

Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council (NP&HPC)

Comments on 18/2608/OUT

NP&HPC is deeply disappointed by this application, which seeks to replace a promised doctor's surgery, an important amenity for the village, with two executive – style houses.

Both the outline application and detailed planning application for this new estate were entitled "40 houses and a doctor's surgery". The council feels that it is disingenuous of the applicant, having been granted planning permission on the basis of the pledge of a doctor's surgery, to now seek to walk away from their promises.

At the East Devon District Council Development Management Committee meeting on 17th September 2013, which debated the outline planning application (13/0316/MOUT) the possibility of the developer's pledge to deliver a doctor's surgery being allowed to "drop straight out" was raised by Cllr Pook and was specifically addressed by the applicant's agent, Mr Lestyn John of Bell Cornwell, who said "My client has given a commitment to provide the doctor's surgery and fit it out". This statement served to appease doubters on the DMC who then cited the delivery of the surgery as a reason for supporting the application which was, as we know, outside the then built up area boundary (BUAB) of the village in an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB).

Cllr Howard – "The more satellite surgeries you have with Coleridge being the hub the better. It's going to be an economic benefit".

Cllr Pook also clearly went on to take the surgery into account when deciding to support the application.

Cllr Allan – "I certainly wouldn't support this proposal unless that undertaking [to deliver a surgery] was there".

Cllr Potter – "Lord Clinton is an honourable man and I have no reservations about this at all – no if [the surgery] will happen."

On the face of it this now appears to be yet another example of a developer saying ANYTHING in order to win the case for development, only to go back on their word when it comes to providing a valuable societal facility.

NP&HPC undertook a consultation with the community on 24 November 2014 when the detailed planning application (15/2172/MRES) had been submitted and wrote to the applicant's agent, Bell Cornwell (dated 15th December 2014) with a number of specific concerns, including the delivery and fit out of the surgery, which we requested should be in the first phase of the development. A response from Mr Ed Brown, Development Manager of Cavanna Homes, on 23 December 2014, stated categorically "the surgery building will be provided even though planning policy does not require its provision".

Furthermore, letters of support were received for the detailed planning appeal including (23/10/2015) the submission of a 199-name petition supporting the need for a new surgery in the village and a specific letter of support from Coleridge Medical Centre dated 2 November 2015. The Coleridge letter stated that the current facilities in Newton Poppleford are inadequate on the basis of lone working and infection control and does not enable nursing practices to be held there. Therefore, the existing surgery is underutilised and Coleridge were keen for a new facility in the village.

The planned surgery site incorporated 12 car parking spaces, which would have served as overflow parking for the new estate which has inadequate parking facilities. This amenity would be lost if the application is approved.

The two houses proposed to take the place of the surgery are of an executive style, double storey and replace one, single storey surgery building. The double storey structures are contrary to what had been planned at detailed planning. The proposed houses will be overbearing to the existing properties (specifically numbers 25, 27 and 29) in King Alfred Way, being due South / South West from these properties and uphill the houses will cast shadow over them especially during winter months.

The landscaping proposed around these properties include raised gardens, whereas the surgery layout includes a level plot – these proposed raised gardens are clearly unnecessary (as the previous application accommodated a level plot) and will be out of keeping with the rest of the site.

There is little open space proposed in this large housing estate with the planned houses quite cramped together. There is a lack of open space at this end of the village. The new estate has already become a dominant feature of the landscape in the AONB from the north view point and two more large, executive – style houses will only exacerbate the view from the north of the estate.

The Parish Council offered to be involved in the negotiations between the applicant and potential surgery users as it currently provides the surgery facility in Newton Poppleford, but the applicant did not want to engage with the Council. All negotiations have been held without any input from the Parish Council. The reference to Sidmouth Beacon Medical Centre in the application is a red herring as Sidmouth WILL NOT take any patients from Newton Poppleford. Ottery Coleridge remains the key medical centre for our village, which has a large elderly population, and yet we have NO direct transport links to Ottery St Mary and another 50 houses currently being built in the village.

It is NP&HPC's considered opinion that the application should be **refused** on the grounds that it clearly involves the loss of an amenity of significant value to the village (contrary to the statement in Bell Cornwell's report – point 4 "Justification of Proposed Development"). The applicant has, since 2013, promised to deliver a doctor's surgery as an economic benefit in return for permission to build 40 new houses on agricultural land outside the BUAB and in an AONB.

This village wants its surgery, nothing less. If the applicant is unable or unwilling to secure a contract to utilise the surgery once built and fitted out then the Parish Council is willing to take over the management of the surgery once built. The Parish Council would run a new surgery to cover costs, not to seek an economic gain from the public health service.

The Parish Council does not believe that all avenues have been exhausted with regards the development of the new surgery. We would welcome an immediate discussion with all parties to find a potential solution to install a proper medical facility in the village.