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Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

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Your Ref: 15/01276/FUL
Our Ref: ph_130418_15_01276 Ch Str housing

13th April 2018

Dear Grahame

15/01276/FUL Erection of 47 dwellings and garaging; formation of estate roads; reformation of existing school vehicular access and adjoining service road; formation of 10-bay coach park and overspill car park; highway alterations; erection of changing rooms and clubhouse; relocation of two sports fields and formation of multi-use games area; formation of sports pitches; formation of children's play area; and formation of grassed terraced amphitheatre, Proposed Development Land to the East of Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application.

Despite the changes to the application, we still do not believe the design and quality of the proposed development meets the requirements set out in the Council's SAMDev Plan:

The AONB designation means that the highest and most sensitive design standards will be sought for all forms of new development in Church Stretton to minimise any adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity in line with Policies CS6, MD2, MD12 and MD13.

We are not opposed to the principle of housing development on this allocated site, but it is a prominent site at one of the main northern entrances to the town, and needs to be in keeping with the surroundings, including the nearby Conservation Area. It is situated on an easy and well used walking route out of the town offering remarkable views to the east from a roadside location.

We note the amendment adding open space in the north-east of the site due to the Source protection Zone. However, the consequent overspill of houses south of the access road means the development does not hold together and integrate well. These houses are we believe too close to the school buildings and MUGA and should be removed from the scheme.

We urge engagement with local stakeholders including Church Stretton Town Council, to make improvements to the design and quality of the scheme.

The following policies, amongst others, are highly pertinent to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework para 116.

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated

Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS17: Environmental Networks states:

Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:

- *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors. Further guidance will be provided in SPDs concerning the natural and built environment;*
- *Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge.*

Shropshire Council SAMDev Policy MD12: The Natural Environment states:

In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the conservation, enhancement and restoration of Shropshire's natural assets will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that the social or economic benefits of development can be demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm to natural assets where proposals are likely to have an unavoidable significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:

- i. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;*
- ii. locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;*
- iii. priority species;*
- iv. priority habitats*
- v. important woodlands, trees and hedges;*
- vi. ecological networks*
- vii. geological assets;*
- viii. visual amenity;*
- ix. landscape character and local distinctiveness.*

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan policy for Housing and Design of Development states:

The design of all housing (market priced and affordable) should demonstrate sensitivity to the special qualities of the AONB.

Where affordable housing is allowed when other forms of development would not be, in order to meet social need, the standards of sensitivity to the AONB should not be compromised, and are expected to be higher than outside the AONB. Such cases need to include a rigorous assessment of identified local housing need and consideration of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development without undermining the purposes of designation. Development should not contribute to the loss of irreplaceable habitats or established ancient trees.

All development should integrate well into the historic pattern and character of the surrounding built environment and landscape. Building style should reflect local tradition, and designs should be of a high standard in keeping with the nationally designated landscape. In line with Core Strategy policy CS6, particular regard should be paid to village and town design statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. Inappropriate design, layout and materials should be avoided. Innovative sustainable schemes are to be encouraged where they take account of the surrounding vernacular and the use of local materials.

Where possible, locally-occurring building materials should be used. Roofing materials should be in keeping with those used in nearby buildings, with no bright coloured tiles or reflective surfaces. The use of photovoltaic tiles matching existing and surrounding roof colours should be encouraged. External lighting on new developments should be kept to a minimum and use down-lighting to reduce light pollution.

Yours sincerely

Phil Holden
AONB Partnership Manager