# SLAUGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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**Slaugham Parish Council**

**Planning Committee 6th January 2022**

**DM/21/3959 | Change of use and conversion of estate buildings from Residential to D2 (Assembly and leisure) and A3 (Restaurants and cafes). The new uses that are being proposed are: Entrance, Reception, Restaurant, Club room, Cookery school, Wellness centre, Treatment rooms, Yoga studio, Gym, Craft centre, Offices, Staff facilities, Visitor accommodation, Maintenance yard, External swimming pools, Children's play area and Kids club. | Lydhurst Estate Warninglid Lane Warninglid Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 5TG**

The “change of use” from residential to assembly and leisure to include a restaurant with 80 covers alongside a cookery school, wellness centre and treatment area; yoga studio gym, craft centre, children’s area, offices, staff facilities and additional guest accommodation is a significant leap from the current use which will have detrimental transport impact on the village of Warninglid, which is a designated Conservation Area. The current and what appears to be the continual access to the Estate will be via The Street which is entrenched with 16th century buildings that have significant architectural and historic interest.

Please note the following policies set out in the Mid Sussex District Plan

DP35 Conservation Areas <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.

Evidence Base: Mid Sussex Conservation Area Appraisals; Sussex Extensive Urban Surveys; West Sussex Historic Environment Record.

**Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:**

**• New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;**

**• Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;**

**• Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;**

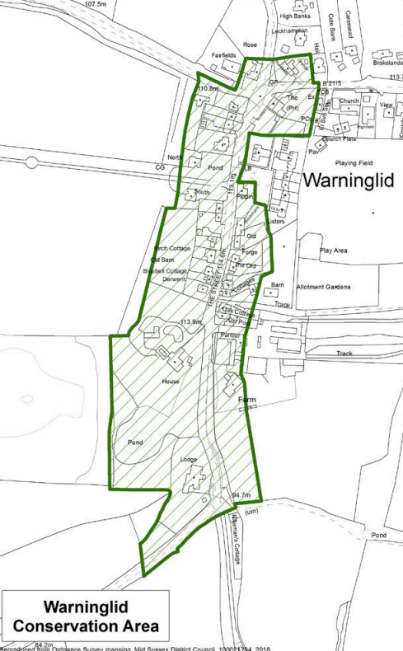
**• Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;**

**• Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are** supported;

**• New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.**

Mid Sussex District Council has designated 36 Conservation Areas so far. They were designated between 1969 and 2003, and a few Conservation Areas have had their boundaries amended since the original designation. This document provides a description and boundary map for each Conservation Area.

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3710/conservation-areas-in-mid-sussex.pdf>

**Warninglid – Conservation Area**

The Street, which forms the focus of the Conservation Area designated in 1969, contains a number of buildings dating back to the 16th century. Some of these are Listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.

The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

• the attractiveness of The Street due to the variety in the ages and styles of building;

• the predominant use of traditional and natural building materials e.g. sandstone, brick, timber and clay roof tiles;

• the traditional style street lamps and road sign directing traffic to adjacent villages/towns;

• the sense of enclosure created by the buildings and the bank, hedges and trees adjacent to The Street; and

• the village pond with an arching sandstone bridge leading to the drive of Lyndhurst Estate, creating a focal point within The Street.

The Council welcome the development of local business that support the economic growth of the Parish, nevertheless these must be sensitive to the local area specifically where there is an increase in traffic movements and demand on local infrastructure that will be needed to support it. These were some of the areas that the Council were mindful of when producing their local plan and policies.

**National Planning Policy Framework 16** **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - Paragraphs 189-208** [**https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/16-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/16-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment)

In determining applications, the Local Planning Authority has the responsibility to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area and any new development must make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

We believe that the increase in volume of traffic would neither enhance the area or make a positive contribution to it. It could be said that this proposal will cause “significant harm” to the setting of the Conservation Area in its current form.

**Slaugham Parish Neighbourhood Plan.**

**Policy 12: Economic Development**

7.7. The local economy is predominantly rural, and in part dependent upon small scale businesses which are scattered throughout the Parish.

7.8. SPC wish to support economic growth in the Parish in order to create jobs and a strong rural economy. SPC therefore wish to support the sustainable start-up of new businesses in the Parish.

