



Celebrating our Heritage – Protecting our Environment – Shaping the Future

Comments in response to the latest changes proposed to:
Planning Application Ref: 55222/010 Land East of Will Hall Farm

The Alton Society wish to object to these latest changes, in the strongest terms possible.

1. Firstly, we are very concerned at this seemingly endless succession of revisions of design and layout of these plans, especially now, given the advanced status of the development, with so many dwellings not only complete, but already occupied! Whilst we accept that in planning law the LPA cannot refuse to receive such requests, even as late as this, nevertheless to allow such far-reaching changes so long after Reserved Matters approval brings into question the integrity of the entire planning process in our view, and is an insult to local residents and other local stakeholders, ATC and others, who have dedicated so much time and effort to evaluate these plans – and their numerous iterations - before arriving at something that the planning authority has deemed acceptable. Whatever the developers' motives, this is an abuse of the planning system.
2. Of all the large developments currently in progress in Alton this site has generally been recognised as the most sensitive gateway location - precisely why the sympathetic proposals first outlined for this site were welcomed. What we now see is a massive departure from these original plans for the site, with the proposed southern frontage constituting a dense, urban street of houses totally inappropriate to this gateway location. It is no surprise that local residents feel outraged.
3. We also object to the somewhat cynical ploy used by Redrow in presenting plans in May 2018 that were clearly going to be unacceptable, only to be followed by something that might now be seen as a reasonable compromise, which it certainly is not.

Indeed, the applicant's covering letter is blatantly deceptive in claiming to 'soften the alignment of the houses on the frontage'. This is only true when compared with the last layout submitted earlier last year, and so roundly condemned. There is only one comparison that matters, and that is with the agreed plans. Instead of the 18 detached houses positioned in a staggered layout along the southern frontage, we now see 26, in a much more uniform line, representing a further urbanisation of the site, and totally dominating both the open space below and the critical views from the Basingstoke Road as people approach the town.

These proposals fly in the face of the key policies of Alton's Neighbourhood Plan (DE1 and DE2) designed specifically to protect the town's landscape. Also, the design guidelines for developers in the Alton Town Design Statement (3.6 especially) are fundamental in protecting inappropriate development at the town's gateway locations.

For the all above reasons, permission for these latest revisions must be refused, and the developer made to revert to the plans already agreed.

Rod Eckles
Chairman - Built Environment Group, The Alton Society
5th Jan 2019