment designation" of the land or of its value to a competent operator. This contravenes the national Policy Framework – para 83 & 84 – enablement of sustainability of rural business, and preservation of developed land for the purpose...
2. The overall design and layout of the proposed development gives the appearance of a "Milton Keynes Housing Estate". There are many design features which are completely at variance with the Yardley Hastings Village Design Statement (a Supplementary Planning Document), e.g.: no chimneys, flat roofs. In essence in the original designs the Village Design Statement has been ignored. In contrast the new Leys development at the other main entrance to the village is to be of a high design standard (coursed limestone, Castle Ashby roof tiles, red brick/grey slate garages and out-buildings, heritage kerbing etc). This new proposal should be constructed to the same standards as it will provide a new entrance to the village from the south east. (May 2020:) Whilst some adherence to the VDS has been added, there is no variation or imagination in material or elevations. Because so many plots have been crammed into the site the roadway can only be straight and no interesting curves and green areas can be introduced. Plot 2 should be removed to free up some green space and allow a road realignment. The frontage boundary treatment to plot 1 should be softened with green planting to set a precedent for any future development of the site.
3. The proposed visibility splay at the entrance from the main A428 is inadequate. The Applicants should be required to provide tracking diagrams for approval by the Local Highway Authority. The Applicants do not have control of the visibility splay. Although that to the North West is public highway the wide pavement here is used for car parking by the residents of the adjacent terraced houses, thereby obstructing the view. To the South east the proposed visibility splay overlaps the entrance to the garden centre, so the view can be obstructed by turning traffic. Traffic turning right out of the estate road onto the A428 will

conflict with eastbound traffic waiting to turn right into the garden centre. The 30mph speed limit will need to be extended eastwards with suitable warning signage. (May 2020:) All the tracking drawing shows is that it is just possible for one long wheelbase vehicle to manoeuvre in and out. It takes no account of any other parked vehicles on the road. Our comments about vehicles turning off the A428 still stand. Spot statistics do not carry as much weight as the traffic at peak times, and when the A428 is used as a motorway diversion traffic is far heavier than is suggested by the applicant. The applicant's "independent" transport statement completely underestimates current traffic flow under normal conditions. We fully support NCC highways' requirement of a ghost island. We had to have someone killed before our plea for the installation of a pedestrian crossing was acknowledged. This community does not want to be in that same position again, just so that a developer can save money and maximise his profit - especially when a retrofit would not be possible.

4. The Estate Road is too narrow, and consequently does not allow for any on-street visitor parking. This will inevitably give rise to "overspill" parking on the side of the busy A428, causing dangerous congestion. Parked vehicles on the entrance road will cause a conflict of accessing and egressing vehicles onto the A428 adding to traffic flow conflict. (May 2020:) Despite the minimum provision of visitor parking, 2/3 of the spaces are tucked out of site at the end of the cul-de-sac, and in one's wildest dreams visitors to the plots lower down the road won't use them – they will still park adjacent to the houses being visited. So our comments about vehicles parked on the estate road still stand – vehicles such as residents' work vehicles which are too large for private driveways, delivery vans and contractors' vehicles.
5. The pavements on the side of the Estate Road, at 1m, are too narrow. (May 2020:) Now that the road and pavement has been widened it just squeezes between the houses. A person pushing a pram, wheelchair or an invalid chair out of a house will be completely unsuspected until it is well out onto the path and very close to the road edge, with the possible consequence of a collision with pedestrians already on the path, who may even be forced out into the road. This situation pertains in village locations with the old 19<sup>th</sup> century housing stock but is surely not permissible or desirable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Also, we do not believe that the lack of privacy caused by the close proximity of the pavement to principal windows is acceptable in this day and age.
6. The sewerage system in the village is already overloaded, and frequently overflows during periods of moderately heavy rainfall. Not only will the additional housing contribute to the overloading on a daily basis, but it would appear that the proposed scheme, if built, would allow for the discharge of surface water drainage into the foul sewer. At Anglian Water's insistence NCC highways have recently spent £25,000 in diverting 2 highway gullies in the High St (which previously discharged into the foul sewer) to discharge instead into the Grendon Brook. AW have also been fined by the Environment Agency for polluting the Grendon Brook last year with untreated overflow. The SUDS slow release system does not relieve the issue. When Grendon brook is in full flood the water level is higher than the invert level of the main foul sewer and there is nowhere for the foul overflow to run even when the two levels coincide. (May 2020:) We do not accept that it is justifiable to put even attenuated surface water into an already overloaded sewage system. The total reliance on a "Manco" scheme to keep the surface water infrastructure efficient is not acceptable unless the developer is prepared to lodge sufficient funds with the AWA for a minimum of 20 years maintenance costs. The history of these schemes is so poor.

7. It is strongly suspected that the ultimate intention of the freeholder is to build new housing on the entirety of the garden centre site, and that the piecemeal approach of initially only applying for nine residential units on one part of the site is an attempt to avoid any obligation to provide affordable housing. The SNC currently has in excess of a five-year housing supply and has met its targets for rural housing till 2029 as set by the West Northants Joint Core Strategy. It has not met its district-wide affordable needs though. It is the Parish Council's view that priority should be given to affordable housing rather than market housing. (May 2020:) Our previous comments still stand, since it is our understanding that not all of the land currently under option to this developer is included in this application. (We believe that the land under option also includes the land that the existing bungalow stands on, for which we believe he has designs. We also believe that one of the owners has a plan to build a separate bungalow at the rear of the business premises). We support the comments made by your policy department objection.
8. It is the view of the Parish Council that the current proposal would seriously prejudice the potential for an over-all, orderly layout and would not make best use of land on the complete site. (May 2020:) We also support the view that, despite the somewhat untidy appearance of the existing site, the very dense style of development proposed presents too stark a contrast from rural open fields to a solid wall of buildings. More design consideration of a lower density scheme would present a more acceptable gradation from open fields to the main body of housing of the village, as is the case at the moment on either side of the A428 - the principal entrance to Yardley Hastings.
9. Under the now repealed Interim Rural Housing Policy, Yardley Hastings was required to provide up to an extra 10% of its existing size to meet housing need. This target has been more than achieved by the Leys development, (May 2020:) on which Francis Jackson Homes has recently made a "meaningful start". (In passing, and with reference to the objections now being made by the LHA (*see para 3 above*) the Parish Council would like to make the observation that Francis Jackson Homes has been required to commit to very considerable and expensive highway engineering before occupation of the site).

In summary the Yardley Hastings Parish Council still believes that the proposed development is entirely inappropriate for a village location and bears poor comparison with the proposed new housing development about to be built by Francis Jackson Homes to the north of Northampton Road adjacent to The Leys. Despite the changes made the Council still regards the present scheme, with its minimum separation distances, access and drainage problems, to be an over-development of this rural site. The Council believes the proposed development would in reality be a detriment to the community rather than an asset. Furthermore, the Parish Council believes that it would be a mistake to allow the current designation of the site as Employment Land to be changed to "Residential" without the market being properly tested. The Council is of the opinion that the agent's claims about the site are spurious, and that any business failures are due to mismanagement and lack of investment, not location. The village's (and the district's) overriding current need is for affordable housing, rather than market housing, and this application still completely ignores this fact.