

Crookham Village Parish Council OBJECTS to

16/03400/OUT Hybrid application for the construction of a 160 unit Care Village incorporating a 64-bed Care Home (Use Class C2) and central facilities building, together with associated vehicular and pedestrian accesses, junction improvements, estate roads, parking areas and garages, footpaths/cycleways and landscape works, with full details of change of use of agricultural land and woodland to provide an area of public open space (Site of Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG)) and means of access to the site. at Cross Farm House Crondall Road Crookham Village Fleet GU51 5SS

for the following reasons:

1. EFFECT ON CONSERVATION AREA

- 1.1. The proposal is for a large plot of uniform urban housing plus a number of large buildings across rising land immediately behind the varied (both in style and historic importance with no one style dominating) housing along The Street and Crondall Road on greenfield land outside the settlement boundary. This is completely out of character with the linear, varied form of Crookham Village and its Conservation Area.
- 1.2. Because of rising ground from The Street into the site (see Figure 1), the proposed development would have a significant dominating and detrimental effect on the settings of the 8 Grade II listed buildings immediately bordering the site and would be visible from the many Grade II and locally listed buildings along the North side of The Street. The detrimental visual intrusion would be even more pronounced due to night lighting on the site because of rising ground into the site and also because current Crookham Village street lighting is deliberately minimal to preserve the character of the village.
- 1.3. Buildings along the line of the ridge running WNW from the top of the hill would be especially intrusive on the skyline both from the village and from the lower reaches of the SANG.

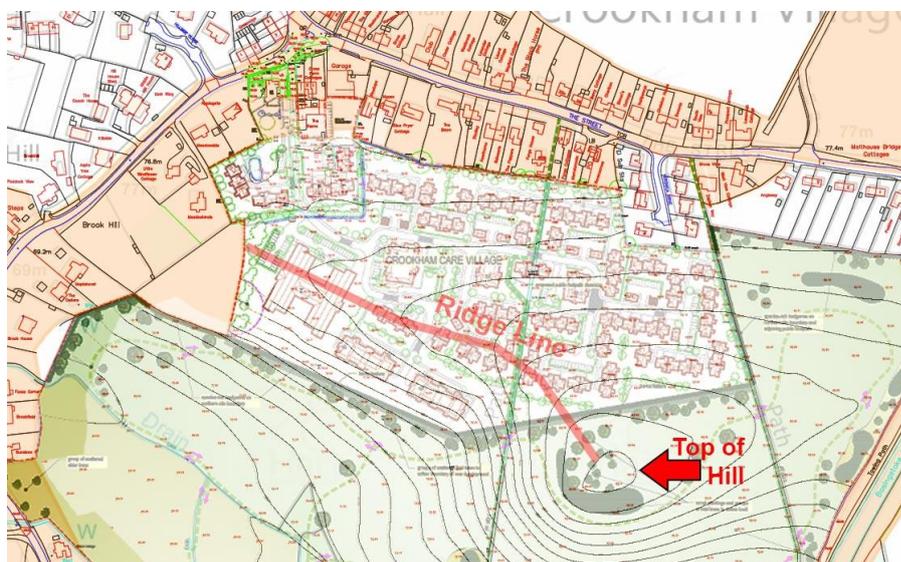


Figure 1: Rising ground (orange = Conservation Areas)

- 1.4. This development would dominate Crookham Village by its footprint, by the huge percentage increase in the number of buildings and by introducing a large block of uniform urban housing which is alien to the existing built environment in the Conservation Area.
- 1.5. The proposed access would have a significant detrimental effect on the visual street scene at Crossways due to removal of a prominent oak in front of the Grade II listed Cross Farm Cottages and the hedge in front of Cross Farm House as well as opening up a wider access track. The loss of parking space for Cross Farm House would also be significant.

1.6. This application is therefore contrary to saved policies GEN1, CON13, CON22 and RUR2.

2. GAP

2.1. As a self-contained, urban 'village' immediately adjacent to the old established Crookham Village the perception of the existing population is of a separate 'town' right on their doorstep with little synergy with its surroundings.

