

Draft for Appeal

Hello everyone, my name is Mike Whitehouse and I am here to speak on behalf of over 200 residents of Hythe & Dibden who are opposed to this development.

I'd like to describe some context about the local area and why the feelings of the local residents are so strongly against this development.

Let me begin by saying that local residents do not fall into the regular characterisation of 'not in my backyards'.

Residents are absolutely not opposed to the development of Orchard Gate, we have always known that the site would be developed, but planning precedent in Dibden Purlieu means that we expected it to be developed in a way that respects the existing sylvan character of the area.

One of the reasons that feelings are so strong is that people from across the Parish value the character and street scene of Noads Way, Lime Walk and Lime Close. Residents from across the Parish avail themselves of the quiet and attractive walks that can be had in the area.

This scheme is a mass overdevelopment of the site when you take into account the existing character and street scene, and if allowed, will form a precedent that will forever change the sylvan character of the area.

Nobody is in favour of this scheme apart from the Appellant themselves. The Appellant, by the way, has no local knowledge of this area, for example as evidenced by some of the statements made in relation to transport in their application and grounds for appeal. The feeling is that every time residents have offered substantial requested feedback through various random communications, these views have been totally disregarded – the feeling is, why bother asking us ? The Appellant has generally used their communications to residents as a simple tick box exercise.

What has transpired, quite uniquely, is to firmly align the views of the District Council, the Parish Council, and their electorates.

To clarify the site is situated in the original part of Dibden Purlieu, known by local residents as 'old Dibden Purlieu'. This refers broadly to the area north of Beaulieu Road

The 'block' immediately surrounding the site, bounded by North Road, Lime Walk, Lime Close, and Noads Way, is characterised wholly by individually designed detached properties, in plots averaging between 0.25 – 0.5 of an acre, with large gardens, garages, and material off road parking

I would like to show you an image of the 'block' in question, showing clearly the size, screening and proximity of existing properties to each other.

It is a fact that owners of those properties have long been bound by strict planning conditions that have sought to maintain the character and street scene of Noads Way and Lime Walk, including Lime Close. Many planning refusals have cited that proposals were not in keeping with the street scene.

History shows that most homeowners on Noads Way for example can't even remove a tree branch without permission

The Appellant seeks to present a case that this is a backland development, of which there are examples in the area, and that the street scene of Noads Way would be maintained by placing the side of a link detached house on the frontage of the site

The reality is that the proposal that the Appellant seeks to develop inserts a homogenous housing estate right in the centre of that block, with 25 mainly semi-detached and terraced dwellings with an average plot size of 0.08 of an acre. It is simply completely out of keeping.

As I said, the Appellant makes the case that this is a backland development of the sort that already exists in the area. This is simply not true.

Notable existing back land developments in the immediate neighbourhood include The Garth, off Noads Way; and Haynes Way, off North Road.

Each of these so-called back land developments carry the planning precedent resulting in detached, individual characterful properties, with garages and off-road parking

We contend that in no way is the proposed development of Orchard Gate comparable with existing precedents

To illustrate this point, I would like to show the Inspector the same scaled block plan.

This clearly shows that the Orchard Gate site is comparable in size and proximity terms to these existing developments.

You can clearly see that The Garth consists of just 9 dwellings, and Haynes Way of just 14 dwellings

Taking into account these facts and the plots of all other existing dwellings, we are of the strong belief that in order to maintain the character of the area, Orchard Gate should be a comparable development with 10-14 dwellings and I would emphasise that this number is consistent with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which describes the land as suitable for a development of 13 net new dwellings. This would garner local support in principle.

Beyond the obvious failings and unsuitability of the scale and design of this scheme there are a number of practical considerations worth pointing out today.

NFDCs waste strategy which comes into effect from 2024 will ultimately have every household provided with 4 waste bins, for general waste, garden waste, mixed recyclables, and food; and sacks for paper and cardboard. A development of 25 dwellings will need storage for 100 bins, yet all of these plots have very small gardens and no garage storage whatsoever, so you can imagine how the street scene will look with bins outside

In addition it is inevitable that a development of this scale will lead to an increase in on-street parking, Noads Way is not a wide thoroughfare, and generally there is very little on-street parking, as demonstrated by the display boards here. The exception is at the start and end of the school day. This already makes passing hazardous as the roads around the three local schools are full of parents' cars, often extending as far as Orchard Gate itself. In addition all of Term time hazardous parking is frequently replaced outside of term times by parents taking their children to the nearby Noads Way Play Area, more on-street parking from Orchard Gate would exacerbate this danger.

Whilst acknowledging that our understanding of the technical arguments is limited, we do have serious concerns that the Appellant has been unable to satisfy NFDC about the adequacy of its plans for drainage. The site is prone to regular flooding with large areas of standing water taking long periods to soak away. These scenes from January this year are quite typical.

Whilst not a planning argument, we are also concerned about the impact that 25 more dwellings would have on what is already very low water pressure in Noads Way.

Furthermore, the scheme as designed would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy for residents particularly in Lime Close, and a loss of amenity for residents in Noads Way with increased noise and light pollution.

I wish to remind the Inspector that the Officer's report on the original Application makes it clear that the Appellant did not take account of advice provided in the pre-application enquiry

In addition an event was hosted by the Appellant on a weekday afternoon in school holidays for residents to see details of the new scheme. This was attended by over 80 local residents, one would assume they were those who were not working or away on holiday

As previously described, It is felt from the Application that the Appellant took no notice of feedback given by local residents at this event.

It's true to say that the Appellant has been deaf to feedback throughout the Application and again during the Appeal.

In summary, this is the wrong development for this site. Allowing a housing estate, completely out of keeping with the surrounding area, on this plot, would clearly drive a coach and horses through planning precedent in the area.

There is zero local resident and local council support for this development.

This type of development would set a new precedent that would make it impossible for NFDC to refuse further such applications, and forever change the sylvan character of the area.

If the Appellant cannot find a way of designing a scheme appropriate to the location, the local feeling is that they should stand aside for a developer that can.

And to finally conclude, Time Out magazine recently listed the New Forest at number 10 in a list of the World's Most Beautiful places. We feel that way about where we live.

We call on this Inquiry to keep it that way.