

SUBJECT: Proposed Residential Development at the Old Rugby Ground/Arden Tennis Club site as per Solihull Local Development Plan Site 245.

I would like you to note my formal complaint and objections to the proposed Residential Development on the Old Rugby Ground/Arden Tennis Club site off Sharmans Cross Road, Solihull as detailed within the Solihull Local Development Plan Site 245.

My objections to this plan are as follows:

2013 POLICY

The 2013 all party policy to maintain the Sports Ground only Covenant on the site of the Rugby pitches should be honoured. Nothing has materially changed since this date.

Also, the 2013 policy to not sell the Freehold should also be retained and honoured. Again nothing has materially changed since this date.

The proposed development is therefore not at all appropriate.

COVENANT

The existing Covenant granted in 1965 which clearly states that the land be utilised solely for use as Sports Playing Fields, should be honoured and not lifted with no acceptable reason for this commitment to be broken. This understanding was made in good faith by Solihull Council who are now honour bound to maintain this. Even though interest has been shown by a number of parties to use these facilities for sporting activity the existing owners have sought to price the Leasehold way in excess of it being affordable. This has been a deliberate act to force prospective sports clubs away from the area. This proposal is therefore not at all appropriate.

ARDEN TENNIS CLUB

The proposed development would certainly adversely impact the future wellbeing and growth of the Tennis Club by reducing facilities and options going forward. There is already insufficient opportunities for children and residents to play tennis/squash/racquetball in the near vicinity. With the additional traffic of potentially 1 to 2 cars per dwelling, the danger to Tennis Club members entering and leave the car park would greatly increase, posing a real health and safety worry. Therefore the proposed development is not at all appropriate.

PROPERTY DENSITY

The proposed development would produce a Property Density which would be in the order of 4-5 times greater than that of the surrounding area. This would be completely out of keeping and therefore not at all appropriate.

DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE AREA

The proposed development would completely destroy the existing character and distinctiveness and charm of the existing area which would be completely out of keeping and therefore not at all appropriate.

HABITAT

The proposed development would completely destroy the habitat of many insects and small creatures. There are also nesting buzzards which have recently returned to the site. This would impact the whole eco-system and therefore not at all appropriate.

DRAINAGE

The proposed development would place even greater pressure on the Victorian drainage system on Sharmans Cross Road. This system is already over capacity, struggling and is therefore not at all appropriate.

SCHOOLING

There is already inadequate school places for children within the catchment of both Sharman Cross School and St Alphege School. The Local Authority has recently reduced the funding for Solihull Primary Schools. Additional housing together with affordable housing will add pressure to this situation with no additional provision for additional school places. Many primary schools have also closed on site nursery provision. The proposed development would therefore be not at all appropriate.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

There is already inadequate medical facilities within the vicinity. The proposed development would therefore be not at all appropriate.

ARDEN TENNIS CLUB PARKING

The potential reduction in car parking space for members to use would have a detrimental impact on the future health, wellbeing and growth of the Tennis Club. Local and National competition opportunity would also be reduced and restricted, adding to this situation. Existing affordable children's Holiday Club places would be impacted with fewer places available in the holiday period. Parents already use the car park for drop off/pick up for Sharmans Cross School which in future would add to the congestion with Sharmans Cross Pub now also being Pay and Display adding to this road congestion. Therefore the proposed development is not at all appropriate.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Sharmans Cross Road is already extremely busy during both morning and evening rush-hours, together with school start and end times at Sharmans Cross School. This residential road was never built to take the existing level of traffic. Any additional traffic added to this congestion would pose an additional threat to the Health and Safety of both pedestrians and, very importantly, children walking to and from school. With additional traffic using Sharmans Cross Road there would be a large increase in pollution levels being harmful to children. Emergency vehicles are already struggling to use this busy road and additional traffic would produce further delay which could be life threatening. The proposed development is therefore not at all appropriate or safe.

I am sure you will agree with my reasoning above that this proposed development is unsound, insensible, unnecessary and unsafe. Bearing this in mind it would be reckless of the Council to pursue this matter and the proposed development should be abandoned with immediate effect.

My recommendations to you are as follows:-

1. Decline the proposed development with immediate effect.
2. Confirm that the intent of the Covenant will be honoured.
3. Set up a working party with Oakland, Arden Tennis Club and Solihull Football Club to return the Rugby pitches to their rightful purpose of providing sporting facilities for residents of Solihull.
4. Look to purchase the Freehold title from Oakland to facilitate point 3 above.
5. Facilitate the granting of new residential development to sites that make far greater sense than this one.

Please give your fullest consideration to my objection and I am sure you will make the correct appropriate decision based upon my comments.

I would welcome your confirmation that you have both received my email and that you will give it your most serious attention.

Regards,



