

## **PLANNING APPLICATION 9/2015/0119**

### **Land at Station Road, Melbourne**

#### **Erection of 24 dwellings: outline application with all matters except access reserved.**

Melbourne Civic Society **OBJECTS** to the erection of 24 dwellings on this site and recommends that permission be refused.

Housing development on this scale on this site is contrary to saved policies in the approved Local Plan and contrary to proposals in the Draft Local Plan which has now been subject to scrutiny by an Inspector at the recently completed Public Enquiry.

The Draft Local Plan makes adequate provision to meet all the housing needs allocated to South Derbyshire within the Derby Housing Market Area, and development on this site, in addition to the development of the land immediately to the west for which planning permission has been granted in outline, would constitute a major housing allocation in the wrong place and would therefore prejudice the successful implementation of the new Local Plan and the emerging part 2 Neighbourhood Development Plan. Major housing allocations in the draft Local Plan are NOT proposed in Melbourne for very sound planning reasons relating to their adverse effects on the physical environment, the availability of services and infrastructure, and the need to restrict the growth of traffic across Swarkestone Causeway to avoid further congestion, preserve highway safety, and prevent structural damage to the Ancient Monument.

The prejudicial effect on the proposed Melbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot be over emphasised. Were permission to be granted for this development Melbourne Parish would, in addition to the number of planning permissions granted since the start of the Local Plan period, have exceeded the number of new dwellings that the village would be required to accommodate by 2028 in a part 2 Local Plan.

Melbourne's special character as an historic settlement of great charm, character and high quality environment would be put at risk by such schemes. The quality of Melbourne's environment, which a recent survey has suggested makes it the 15<sup>th</sup> most attractive place to live in the country, has attracted too many speculative applications by volume house builders who, paradoxically, would diminish that attractiveness by the rapid development of their new housing estates.

The local community has now embarked, with your Council's full agreement, on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The NDP will examine the suitability of this site and other undeveloped land in Melbourne, and the local community will decide how many new homes should be built in the plan period and where that development should be located. In the meantime this application should be refused on policy and prematurity grounds.

The Society has further comments relevant to your Council's deliberations.

1 This application is accompanied by an indicative layout which relates this development to a layout on the adjoining site to the west. Indeed, access is taken from that site's access road. However, there is no approval to the access road or to the housing layout on the adjoining land because that was an outline application with all matters reserved except the junction with Station Road. This application therefore cannot legally be considered until such time as the detailed road, drainage and housing layout have been approved on the adjoining site. Indeed, we note that no decision notice has yet been issued on the adjoining site. This application is premature and must be refused.

2 In July 2014 severe flooding occurred both on Station Road and within the newly built Millbrook Estate served by Sweet Leys Way. The new foul drainage system within that estate was evidently defective, and the surface water system on Station Road could not accommodate the excessive run-off from land to the north. The developer in this instance proposes to connect foul drainage to 'existing sewers', and proposes a sustainable surface water drainage system, but has given no indication of where or how that is to be achieved. The local authorities and drainage utility company have called for a study of the current systems, and we are not aware that this has been carried out to anyone's satisfaction. Until it has, no permission should be granted for further residential development connecting to the existing drainage systems in Station Road.

3 Although in outline, the application is accompanied by an indicative layout. This should be ignored, but in the past these indicative layouts appear to have been regarded as material considerations when an outline application is determined. The Society therefore wishes to put on record that the application's indicative layout is unsatisfactory, and in particular the absence of on-site parking within the curtilages of plots 14-18 inclusive – which are large detached houses - is likely in practice to lead to cars belonging to residents and visitors having to park either on the access road itself (which isn't wide enough), or on adjoining open space, or by paving over their front gardens. The use of shared detached garages on land opposite the houses will not, we suggest, be acceptable either to future purchasers or on amenity grounds to the community at large. This deficiency can only be remedied by ensuring that parking for each large detached house is provided within its curtilage, and will only be possible by increasing the size of these plots at the expense of at least one dwelling.

4 Again, the indicative layout suggests sites for public open space within this development which will serve both this site and the site to the west. That, too, is illogical until such time as detailed plans have been approved on the adjoining site. The submission gives no indication as to how the open space alongside Carr Brook or the larger area, presumably including children's play equipment, on part of the site fronting Station Road, is to be maintained. This sort of detail has too often been overlooked, leading to problems for local residents, for example in Jubilee Close. Is the land to be adopted by the District Council, or is it to be a private space maintainable by a charge on each householder in perpetuity? These sort of issues need to be addressed at this stage before any permission is granted – and indeed ought to have been considered before permission was granted for 22 dwellings on land to the west, but we are not aware that this was resolved at that stage.

5 Unlike speculative housing applications as yet undetermined in Jawbone Lane and Blackwell Lane, there are no heritage objections to the development of this land. Indeed, it is possible that the Neighbourhood Development Plan will give serious consideration to the development of this site, but that is no reason to pre-empt that decision now. The local community should be given the opportunity to weigh the merits of developing this site alongside other sites where no heritage objections arise. This reinforces the prematurity case for refusing permission.

Permission should be REFUSED on policy and prematurity grounds. These are sound planning reasons, and they override any assumption in favour of sustainable development contained in paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the indicative planning layout is defective for the reasons given in points 1-5 above, and these points constitute substantive extra reasons for refusal of permission.

Please ensure that all these considerations are drawn to your Council's attention when the application comes before the Planning Committee for formal determination.