

Planning Policy

Mr A Watson,
Savills,
Exchange House,
Petworth,
GU28 0BF

File ref :122

19th October 2016

Dear Andrew,

Adur Local Plan: Land at Mill Hill, Shoreham-by-Sea.

Thank you for your representation made in response to publication of the Amendments to the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (2016), and subsequent information, relating to land at Mill Hill, Shoreham-by-Sea, which is in the ownership of Brighton and Hove City Council. This has been given careful consideration.

With regards to your view that the Mill Hill site should be included within the Adur Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, I can confirm that the site has been reassessed in the light of your representation, and is now described as *'available but not suitable for development.'* This classification is based on the following grounds:

Landscape

The elevated, open farmland on the slopes of Mill Hill is assessed as an area of high overall landscape sensitivity (Adur Landscape Study Update, January 2016, Sheils Flynn) which makes an important and highly valued contribution to the landscape of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap and to the setting of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The landscape sensitivity assessment explains how the Mill Hill Slopes contributes to the landscape of the Gap and the distinctive landscape setting of Shoreham: *This open grassy slope is perceived as the lower flank of Mill Hill at the only point where an undeveloped part of the Downs extends across the A27 and down into the settlement of Old Shoreham. This field makes a critical contribution to the landscape setting of Shoreham and to the overall sense of undeveloped green space in the Lancing-Shoreham Gap. It makes a valuable visual connection between the Downs and the urban area of Shoreham, 'anchoring' the town within its wider landscape setting.*

There is a sense that the open, rolling landscape of the South Downs flows right down to the edge of Shoreham, defining the distinctive landscape setting of Shoreham on its northern fringe and providing a striking contrast between urban and rural landscapes. The Mill Hill site is a particularly prominent part of this landscape setting because it is the flank of the Adur valley and the counterpoint to the landmark of Lancing College Chapel on the western side of the valley. The Mill Hill site is within the area designated by Unesco as the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere, so it is a component of an internationally recognised world class landscape. The proposed area of built development shown on Figure 5.1 in the May 2014 Fabrik report is predicted to cause severe adverse landscape and visual effects because:

- built development on the Mill Hill Slopes site would be visible from multiple locations within the Lancing-Shoreham Gap and would significantly reduce the scale of the 'green' swathe of the Downs which currently extends across the A27 to the fringes of Shoreham in views from the SDNP (including from Lancing Ring and Lancing College Chapel), the Adur riverside public footpath, Shoreham Tollbridge and New Salts Farm Road;
- the slopes of Mill Hill on the northern fringes of Shoreham are highlighted as one of the 'prominent open spaces' in the landscape analysis of the Lancing-Shoreham Gap on Figure 6 in the Adur Landscape Study Update, which explains the way that we perceive the landscapes of this Gap and the distinctive landscape settings of the towns that border it. Such 'prominent open spaces' are described as being important *because they enhance our appreciation of the physical, natural landscape elements that structure this landscape*;
- built development in this prominent location would detract from the existing relatively rural character of this northern part of Shoreham's distinctive landscape setting; and
- the 'potential area of open space' shown on Figure 5.1 in the Fabrik report would not be sufficient to 'contain' the hard edge of the A27 and, as a result this road would be perceived as a poor quality, abrupt visual boundary to the SDNP.

With regard to access, I note the report submitted as part of your representation. I have liaised with West Sussex County Council. They have responded that they would have concerns that the mitigation outlined in the representation may not be sufficient to achieve safe access and traffic movement, therefore would not support a site allocation in this location at this time without further transport and access work being undertaken.

It is therefore considered that the approach taken within the Amendments to the Adur Local Plan (2016) was indeed appropriate, and as a result modifications to include the Mill Hill site will not be proposed when the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,



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