



*making Frome a better place*

Oliver Marigold  
Planning Department  
Mendip District Council  
Cannards Grave road  
Shepton Mallet  
Somerset  
BA4 5BT

23 July 2015

Dear Oliver

**2015/1170/REM - Application for Reserved Matters Approval for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale following outline permission 2013/1635. Land to the East of Southfield Farm, Rodden, Frome**

Southfield Farm is one of the key development sites in Frome, the site borders the river and careful consideration needs to be given to reflect the value and use of this amenity. It is essential that any development proposals for this site are of good quality design and that adequate provision is made within the site for pedestrian and cycle routes linking the site to the town centre, along the River Frome.

Following a meeting of the Frome Town Council Planning Advisory Group and Council, it was agreed that, whilst the principle of residential development of this site is supported, this Reserved Matters application should be refused for the following reasons:

1. A Development Brief has not been prepared and adopted for the site as required by Core Policy 6 of the adopted Mendip District Local Plan and as such it is difficult to see how the various phases fit together. It is recommended that a Masterplan is prepared for this site to inform any future applications.
2. A management plan has not been prepared showing how members of the new community will interact with each other in contravention of Policy H4 in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan
3. No provision has been made within Phase 1 for community facilities compromising the ability of the development to operate as a community

4. The application does not comply with the Travel Plan in that:
  - a) The road system is a dominant feature within the design of Phase 1; there are long uninterrupted stretches of road within the design that will encourage unacceptably high car speeds
  - b) Road layouts are all dead ends with no pedestrian 'cut-troughs' to create sensible desire line routes
  - c) There is no provision for high quality pedestrian and cycle routes within the site
  - d) There is no indication as to how those on foot or bicycle can connect with NCN24
  - e) No plans for cycle parking/storage are shown
5. The plans neither show a footbridge over the River Frome nor pedestrian links to it; this is contrary to Core Policy 6 of the Local Plan, Policy H4 of the Neighbourhood Plan and does not accord with the commitment to contribute to a footbridge within the signed s.106 agreement
6. Whilst the Design & Access Statement promotes a design vision that envisages 'a variety of frontages, but with an emphasis on soft landscape of garden hedges, trees and planting,' street frontages are almost entirely parking
7. The materials plan is not well-coordinated mixing brick, render, stone and tile slate
8. No provision is made for serviced plots for self-build or custom housing as required by Policy H4 of the Neighbourhood Plan; the policy specifies that at least 5% of the housing numbers should be delivered in this way
9. The information supplied with the application is inadequate and the application should not have been validated as there are no plans showing sections through the site.

**Supporting information for:**

**Reason 2 - Community development**

The Design & Access Statement submitted at outline stage set out a vision for the development:

'To create a high quality sustainable new *neighbourhood* for Frome, which delivers a choice and range of high quality new homes, attractive pedestrian friendly streets and accessible greenspace for biodiversity and recreational benefits.'

Neighbourhoods are normally social communities with considerable face-to-face interaction among members. This first phase of development simply delivers housing; there is no provision made for social interaction within it. This is contrary to Policy H4 in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan for Frome that requires any development over 100 houses to set out a management plan detailing how members of the new community will interact with each other and the wider Frome population.

#### **Reason 4 – layout of the site & provision for pedestrians & cyclists within it**

The Travel Plan said ‘In terms of the layout and design of the site a network of high quality pedestrian and cycle routes within the site will offer direct, safe and convenient access around the site by foot and bicycle. This network of routes will provide part of the missing link to NCN24 which runs from Frome to Longleat. The design of the estate roads will be in accordance with Manual for Streets and other relevant guidance so that the road system is not the dominant feature within the new community. By undertaking this approach it is hoped that car speeds will be kept low and hence walking and cycling will be an attractive mode of transport.’

The Travel Plan also indicated that a ‘Reserved Matters applications will indicate the location of cycle parking spaces i.e. for individual dwellings enlarged garages or sheds with suitable locking points will be used and for apartments shared enclosed structures with suitable locking points will be used’.

The Reserved Matters application does not satisfactorily address the above points.

#### **Reason 5 - Pedestrian/cycle links with the rest of the town**

One of the principles embodied within the Design & Access Statement was that there would be enhanced connectivity between the development and Frome with a particular focus being the River Frome corridor. The Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan require a pedestrian link across the river to Adderwell. The signed s.106 agreement commits the developer to make a contribution of £100k to the footbridge. However, the plans neither show the footbridge nor how the development would link with it.

You will see, Oliver, that taken together these matters add up to deep disappointment in this application. I would like to stress that Frome Town Council absolutely recognises the requirement for new housing and our obligation to support its provision. However, it must be of a design and standard which helps build Frome as a well functioning town and provides homes of which we can be proud. This application is currently a long way short of meeting these basic requirements.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Peter Macfadyen

Leader, Frome Town Council



Château-Gontier



Murrhardt



Frome



Rabka-Zdrój