2.2. The original aim of the gap was to inhibit expansion of the urban area of Church Crookham. This application proposes an urban intrusion from the other direction.

2.3. Due to its location, size and density the proposed development is an urban intrusion into the gap that separates Crookham Village from adjacent urban sprawl. Because this large and dominant site would be back land development immediately adjacent to the village, the gap would effectively be completely closed notwithstanding the developer's optimistic assertion that the site only occupies a small proportion of the gap specified in the existing Local Plan.

2.4. Over time, as the initial population gets older and less mobile, integration of the two populations will become even more problematic.

2.5. Views from the two public footpaths crossing the site would be very significantly degraded with half of each open section of the current footpaths running through or beside urban housing on the site which would further emphasise the gross intrusion into the gap

2.6. This application is therefore contrary to saved policy CON21 in that it threatens the 'separate identity of a smaller settlement' listed under CON21.

3. ACCESS

3.1. The application states that it seeks full permission for access. It is not clear whether this applies to the main access into the site or also to access to the proposed SANG car park. CVPC objects to both.

3.2. Crossways junction is immediately adjacent to the proposed main access. Proximity of the main access to this very busy junction (especially during peak hours), the demographics of the proposed residents (many of whom will be forced to use their cars due to lack of appropriate public transport), plus the use of the access by large vehicles servicing the site both during construction and thereafter, mean that road safety would be unacceptably compromised and access during peak hours likely to be compromised.

3.3. Main access would be immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed Cross Farm Cottages which, due to their age and lack of foundations, are extremely vulnerable to the detrimental effect of vibrations caused by heavy goods traffic.

3.4. Changes required to accommodate the main access would also have a significant detrimental effect on the street scene in the Conservation Area.

3.5. Overall, CVPC considers that the proposed main access is in an unacceptable location.

3.6. Unsuitability of the SANG access is covered later.

4. TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

4.1. The travel plan makes much of walking and cycling, neither of which are likely to feature significantly in the travel plans of their proposed demographic, the more so as time passes.

- 4.2. The travel plan is based on bus services in July 2016. Local bus services were re-organised from 1 September 2016. There are now no regular bus routes near the site except for the run to Farnborough College out at 0800 and back at 1630 during term time only, which is not a useful service for this development of older people.
 - 4.3. The nearest active bus stop is now for the No10 bus near the junction of Coxheath Road and Crookham Road, at least 20 minutes' walk from the site entrance (plus an allowance for the reduced walking speed of older people).
 - 4.4. The travel plan makes no mention of providing dedicated transport such as a minibus, although this is mentioned in passing elsewhere.
 - 4.5. Parking provision is based on HCC standards, which fall below provisions required by HDC parking standards for the rural location. No provision has been made for the likely numbers of 2-car households, especially for the younger end of the demographic and those who continue working as the pension age increases well beyond the proposed minimum age criterion.
 - 4.6. The travel plan is based on 15 FTE staff (23-31 total)^[Transport Statement para 4.1.2] working 3 shifts, yet elsewhere in the paperwork employment of 60-80 people^[CCVLT Statement p46] is mentioned and elsewhere^[CCVLT Statement p54] 85-100. It is also asserted^[Transport Statement Table 7-1] that 31% of employees will be non-car drivers, for whom no obvious plans^[Transport Statement Table 8-1] have been made to get them to work given the lack of public transport. The basis of estimates of both staff travel and staff parking is very suspect and hence of the overall traffic implications.
 - 4.7. Despite assertions to the contrary, a closed pub (The Black Horse closed recently and there is no guarantee of it re-opening) and a single village store/postoffice/tearoom hardly amounts to adequate facilities for a new settlement to rely on.
5. CVPC concludes that the travel plan is insufficiently robust and that therefore the site is unsustainable and hence contrary to the NPPF.

6. UNSUSTAINABLE LOCATION

- 6.1. Put together, the above objections demonstrate that this would not be a sustainable location for the majority of occupants of this 'care village'.