7.9. Policy 12 provides a supporting context within which such proposals would be considered in the development management process. Plainly, the definition of a sustainable location will be a matter of local judgement. However, SPC considers that a sustainable location would be either one within Handcross or Pease Pottage or within 800 metres of the settlement boundaries of those settlements, and/or readily accessible to non-car forms of transport.

Policy 12: Economic Development Proposals which enable the development of business uses within the Parish will be supported where proposals are:

1. Located in a sustainable location;

2. In keeping with the character of the area;

3. Respect residential amenity; and

4. Would not have an unacceptable impact on the local road network.

**Policy 4 Conservation Areas**

Development proposals within Handcross, Slaugham or Warninglid Conservation Areas will be supported where they conserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conversation Area concerned, and comply with the requirements in Policy DP35 (Conservation Areas) of the MSDP.

Development proposals which respect the following features:

1. St. Mary’s Church, Slaugham;

2. The Street (Park Road), Slaugham

3. Slaugham Place;

4. The Street, Warninglid; and

5. High Street, Handcross.

will be supported where such proposals would conserve or enhance the specific part of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting.

We believe that some of the statements made by the Estate and their professional consultants are inadequate. The Transport Statement does not provide an adequate assessment of the impact of the proposed expansion.

The survey and the statistics collated were completed during the COVID19 pandemic which is not a true reflection on the traffic movements and so the projected movements once the development is complete.

The document alludes to be written in accordance with the Horsham District Local Plan when it should be in accordance with the Mid Sussex District Plan as the LPA for Warninglid, not Horsham.

**Local Response - The Committee consulted with the local residents who have three key areas of concern:**

**Traffic** **Impacts**

This is as already stated a serious concern and its impact on the village particularly the residents of “The Street”.

**Utility Infrastructure**

The impact on the water and electricity supplies given that we are all aware of the fragility of both these services, having had no water for long periods in the last few years.

**Future Growth**

Lydhurst Estate may decide to increase services beyond this proposal so strategic plans should be shared so adequate infrastructure measures to support those if resolved upon can be invested in now

or:

What corrective measures can be put in place should the activity levels significantly exceed those proposed within the submitted plans.

1. **Traffic**

The Council, along with many of the residents of the village, and in particular those that live on The Street within the Conservation Area are concerned with the increase in vehicular movements linked to this proposal that will be generated during the construction period and in line with the ongoing operational activity proposed.

The access from the village crossroads is already effectively single file due to width of the road, resident and visitor parking alongside the Public House, The Half Moon to Listers. All of which is adjacent to the Lydhurst Estate entrance.

The access to the village from the A272/Spronkets Lane is similarly congested along the length of The Street for much of the day and already a hazard to agricultural traffic and other legitimate users, which include, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians.

The projected traffic flows are inadequate for the facilities and services being constructed under this proposal, little regard has been given to staff and service vehicles, passing trade to the proposed café, visitors to the wellness studio, pool, treatment rooms and cookery school. This statement is supported in the WSCC consultation response where more accurate information is required and that this needs to be revisited.

<https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Live/Document/ViewDocument?id=7F5E4EFE985B42AFBD54F48A22D02BAC>

All of these facilities will need a constant flow of customers, staff, service vehicles and suppliers to ensure they remain in good order and viable.

We also note that the traffic modelling was completed in 2020/21 during the early pandemic period and is not reflective of normal village life and traffic movements. There are other noteworthy inaccuracies within the transport statement that do not provide a factual representation of the increase in traffic to the area which need to be revisited.

The proposed access is width restricted over the “pond bridge” with no provision for larger vehicles to safely access without blocking the Street. The bridge and ponds are an important feature in the Warninglid Conservation Area close to which are a number of Listed Buildings in The Street, the importance of which should not be diminished as set out above. The Street, does not lend itself to accommodate large delivery vehicles, there is not enough room for two cars to pass let alone larger vehicles.

There are strong feelings locally that all access/egress should be from Warninglid Lane, rather than access from The Street and egress from Warninglid Lane. Given the traffic numbers we are anticipating, there would still be an unacceptable level of traffic movements in The Street.

