

LDF proposals for Hampsthwaite

Comments from Hampsthwaite Parish Council on the proposal to build 100 dwellings on Land South of Brookfield (RL3036)

Introduction:

Hampsthwaite residents are insistent that we remain a village discrete from any creeping urbanisation from nearby Harrogate. It is noted that proposed development in Harrogate itself is likely to result in more housing between Hampsthwaite and Harrogate. We note also that the burden of 100 extra houses appears excessive when compared with other villages of a similar size.

On Thursday 21 October 2010, 109 Hampsthwaite residents attended an Open Meeting held in the Memorial Hall to discuss the Local Development Framework plans for Hampsthwaite. The preferred option, R3036, put forward by Harrogate Borough Council for 100 houses on land south of Brookfield, was discussed in some detail.

Residents at the meeting made their opposition to the HBC scheme very clear with no votes for the proposal as it stands and an overwhelming majority voting in favour of no further development at all. A small minority of 10 indicated that they might be willing to compromise if a much smaller number of dwellings is put forward by HBC.

The overwhelming majority of the community of Hampsthwaite rejects strongly any proposal for additional housing beyond that which has already taken place over recent years and can see no material evidence justifying the need for further housing development which will clearly adversely affect the beauty of this very historic rural village.

Objections:

1. This proposal was rejected on two previous occasions:
 - This site has been the subject of **two previous failed applications** and the reasons for their failure remain valid today. The reasons for failure are **incorrectly recorded** as not causing "*harm to the form and structure of the village*" in the Local Plan History for this site in Assessment of Site Options Volume 6 (Glasshouses to Hampsthwaite) – i.e. The Secretary of State actually said in his summary:
 - Residential development of this area:
 - "*would be a substantial addition to the adjoining development which already conflicts with the basic form of the village. I consider that it would cause **significant additional harm** to that form*".
 - Concerning the landscape and views:
 - "*The result would be to make the locality significantly more urban and **seriously harm** the pleasant rural character which it has at present*".
 - Concerning protection of the countryside:
 - "*would be a **significant and harmful intrusion** of built development into what is at present an area of attractive countryside*".

2. The site boundary is known to be incorrectly drawn:
 - it has been brought to our attention that the boundary of Site RL11141(1) is incorrectly drawn as passing through land belonging to the The Old Mill thus throwing into question the validity of the survey overall – i.e. how many more errors are there?
 - Since estimates of numbers of pupils and increases in traffic flow are also based on total area available, these figures too must now be in question.
 - Even as proposed, the number of children likely to result from the development is seriously underestimated, especially in view of the high proportion of affordable homes suggested. Our firm view, based on our experience of existing developments in Hampsthwaite, is that figure of at least double the 26 extra children advised by NYCC is more likely.

3. Entry to the proposed site is restricted:
 - the statement in the Assessment of Site Options Volume 6 (Glasshouses to Hampsthwaite) that “*Access can be made to the 'Brookfield' estate on either Brookfield, Brookfield Garth or Brookfield Crescent*” appears completely to disregard the fact that all traffic from these entrances is funnelled into Brookfield and out on to Hollins Lane at very busy and poor visibility junction.
 - Brookfield itself is residential and with many young families. The expansion proposed would significantly increase road traffic, speeding and consequently increase danger to those living on this single access route. It is not unreasonable to suggest that there could be as many as 200 extra cars making use of this one junction several times each day.

4. Surface water drainage:
 - the clue is in the name “Brookfield”! Even at times of only moderate rain, surface water drainage in from Hollins Lane and Brookfield is already overwhelmed. Brookfield itself has been inundated with water flooding off the fields behind.
 - Drainage systems down Hollins Lane and leading into Hollins Close have not been able to cope with the volume despite recent attempts to improve the situation. During severe weather, roads are flooded and drainage covers lifted, thus creating a traffic hazard.
 - We note also the proposal itself recognises that Killinghall Water Treatment Works “*has limited capacity for expansion*”.
 - The name *Hamps* derives from its Middle English title, “*Hanespe*” which derives from the British name, which means “*summer dry*”, i.e. dry in summer - and therefore wet in winter!

5. Hampsthwaite is poorly serviced by public transport:
 - the Route 24 Harrogate to Pateley Bridge bus is the only transport service which runs mainly hourly up to 6:30pm (last bus from Harrogate) and currently costs £6.20 per person for a return ticket covering just the 5 mile route to Harrogate. At the decision of NYCC, this service is being further reduced by removing the winter Sunday and Bank Holiday runs between all villages on route from Harrogate to Pateley Bridge. For people living in affordable accommodation and on low incomes and without vehicle transport, access to the village by public transport is very expensive indeed.

