

Examination Statement

Land West of Selsfield Road Ardingly (Draft Allocation SA25)



Appendix 3.0 Letter from Ardingly Primary School



St. Peter's C.E. Primary School

Holmans, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6UQ

Telephone: 01444 892314 Email: office@st-peters.school

Headteacher: Mr J. Savage Deputy Headteacher: Ms V. Price



Tuesday 4th May 2021

Dear Oliver,

It was good to meet with you on Wednesday 28th April and have the opportunity to discuss the proposed development on the land west of Selsfield Road in Ardingly (and immediately north of St. Peter's C.E. Primary School) which is currently owned by the South of England Agricultural Society.

We first met in 2019 when we discussed a number of ways in which the development had the potential to directly impact the school, both positive and negative. Clearly a number of meetings have taken place since we last met and you explained that although the proposal is for 70 houses on the site, you believe that there is still value in considering the originally proposed 100 dwellings as it is likely that you will argue that case when the inspector considers the Mid-Sussex District Development Plan in June. With the inclusion of improved school access and opportunity for the Scouting association to relocate to new premises from their current derelict facilities that sit within the school boundary, you explained that there are clearly benefits for the school with the second proposal.

As discussed, like many schools in West Sussex, St. Peter's is a relatively small village primary school with mixed age and mixed ability classes. The population that our school serves extends beyond the immediate rural community of Ardingly and currently 77% of pupils attending are from within our catchment area with 19% from the Lindfield/ Haywards Heath area. Despite some spaces in the upper end of the school, pupil numbers on roll are once again on the increase, particularly from outside of Ardingly, and our reception class this current academic year is full.

Whatever the size of any housing development in the village, the school would clearly require support to best cater for both the current and additional pupils that this would bring to ensure its full inclusion and longevity. Any support in redeveloping the school site and surrounding land must be in line with the overarching aim of improving the opportunities, health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Should either development proposal go ahead, it would be necessary to:

- address safeguarding concerns which arise, due to the close proximity of housing adjacent to the school (e.g. updating the site with appropriately designed, secure fencing);
- improve access with a re-sited entrance ensuring the school is fully included and represented as part of the development, rather than becoming more isolated as a result (e.g. a drop off point to the north of the school would have the benefit of improving pedestrian access and lessening congestion in Holmans); and
- provide accessible green space for playtimes and curriculum times supported by the establishment of a Forest School (this could be achieved by removing the hut currently in the school grounds and providing access to a community building in the development, thereby freeing up space for the school).



In addition, there are a number of projects that the school currently does not have the budget to progress. Should a significant number of dwellings be constructed then no doubt a new classroom space would be required alongside the repurposing of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area and outdoor amphitheatre area, some areas of which are currently out of use.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Kind regards,



Mr J. Savage
Headteacher



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