

Welcome to the regular Update. There's a lot happening on the planning front in Woking at the moment, mostly outside Hook Heath.

Woking's Town Centre Masterplan

The masterplan sets out detailed standards and principles that should guide development in the town centre, particularly building heights and density. The Council have a consultation running till 17 October. I expect you have all had notification of this; I've had seven so I find it hard to imagine that anyone has been left out, but if you have, you just need to go to the Council website to participate.

Development on Egley Road

In the recently approved Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD), land north of Hoe Valley School on Egley Road was removed from the green belt and allocated for development. Cala Homes and Barchester Healthcare put together a proposal and carried out a public consultation which resulted in a small reduction in the number of dwellings. The site is on the other side of the railway opposite the green belt land south of Allen House Park. A planning application (PLAN/2022/0694) for 88 dwellings (half affordable) and a 62-bed care home has now been submitted. So far there have been 24 objections.

The main issue seems to be the density of development on the site which is much higher than that which prevails on the adjoining Hillside. I expect that the developer will argue that what is important is the impact on the street scene and the development will be screened from Egley Road by trees. For Hook Heath we tried to ensure high density developments of this nature would not be permitted by including in policy BE1:

'Where possible, plot sizes should be similar to those adjacent and in other cases within the mid-range for Arcadian Developments (5-10 dph)'

This was aimed to be more prescriptive than Woking Core Strategy policy CS21 which requires that buildings should be situated *'paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land'*.

Given the relatively high proportion of affordable dwellings in the development I would expect the developer to argue that a reduction in housing density would reduce the proportion of affordable houses.

Development on Sutton Green Golf Course

A second application for a housing estate and care home has recently been submitted.

PLAN/2022/0647 Outline planning application for the redevelopment of a golf course to provide a 66x bed care home (Use Class C2), a retirement community (Use Class C2) comprising up to 200x extra care retirement dwellings, associated facilities and amenities alongside a c.30ha Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and associated works with all matters reserved except access.

There have been over 100 objections so far. The main issues are very different to the Egley Road development.

- The site is in the green belt and not in the approved Site Allocations Development Plan Document for development.
- Official figures show there is currently no need for another care home.
- The SANG cannot be delivered by the developer as SANGs are the responsibility of Woking Borough Council.

I understand that some of the current golf club members have left to join other golf clubs, as they are naturally worried as to whether they will be able to continue to play golf. This may result in a loss of income for Sutton Green Golf Club in the short term if planning permission is refused.

5G Telecoms Towers

Woking Borough Council have recently rejected applications for four towers elsewhere in Woking, two on the advice of Surrey County Council who thought that the cabinets would impact visibility and reduce road safety.

The number of applications has increased this year; my impression reading the objections is that residents don't believe the safety criteria used by the industry. It can only be a matter of time before this is tested seriously in the courts, both in the UK and abroad. I've noticed that a number of the safety statements have been prepared by trainees. I would have expected that WBC would insist that they were countersigned by a chartered engineer, if only to minimise their exposure to a legal claim.

The last application in the centre of Hook Heath was rejected and it's hard to imagine what other sites in Hook Heath would be suitable.

Planning law changes

The government has been distracted by other issues and it's hard to predict what changes any new government would implement. Our Neighbourhood Plan might last to 2027 after all.

Permitted development rights (where in some circumstances you carry out an extension without full planning permission) were changed in August 2020. The most contentious of these was the right under some circumstances to build an extra storey or two on top of your existing house. There has not been a case of this in Hook Heath yet, partly I suspect because buildings regulations permission is still required and the local authority still has to agree to the extension.

Trees

As part of the application by Birchgrove for rebuilding Woodbank they donated £10,000 for planting mature trees. The Council planted seven specimen trees, mainly in Hook Heath Avenue. Unfortunately, two have died, probably because they were not watered on a regular basis.

Local Planning Applications in the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Area

Six applications reported in the last Update have been approved by the Council.

PLAN/2022/0105

Erection of two-storey rear and side extension, part two-storey, part single-storey side extension, single storey front extension, formation of rooms in the roof space following demolition of garage and utility room. Erection of porch and alterations to fenestration, exterior, roof form and insertion of roof lights at Wood End, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2022/0164

Erection of open sided, lean-to carport at Willoughby Lodge, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2022/0202

Erection of a two-storey front extension and single storey rear extension at The Spinney, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2022/0206

Erection of a two-storey side and rear extension and single storey side extension and front porch following demolition of existing garage. Formation of vehicular access at Spindrift, Ridge Close.

PLAN/2022/0210

Erection of a single storey rear extension at Novem, 9 Fernhill Close.

PLAN/2022/0242

Erection of a two-storey front and side extension with increased ridge height and portico. Erection of a single storey rear extension and creation of pitched roof over existing garage at Paget House, The Drive.

Three applications reported in the last Update remain undecided.

PLAN/2021/1041

Proposed subdivision of the existing plot and erection of a detached two storey building at Haere Mai, Mile Path.

PLAN/2021/1209

Section 73 application to vary Condition 04 (use of store/workshop) of planning permission ref: PLAN/2004/0072 dated 25.03.2004 (To extend onto existing garage and insert new roof to form a store/workshop following demolition of existing store room) to enable the store/workshop to be used as kitchen/living room for guests at Keighley Lodge, Pond Road.