6. An unacceptable degree of urbanisation:
 - the initial proposal of 100 houses (leading up to a total of 390 possible houses) will virtually double the existing size of this village. The impact on the village and its infrastructure will be huge and lead to a serious detrimental change to its character, village community spirit, and visual countryside setting, effectively turning the village into a small urban town with the appearance of that of a large sprawling housing estate.
7. Hampsthwaite has absorbed several developments recently:
 - since the early 1980's, Hampsthwaite has absorbed the very considerable developments of the Brookfield Crescent estate and, most recently, the St Thomas a'Becket estate, Dawson Court and Cruet Fold. Additional large-scale proposals such as this seriously undermine the identity of the village – i.e. when is a village not a village?
 - The name "*Thwaite*" comes from the Old Scandinavian word *thveit*, meaning '*clearing, meadow or paddock*'. The proposal to build on the rising landscape to the south of the village will adversely change the skyline, increase light pollution and harm the identity of Hampsthwaite not only physically, but literally.
8. The number of new homes proposed represents a 22.5% (!) increase in the size of the village:
 - Clause 2.48 of Policy YH6 within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) stipulates that the plan seeks to prevent dispersal of development to smaller settlements and open countryside and that the LDF should establish local development needs that are essential to support smaller settlements and appropriate limited types of development in the open countryside in line with PPS7.
 - We do not accept that the LDF has accurately established adequate local development needs essential to support the Hampsthwaite village and is instead imposing this excessive development burden on the village against its residents' wishes and those of previous housing needs surveys.
9. A serious loss of attractive countryside too close to the designated Area of Natural Beauty:
 - the proposed development is contrary to the aims of Clause 2.46 of Policy YH6 within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which identifies that 80% of the Region is rural in nature and that there is a need to ensure that the countryside is enhanced and provides a "*functional landscape*" where development draws on and sustains the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Region.
 - It will also contradict the further stipulated aims within the RSS to provide effective environmental stewardship in terms of economic restructuring and the importance attached to local people having access to local services to enhance the quality of life experienced by them.
10. The forthcoming Localism Bill:
 - in light of the forthcoming Localism Bill (expected to begin its passage through Parliament before Christmas) that will see the implementation of the Government's intention to abolish current Regional Strategies and return decision-making powers in housing and planning to local authorities, any proposals for additional housing within Hampsthwaite should await the

outcome of this Bill and take due regard for actual locally generated planning needs of the village and not simply force development on the village driven by available land and previous Government targets. (letter dated 10th November 2010 from the Chief Planner for the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to the chief planning officers of all local planning authorities in England and Secretary of State's (SoS) letter to the Planning Inspectorate on 27 May 2010 refers).

11. In Hampsthwaite's Village Plan of 2006, some 75% of respondents wanted no further building development:

- a 56-question survey was distributed to 441 households in the village during May 2006 and 258 questionnaires were returned. This was a 59% response rate, demonstrating a high level of interest in the survey – see www.hampsthwaite.org.uk/ParishPlan/planindex.html.
- The proposed development is on green field land expanding the previous development limits of the village and taking away significant areas of open countryside contrary to the spatial vision and headline outcomes of the RSS and Policy H2/B1 which requires local planning authorities to prioritise housing development on previously developed brownfield land and through conversions of existing buildings to contribute to a regional target of at least 65%. We are also of the view that Part D of policy H2 (clause 12.25 of the RSS) has not appropriately taken account of the Housing Green Paper (2007), advice from the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit and other relevant evidence.

12. Local affordable housing needs have already been met:

- a Housing Needs Survey, conducted by the Rural Housing Trust in March 2006, recommended a local needs housing scheme of 10 to 12 two and three bedroom dwellings. The recently built affordable homes at Cruet Fold have already met this need.
- The proposed quantity of affordable housing at 50% is too high. HBC's Core Strategy assumes a level of 40% in line with Policy H4 of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy May 2008 (RSS). This higher figure also does not take account of the amount of affordable housing which already exists throughout the village, notably the recent Cruet Farm rural exception development consisting of 100% affordable houses, and the number of low cost houses in the village, either council or privately owned.

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and dated 25th November 2010