7. DEMOGRAPHIC

- 7.1. The population of Crookham Village is already skewed towards the older end of the age range.
- 7.2. Adding a self-contained urban care village restricted to an older initial population that will steadily age over time will produce an even more skewed age profile for the area with inevitable skewing of any local facilities towards the older population. The effect will be to make the old village less and less attractive to younger incomers and hence further compound the existing demographic problem.

8. LANDSCAPE

- 8.1. The application asserts that *"there are no non-statutory or local designations indicating that the application site and its setting are particularly valued locally."* Both the population of the village and the many others who use public footpaths through the site would beg to differ.
- 8.2. A good proportion of both the development site and the SANG is safeguarded under the Hampshire County Council Minerals and Waste Plan in the MWCA Soft Sand category. The NPPF Sect 13 para 114 states: *"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should: give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction; not normally permit other development proposals in mineral safeguarding areas where they might constrain potential future use for these purposes."*

8.3. The Hart Council's Landscape Capacity Study 2016 recorded that the site had a Visual Sensitivity Score of MEDIUM/HIGH for all three assessment criteria.

9. ENVIRONMENT

9.1. There are significant doubts about the lack of depth in the environmental survey for which the on-site element was conducted during January 2016, a time of year when many of the affected species would not be at their most prominent, to put it mildly.

9.2. By opening up the whole of Cross Farm to public access, existing populations of ground nesting birds and rare species of flora would be significantly degraded.

9.3. Local records indicate that wildlife displaced from local SANGs, particularly from Edenbrook, has been increasingly noted on Cross Farm. A combination of development area and public access to the SANG would further erode options for local habitats.

9.4. This potential further urban intrusion into the Upper Hart Valley would have a major detrimental effect on wildlife populations across the whole valley.

10. SANG and PUBLIC FOOTPATHS

10.1. SANGs are supposed to attract people away from the SPA. By urbanising the Northern half of both footpath 1 and footpath 5 across Cross Farm, the area will become significantly less attractive for the many existing users and hence have an effect counter to its main aim.

10.2. The southern section of the SANG is very boggy in wet weather and usually throughout the winter months and is therefore not a suitable area for walkers without significant and counter-productive groundworks including boardwalks.

10.3. There is an intermittent spring at the northern end of FP5 which results in a flow of water down FP5 towards Riverside Cottage rendering the surface both muddy and slippery and hence very unsuitable for an older population.

10.4. Access from FP5 onto the canal towpath is via a stile which is unsuitable for older people and would need to be removed to give adequate passage for older people.

10.5. Opening up access to the SANG area runs the risk of use by unwelcome motor cyclists, which has implications for law and order as well as damage to grounds.

10.6. Access to the proposed SANG car park on land within Zephon Common (Hampshire CL131) is of little merit.

10.6.1. Egress from Zephon Common Lane onto Crondall Road is very dangerous, especially for casual users.

10.6.2. Zephon Common Lane is mostly single track without passing places.

10.6.3. Poulter's Bridge (a listed structure) has a pronounced hump which means that drivers are completely unsighted of pedestrian and other traffic until they crest that brow.

10.6.4. Zephon Common Lane is used by large tractors to gain access to farmland beyond Poulter's Bridge.

10.6.5. Overall, this access is completely unacceptable from a road safety perspective as well as the potential for damage to verges.

10.6.6. The proposed SANG car park is on common land for which SofS permission would likely be required, permission which guidance suggests would not readily be given. Furthermore, due to its proximity to a popular area for fishing along the canal, it is likely that during the open season there would be significant use by anglers to the detriment of those who wish to access the SANG.

