



**Late Observations Sheet**  
**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**  
**10 September 2015 at 7.00 pm**

Late Observations

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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thursday 10 September 2015

LATE OBSERVATION SHEET (2)

4.1 – SE/15/00628/OUT Fort Halstead, Crow Drive, Halstead, Sevenoaks TN14 7BU

It has been requested that policy EMP3 be provided in full:

Policy EMP3 - Redevelopment of Fort Halstead:

Fort Halstead, as defined in Appendix 6, is allocated as a Major Employment Site in the Green Belt.

Redevelopment proposals will be expected to achieve a range of employment uses appropriate to an employment site such as research and development, serviced offices and workshops and generate at least the number of jobs that the site accommodated immediately prior to the announced withdrawal of DSTL from the site. Redevelopment may also include a hotel. Land based employment, such as the management of the woodland and downland will also be supported, subject to the criteria below.

Residential development of up to 450 units may also be permitted provided it forms part of a mixed used scheme that delivers an employment-led development and is designed and sited in a way that is consistent with the provision of a range of employment uses appropriate to an employment site. It must also comply with other aspects of the policy. The inclusion of appropriate community facilities and infrastructure to support the sustainable development of the site consistent with the policy will be required. Redevelopment of the site will maintain or reduce the amount of built development on the site and be fully contained within the Major Employment Site Boundary. It should have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The height of the buildings must take into account the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the countryside in this location.

Redevelopment proposals would be expected to:

- Be sustainable in respect of the location, uses and quantum of development and be accompanied by a Travel Plan incorporating binding measures to reduce dependency of future occupants on car use;
- Provide accessibility to jobs, shops and services by public transport, cycling or walking, including proposals for onsite provision proportionate to the proposed development;
- Make a positive contribution to the achievement of aims and objectives of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and conserve and enhance the natural beauty and tranquillity of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Confirm, by way of a Transport Assessment, that the development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the local and strategic road networks;
- Protect and integrate the Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed buildings into the development with improved access and setting;

## Agenda Item

- Integrate existing dwellings located in close proximity to the boundary of the Major Employment Site into the new development;
- Incorporate principles of sustainable design and construction to minimise energy consumption in its construction and operation;
- Improve the provision and connectivity of green infrastructure, including the protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and the provision of improvements to the Public Right of Way network.
- Provide for a comprehensive development and include a phasing plan, including phasing of infrastructure provision, showing how each phase of the development will contribute to the implementation of the policy.

### Minor Amendments

The following late observations relate to minor amendments to the main report as follows:

Condition 16a delete the word construction and insert the word development.

Condition 22 insert the word and instead of an

Informative 5: The Informative to read: Contaminated soil that must be disposed of is waste.....etc

Page 29, paragraph 5 – Should read DSTL not DST.

Page 75, paragraph 311 should refer to S38(6) of the Act, not 36(6).

Page 80, Para 347 7<sup>th</sup> bullet point...remove the word *restrictions*. This sentence reads Charging points for electric vehicles within the site.

Page 83, paragraph 367 – add the word *exist* to the end of the first sentence.

Page 90, paragraph 413 – First sentence should read “There are still concerns from residents and Parish Council’s , about the impact of additional traffic upon surrounding roads with many suggesting that the Star Hill entrance should be closed other than for emergencies.”

Page 121, paragraph 606 correction to second sentence “Natural chalk slopes and escarpments formed at angles of less than 30° are highly likely to be stable.”

Page 99: Paras 469 – 471 delete these paragraphs – they replicate paragraphs 462-465.

Page 101: Para 487: Since the publication of this report the conclusion in paragraph 487 has been queried in respect of the harm caused to the significance of the heritage assets. In response it has been confirmed that the harm identified in this paragraph is in fact considered to be **less than** substantial in accordance with the detailed analysis. The analysis remains the same as does the officer recommendation.

Page 77: Para 325 Although a precise floorspace comparison is problematic, as described above, we are able to compare the footprint confirmed by the 2004 LDC with the footprint that would result from the development shown in the illustrative masterplan. Some Late Observations

demolitions have been undertaken by Dstl which amount to approximately 17,781 sq m's leaving a current footprint of approx. 64,387 sq m's. Taking the footprint from the masterplan, including all forms of development identified therein, would result in a footprint of approx, 50,949 sq m's.

