

PROPOSALS BY MILLER HOMES FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ALTON SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB, ANSTEY ROAD, ALTON

The Society welcomes this initiative by Miller Homes to consult the public before making a formal submission to the Planning Authority for consent to the Reserved Matters. The comments below have been made on careful consideration of the scheme as presented. The majority of the criticisms arise from what we believe to be a case of over-development.

1 Frontage and Layout

While being appreciative of the 'legibility' of the layout we are disappointed that it fails to generate any 'sense of place' as required by the NPPF. Instead, there is a monotonous grid of streets without any particular focus or nodal point and which lacks the kind of facilities, such as a shared open space with a children's play area, that would be expected in a scheme of this size. Moreover, on the road frontage, the houses have been set very close to the boundary with, in our opinion, insufficient space for landscaping and with no sense of an entrance.

2 Dwelling Mix

The proposal is for 73 houses and 12 flats. 1 and 2-bed units account for 39% of the total. Given the established need for this type of unit we would argue strongly for a higher proportion of small units. This would have the added advantage of achieving a higher density in relation to the land area, thus enabling the provision of the kind of open space advocated above without sacrificing the total number of units. The higher densities could be concentrated towards the rear of the site perhaps.

We note that 35% of the dwellings are to be 'affordable'. Given the relatively low development costs associated with this site we are surprised that the 40% normally required by local policies has not been met. It would appear that the affordable homes have been clustered in groups of 4 or 5 rather than spread through the site

3 Car Parking

One of our number was informed recently that a total of 180 spaces is proposed. It was added that this is considered generous in relation to current standards including those in the emerging Alton Neighbourhood Plan. In fact, analysis shows this number to be far fewer than should be expected. There is actually a shortfall of 44 car spaces if visitors' parking is taken into account at the rate of one space per two dwellings. Should the scheme be implemented in this form we can expect cars to be parked on pavements and verges, such as is commonly found to be the case in many other developments in Alton.

The parking layout itself is highly unsatisfactory, relying as it does in very many cases on end-to-end double, and even treble, parking.

4 House Designs

This can be summed up as 'more of the same'. When can we expect to see good contemporary design? The criteria set out in DE2 of the Neighbourhood Plan have not been met.

5 Energy

There is no mention of energy standards or even of aspirations, and yet climate change is perhaps the biggest issue of our time. There is no mention, even, of how it is proposed to meet the EHDC requirement of achieving 10% of energy from renewables.

We would suggest that prospective purchasers should be offered the option of installations such as thermal solar panels, PV panels and heat recovery, even if these would attract extra cost to them, and that all the houses (as opposed to flats) should be provided with a chimney capable of serving a wood burning stove. Such information should be included in the sales literature.

6 Access and Traffic

The proposed point of access would appear to be very close to the junction of Anstey Road and Anstey Lane, shortly to be the location of a new roundabout. Has the implication of this been considered? Has this layout been approved by the highway authority? The prospect of a substantial number of cars emerging and needing to turn right in the morning peak hour is daunting, and we wonder if special measures have been considered to manage this kind of situation.

7 Drainage, Flood Risk

There is recent anecdotal evidence of flooding in Anstey Road. No one yet knows how the Cadnam Farm development will affect surface water drainage in this part of the town, but we think the risk may in practice be higher than 'low', and that appropriate measures will be needed.

CONCLUSION

We regret to say that this proposal falls far short of the standard that we should expect in almost every respect. We do not consider that a development of this dwelling mix and layout will be satisfactory, and that in its present form it would constitute a clear case of over-development.