10.6.7. Overall, the proposed SANG car park is in an unacceptable location.

11. HOUSING NUMBERS

- 11.1. Figure 14.10 of the latest edition of the SHMA estimates a requirement for 164 extra care units for older people in Hart over the period 2014-2035, a target which would appear to have been exceeded already.
- 11.2. There is an acknowledged shortfall in provision of affordable housing in the area. The application states Class C2 for the nursing home, but is silent on the category of the many individual dwellings and apartments. Guidance suggests that such dwellings should be in Class C3, for which an affordable housing element is an admissible requirement.
- 11.3. Para 14.21 of the latest SHMA emphasises that the vast majority of older people will choose to remain in their own homes rather than move into specialist accommodation and states *“It is therefore likely that in future a greater proportion of older people will remain in their own homes, providing appropriate care can be put in place to enable them to stay. The type of accommodation needed for the ageing population is inherently tied to the approach to care and the extent to which care can be provided at home.”* The requirement for this care village in this location is therefore not clearly established given the current availability of non-nursing care locally for elderly people in their own homes.

12. SHLAA

- 12.1. The November 2016 edition of the Hart SHLAA includes SHL116 for Cross Farm with an assessment of potential housing capacity of only 80 versus the 224 proposed in this application. It calls for the setting and character of the nearby listed buildings and Conservation Area to be protected, which this application does not adequately address.
- 12.2. The SHLAA fails to note that Footpath1 bisects the site and records only Footpath 5 at the Eastern end.

13. REFUSAL

- 13.1. Crookham Village Parish Council strongly recommends refusal and believes that any appeal would fail given the strength and scope of the objections.
- 13.2. There are strong parallels with 14/03030/MAJOR at Hares Lane, which was refused by Hart and for which an appeal has been withdrawn. It is therefore suggested that the following adapted reasons for refusal, potentially augmented by further considerations, might be applied in this case:
- 13.2.1. *The proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in this open countryside location, outside of the settlement boundaries of Crookham Village, and would have a significant detrimental effect on the linear character and setting of the conservation area by virtue of its siting, size and prominence in the landscape. The proposal site also lies within the local gap between Crookham Village and Church Crookham. As such, the development would be contrary to 'saved' policies GEN1, GEN3, CON22 and RUR2 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and to Government advice contained within paragraphs 17, 109 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).*
- 13.2.2. *The proposed development would result in substantial harm to heritage assets, comprising the Crookham Village Conservation Area and the 8 Grade II statutory listed buildings along The Street, which would not be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. As such, the development would be contrary to the requirements of 'saved' policy CON13 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and the advice contained in paragraphs 14, 17, 132 and 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).*

13.2.3. *The proposed development is for market extra care housing for which there is no requirement in the current version of the SHMA. In addition, the proposal does not make any provision for an appropriate level of on-site affordable extra care housing which is identified as a need in the SHMA. The development is therefore unsuitable in that it would neither provide a fully integrated community nor would it satisfy the need for affordable extra care housing as identified in the SHMA. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the requirements of 'saved' policies ALT GEN13 and ALT URB14 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and the advice contained in paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).*

13.2.4. *The proposed development would not make appropriate provision to mitigate the impact of the development on the provision of leisure facilities and local transport infrastructure. As such, the proposal would be contrary to paragraph 4.6.1 and the requirements of 'saved' policy T16 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006.*

13.3. East Hampshire's refusal of application 55801/001 for a similar application on Grayshott is also relevant.

14. APPROVAL

14.1. Should Hart Council decide to approve this application, the following considerations also apply:

14.1.1. Crookham Village Parish Council will need to be included in s106 negotiations to ensure that local interests are adequately taken into account, especially with regard to shared use of on-site facilities.

14.1.2. Severe restrictions will need to be placed on use of the main access:

14.1.2.1. During silent hours due to the adverse effect on old listed properties bordering the entrance.

14.1.2.2. During peak traffic hours due to the adverse effect on traffic flows and road safety of large vehicles manoeuvring in Crondall Road.

14.1.3. An alternative car park for the SANG will need to be identified and considered.

14.1.4. Improvement of the sections of both FP1 and FP5 between the site and The Street.

14.1.5. Extension of the offered footway improvements along The Street to reach Malthouse Bridge so that both footpath egresses and also the walking route towards the distant bus stop are made suitable for the older population of the development.

14.1.6. Conditions restricting occupancy to the approved demographic even if uptake fails to sell all the properties. Failure to accept this constraint would undermine some of the assumptions underpinning traffic assessments.