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High Peak
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High Peak Borough Council
Planning Department
PO Box 136
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6 October 2015

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on application no HPK/2015/0497
Land off southern end Long Lane, Chapel-en-le-Frith

I refer to your letter of 21 September 2015 in the above matter and wish to make the following comments with reference to the conditions applied when planning approval was granted 19 December 2013:

- 1 Condition 3 - Approval of the details of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping**
- 1.1 The site is currently an agricultural field bounded by dry stone walls, partially below the level of adjacent roads and against the backdrop of the National Park. It lies outside the current developed area of Chapel-en-le-Frith. Any development within the site should be sympathetic to that situation.
- 1.2 The plan layout (External Works 101 Rev A) discloses that it is proposed to fill the majority of the area to create a stepped embankment upon which the new houses are to be constructed. The average height of the banking over the current ground level of the field is approximately 500 mm. In many places the banking will be much higher, up to 1,650 mm and it appears that most of the houses at the western boundary will be built on ground higher than the top of current stone walls. Pre-emptive ground works on the site support that interpretation and Seddon Homes' practice on their adjacent, recently completed development demonstrate this in action although it was not in that instance disclosed on the public record of the planning application. At one point of that development the new ground level alongside Bank Hall Drive lies higher than the top of a 1,650 mm stone field entrance gatepost situated within 3 metres distance. It looks forbidding when seen from the footpath and eclipses a long established adjacent tree.
- 1.3 I submit that the construction of such embankments is not sympathetic to the site's situation, emphasises rather than mitigates the visual intrusion of the proposed development and will be of increased detriment to the outlook of properties to the north-

east of Long Lane and the west which are set on lower ground. I suggest it should be specified that the ground level of new construction should be no higher than the level of the field before any earthworks undertaken after 17 June 2013 (when the application was first filed).

- 1.4 I note the plan and elevation overviews submitted of the various house designs. These need to be considered in the context of any raised ground which has the effect of mounting the properties on elevated pedestals.
- 1.5 I note the detailed planting plans and the proposals to maintain and protect the trees currently on the site. However, the proposed construction of encircling embankments as clearly shown on the plan layout will change the situation and conditions for those trees. In effect they will be placed within hollows likely to waterlog which may cause the trees to die rather than flourish. Furthermore, the landscape of housing and natural vegetation will be impacted by the unusual different levels.
- 1.6 If approval is to be granted for the scheme including embankments the applicant should provide details of where the necessary land fill will be obtained and how it will be transported to site.

2 Conditions 13 and 14 regarding surface water run-off and flood risk.

- 2.1 The site currently drains by ditches, natural run off courses and agricultural land drainage into the brook on the east side. It receives direct rainfall and the runoff of rains from the railway embankment to the south edge and from the roadway to the station along the west edge. In addition it receives groundwater from natural seepage and minor springs across the area.
- 2.2 The public record of this planning application obliquely notes the issues of water in the GeoEnvironmental and Archaeological reports but it does not discuss how they will be managed. The developer's plans have to be deduced from the plan layout.
- 2.3 It appears that the developer proposes to fill the ditches and to rely on the raised embankments with steep gradients across the site to keep the new properties dry. It is probable that drains are included to remove surface water from the roadways and they may also convey roof water. The GeoEnvironmental consultant notes that "soakaway drainage is unlikely to be suitable due to the presence of widespread cohesive deposits". Other water receipts directly onto the properties, runoff and groundwater have no management system and may be anticipated to find their way to lower ground across Long Lane to the north-east and the station roadway to the west.
- 2.4 In general, whilst the site in current agricultural use is often waterlogged, the drainage system meets its requirements. However, several times a year the site is unable to drain away quickly enough and water flows in volume from the fields across the roadway leading to the station and into private drains on the western edge that lie below the level of the roadway. On two occasions within the last twenty years the quantum of water exceeded the capacity of those drains and there was a risk of properties flooding. Water sometimes flows onto Long Lane to the north-east.
- 2.5 It is not appropriate that a new development should rely upon private drainage over a roadway outside the site. To the extent that I and my neighbours are able we do not consent to it. In any event, the capacity of such drainage is limited.
- 2.6 I suggest that the developers should be required to construct ditches along the western boundary and across the site to ensure effective drainage in all conditions.

- 2.7 I note from the comment of the Environmental Agency dated 21 September 2015 that they have not received information to support the satisfaction of these reserved conditions 13 and 14.
- 2.8 In view of the importance of these matters I suggest that the developer should be required to place on public record the results of a suitable model of expected rainfall and other water receipts and the management thereof including periods of sustained rainfall and possible climate change impacts.
- 3 Development control committee meeting**
- 3.1 I am willing to address the meeting if invited to discuss these matters further although I hope my letter is sufficiently clear. Otherwise I do not request to address the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Matthew Topham.

Matthew Topham