With this in mind we fully support the WSCC Highways Officers request more information and that this proposal is reconsidered surrounding transport/access as a matter of local importance to the area and surrounding villages.

1. **Utilities**

Concerns regarding the increase demand on local utilities, particularly water and electricity. There appears to be no provision for significant brown water harvesting and the achievement of water neutrality.

We are concerned with the increase in demand on the electricity power supply which is currently inadequate for an expansion of this size. The network has known issues that have been raised with UKPN, which require network enhancements as the village experiences weekly outages. The villages has over the years also experienced several water crisis most recently in for just over 3 days in the summer of last year and for some week in August 2020, this made the local and national news. We are of the opinion that the Estate draws from the same network for both electricity and water, this will be have severe impacts unless more work is proposed alleviate these.

The electrical services feasibility report acknowledges the strain on the network and the impacts of the and makes several recommendations to transfer load within the site itself along with an initial approach made to UKPN, via Crown Energy to establish the feasibility and likely costs for providing the required supplies. As we see it there are no actual plans for this to be extended improvements to outside the site or the impacts that this will have on local infrastructure. The current study also recommends the replacement of oil fired boilers due to the high carbon omissions and local planning policy to use renewables where feasible. This will increase demand in the future.

The risks surrounding loss of electricity due to the demands on site are documented. This includes the disruption to the mains water supply with the increase water consumption to service the various services swimming pool, leisure/gym guest accommodation and WCs etc. There are recommendations being made with no validity, further work is required to include UKPN and Southern Water agency approach to the increased demand planned as part of this proposal. We are note that the planning officers report acknowledges this also.

<https://padocs.midsussex.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Live/Document/ViewDocument?id=066C61E77B4A42AE8C9267899E90918B>

1. **Future Growth**

What is next? There is a concern that should the estate proposals be the success the owners hope for, what will follow and how and can this be planned for? There is, and understandably so, no provision for success beyond that anticipated. The challenge for the estate will be how to manage this. The reality is the impact on the village and the wider Parish and how the local residents will live with a deteriorating quality of life caused by increased traffic to the area with no input on how this may be dealt with. This will leave those locally with the feeling of isolation and abandonment caused by the success of the venture with no further engagement or local consultation.

With this in mind the Council propose that restrictions/conditions are considered now to permitted development rights to ensure there is no development creep and the estate become a victim of its own success. We can see locally the impact on Handcross caused by Nymans Gardens and more recently the impact at Lower Beeding of the regenerated Leonardslee Gardens. The village would be unable to cope on a daily basis, and it would have detrimental effect on an area that is immeasurably valued and cherish, that has significant historical value.

We appreciate that the LPA will be undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as the site is also within the High Weald AONB, which is excellent news for a site of this size and potential.

However, it would appear that the only assessment that has currently been documented is the environmental protection of the site, which states that due to its proximity (approx. 300m) to the nearest property impacts are unlikely. We do not agree with this assessment. We believe that this proposal will affect the residential amenity of those neighbouring properties by additional noise, odour and light pollution not to mention the movement of those attending and leaving the site. We appreciate that further work is recommended here to ensure conformity with MSDC Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution.

With regard to construction conditions and control, noise and air quality emissions should also be measured based on the current planned access to the site, which is unsuitable for construction traffic, limiting or restricting the movement and timings will not adequately alleviate this.

**Slaugham Parish Council Planning Response - In Summary**

**It is with regret that Slaugham Parish Council do not feel that they can support this application in its current form and therefore object to the proposed development.**

The increase in traffic movements within the conservation area that will be wholly harmful to the environment, the Street and quality of life for those living within the immediate area and the wider village conurbation to include the impacts on local infrastructure and the repercussions that this will have.

We would ask the LPA planning officers and delegated committee propose that further work is undertaken on the transport and traffic movements along with the increase demand on services to include a plan for improvement before recommendation to approval. As previously stated, we would like WSCC Highways representation response to include the provision for the main access/exit from the site onto the Warninglid Lane, not the Street. This Committee would be more than happy to attend site meetings to support this going forward.

We do hope this proposal is a success for the Lydhurst Estate and the owners whilst recognising that whilst progress can be a force for good, it must not be to the detriment of the village, its residents, and the surrounding area.