### Trees

Para 525: The issue of Ash Die Back is referred to in paragraph 525. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has been asked to amplify the potential implications of this and has responded as follows:

"Tree diseases are all around and affect different species of tree in differing ways. The affects could be to cause problems to individual trees, which then need to be assessed on an individual basis. The affects of certain diseases can also spread from tree to tree and affect individual species or a variety of species such as Honey Fungus (Armillaria). Certain diseases have been in the press of late including Chalara dieback of Ash (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) and Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp (Dryocosmus kuriphilus).

Ash die back disease was first identified in 2012 in small pocket areas in the east of England. In the last few years it has spread and has now been identified within the Sevenoaks boundaries in Otford and Riverhead. Given its geographical spread since 2012, it is inevitable that Ash trees in and around Fort Halstead will be exposed to the fungal infection. It is unknown what the affects may be as research has shown that younger growth are more susceptible to the affects of the disease than mature growth although mature growth is not immune. The worst case scenario is that large amounts of the Ash population at this location will be affected, and will have to be felled. This could lessen the woodland cover for this area considerably, as there are a large amount of Ash present here. It would then require the management of the site to deal with the issue as any other land managers will need to. The issue here is what happens if the Ash are removed and the tree population is dramatically decreased. There needs to be a woodland management plan to organise the replanting of woodlands and individual estate trees with other suitable forest type trees following the removal of any that become infected. This is an unknown quantity at this stage but it would be prudent to plan for the aforementioned worst case scenario

Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp (OCGW) was recently discovered in Farningham Woods in June 2015, the first time this pest has been confirmed as present in the UK. A second site has been confirmed with OCGW present in a small number of trees in a single street in Hertfordshire. Investigations and continual monitoring are continuing following the felling and burning of the infected foliage. As for Chalara, the way to deal with OCGW is to fell and remove the trees. Any outcome can only be assumed at this stage as it is not known whether the pest will spread or if it has been stopped by the precautionary felling that has recently taken place. Sweet Chestnut is not as widespread at Fort Halsted as Ash species. The worst case scenario therefore is for less of an overall affect to the felling of infected trees if there are fewer trees to be infected. The solution would be same as for Chalara to restock following any clearance."

### Traffic Impact

Para's 401 - 417 address the issue of the impact of the scheme upon the surrounding highways network.

## Agenda Item

A briefing note has been submitted by the applicants Transport Consultants which addresses the concerns expressed regarding the impact of the scheme upon Star Hill. It summarises the following:

- It is important that Star Hill is retained as an access for emergency vehicles, buses pedestrians and cycles. Both the 402 bus and community bus would need to use this access as the most suitable route to access primary schools and to promote ease of access/social cohesion between this site and the surrounding area.
- Traffic surveys undertaken in June 2014 and in November 2008 (not during school holidays) confirmed that most traffic using Star Hill to gain access to Knockholt originated mainly from the south ie Sevenoaks rather than from Bromley or Biggin Hill to the north.
- The provision of a route between Polhill and Star Hill will not create any new short cuts so will not attract through traffic movements.
- The scheme can be developed in a way that will minimise the number of vehicles choosing to use the Star Hill access: circuitous route through the site, low speed limit, road layout that encourage commercial traffic to enter and leave via the Polhill access, additional traffic calming measures on the access road leading to Star Hill, increased perception of the Polhill roundabout as the main entrance to the site.
- The Transport Assessment has assessed that the secondary site access would be used by approximately 90 vehicles during the morning peak hour and 100 during the pm peak hour. These estimates are similar to but slightly lower than, the observed use of the site access in the 2008 traffic survey.
- There will be a small increase in traffic movements across the day which it is estimated will result in less than 20 vehicles driving through Knockholt village/hour/day.
- The safety of this access will be improved by improving visibility splays for vehicles leaving the site and the provision of anti skid surface at the junction.
- The safety of Star Hill will be improved as a result of the introduction of a new 40mph speed limit between Knockholt Village and south of Keepers cottage, new signage at the entry points of the new speed limit and further investigation into the width of the footway outside Keepers Cottages with a view to widening should this be feasible.
- Construction traffic will only use the main entrance