PLAN/2022/0258

Erection of a detached house at High View, 1 Derrydown.

This is a proposal to make a small adjustment to the size of one of the new houses (already approved).

One planning application has been submitted and approved since the last update.

PLAN/2022/0148

Erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory at Camelot, Golf Club Road.

There are eleven new planning applications which are currently undecided.

PLAN/2021/1057

Erection of a single storey rear extension at Agnes House, Pond Road.

PLAN/2022/0423

Erection of single storey side and rear extension and alterations to fenestration at Links Cottage, Golf Club Road.

PLAN/2022/0437

Erection of a replacement dwelling and a home office following demolition of the existing house and the existing detached garage at Little Shepley, Sun Hill.

PLAN/2022/0455

Demolition of all existing structures and erection of one new two storey dwelling plus basement level and the provision of a new vehicular access onto Hook Hill Lane at Hook Hill Farm, Hook Hill Lane.

There have been three objections. Our chief concern is that the plot appears to have been split in two but this is not mentioned in the application and there is no information on what is proposed for the smaller part of the plot.

PLAN/2022/0456

Roof extensions forming gable to the front and 2 x gables to the rear with dormer between to facilitate the conversion of roof space to habitable accommodation, 1 x front roof light and alterations to fenestration to facilitate the conversion of the existing garage to habitable accommodation and detached double garage to the front of the site at Cedarwood, Hook Heath Road.

This proposal in the green belt relies on very special circumstances in that the submission has less impact on the green belt than what could be built under permitted developments.

From the perspective of the typical Hook Heath resident the house is not visible from the public domain and thus the proposal would have no practical impact.

PLAN/2022/0510

Erection of 2No. detached, two-storey houses with rooms in the roofspace, with attached double garage to 1No. house, and associated landscaping following demolition of existing dwelling at Firlands, Holly Bank Road.

The HHRA and four others have written to object, mainly about housing density and parking. However, it is not clear whether these issues will be sufficient to prevent the development.

PLAN/2022/0609

Erection of three sets of gates and supporting pillars and timber post and rail fence across the frontage (retrospective) at Mounts Ryde, Golf Club Road.

Mounts Ryde has been extensively enlarged and as part of that the owner has installed gates and a fence without planning permission. This is an attempt to obtain that permission.

There are two main issues.

The building line of the new fence and gates is situated in front of the boundaries of other houses, changing the street view.

Woking Golf Club have stated that the owners have built the fence and gates on golf club land which the applicants have claimed as their own. The precise position of a boundary is not normally a planning issue but the golf club could take legal steps if planning permission is granted.

In addition, this is a high flood risk area and the planning officer could ask for a flood control plan.

PLAN/2022/0626

Submission of Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale) pursuant to outline permission ref: PLAN/2020/0159 (Outline planning application for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of 2x two-storey three-bedroom dwellings with double garages using existing accesses from Cedar Road with the access arrangements to be determined at the outline stage) at Red Lodge, Cedar Road.

It seems that a number of plans (floor, elevation) are missing from the application. Also, the plans show one three-bedroom and one four-bedroom property, not two three-bedroom houses as in the outline planning permission.

PLAN/2022/0639

Erection of detached outbuilding with first floor accommodation following the demolition of existing garage at Hook Hill Cottage, Sun Hill.

PLAN/2022/0657

Erection of single storey extensions to the front, side and rear elevations and roof extension to increase ridge height including insertion of front dormer windows and rear and front rooflights to facilitate additional accommodation within the roofspace at Eastwood, Hook Heath Road.

Another application which argues that the proposed development is less harmful to the green belt than the already approved expansions together with a permitted development.

PLAN/2022/0697

Erection of a single storey rear extension to form an annexe following removal of existing conservatory at Logie, Cedar Road.

Certificates of Proposed Lawful Development.

One application from the last Update has been withdrawn.

PLAN/2022/0191

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for the erection of a rear outbuilding at the Hippines, Hook Heath Road.

One new application has been rejected.

PLAN/2022/0176

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for a single storey side extension at Gainford, Hook Heath Road.

Gainford is in a conservation area which means that side extensions are not allowed under permitted development rights.

One new application has been approved.

PLAN/2022/0440

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for rear dormer window, 1No side rooflight and alterations to fenestration at West Hurstgate, Hook Heath Road.

Two new applications have been submitted.

PLAN/2022/0578

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for a detached outbuilding (amended description) at Goldhaven, 5 White Pillars, Holly Bank Road.

I wrote to point out that the description was wrong (now corrected) and that the use of the outbuilding wasn't declared (now described as office/gym).

PLAN/2022/0652

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for the erection of a rear dormer and 1no side rooflight at 20, Allen House Park.

Annual General Meeting

We are required by our constitution to hold an annual AGM. The Forum's officers: David Dare, vice chairman; Heather Mustard, secretary; Gerald Griffiths, treasurer; and myself offer ourselves for re-election. The AGM will be held with the HHRA on Monday 10th October at Woking Golf Club, Pond Road. Doors will open at 19.00 for a 19.30 start.

Many thanks for your interest and support

Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman
On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management
Committee