



Clitheroe Civic Society

21st May, 2013

Sarah Westwood, Planning Officer

Ribble Valley Borough Council Offices

Church Walk

Clitheroe

BB7 2RA



Re: Planning Application 3/2012/0942 Standen Development. Development of land at Higher Standen Farm for 1040 houses

Clitheroe Civic Society has carefully examined this application and has concluded that, on many counts, it is totally opposed to this development.

The highly detailed and unnecessarily repetitive application of 53 documents seeks to swallow up green fields; has brushed over environmental destruction; makes only token promises on school places and never mentions the already over-burdened Health Centre. This application seeks “an **EXTENSION**” to Clitheroe which is totally unsustainable and unacceptable without destroying the existing ancient settlement of Clitheroe as a small town. In short, the applicants do not care about the impact of this proposed development on Clitheroe itself.

Recent figures from index mundi show that the projected rise in population is less than predicted in 2012, so we would suggest that the figures of new housing needed in Clitheroe should be adjusted accordingly.

Recent new-build applications already in the pipeline far exceed the 700 NEEDED in Clitheroe.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

“The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment concludes that site has value as part of the countryside surrounding Clitheroe, and the development of the site will expand the periphery of Clitheroe bringing the urban edge closer to other areas of countryside” (Design & Access Statement P.15 Landscape Context).

The developer is seeking to gloss over the fact that this development is **outside the permitted development boundary of Clitheroe. In plain English, it is extending the boundaries of the built town into the highly valued and valuable countryside.**

Clitheroe Civic Society is aware that it is perfectly feasible under the NPPF for this type of development to be stopped.

“The development of the site will result in a reduction in the overall quantum of countryside but the landscape is **not of high value as it is not part of the Bowland Fells AONB**” (Source as above). Such a comparison is invidious. When seen from the castle, this site forms a definite part of the greenfield lowland of Pendle Hill and as such it is of extremely high value, as marking a boundary of the built area; a highly significant visual amenity and a place of recreational value to the residents of Clitheroe and to visitors. A reduction of 50.1 hectares is a huge amount of green open countryside lost for the environs of Clitheroe, despite its not being an AONB. The spurious assertion that this countryside at Standen is not as valuable as the Bowland Fells is without any credence. Further the “The landscape can be used to ensure **view corridors** are retained to key features of the surrounding features such as Clitheroe Castle and St James’ Church tower...” (P15 D&A statement) shows that the developers realise the potential for isolation of this development because it is truly not a part of Clitheroe, and it sounds like a desperate attempt to pacify any objections.

In the Core Strategy Amendments: Setting a Vision for the Area. 7/13.11 “Respect, protect and enhance the high quality environment and biodiversity in the borough” and in 9/14 “Protect and enhance the wider local environment both natural and built environment, in rural and urban areas” **MUST** be used to safeguard this important and valued site. Importantly, The NPPF states “sustainable development involves seeking positive improvement in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life. This application for development on the Standen estate seeks to ignore all of this and dismiss it as of no consequence.

The applicant has made some gestures towards mitigating the damage resulting from the loss of the open fields by undertaking care for Mearley Brook and for the pond on the estate. Important as these are, the resultant devastation for all other wild life; for many mature trees and hedges; for the loss of an abundance of flora and mosses; for habitats, food sources and movement corridors for small animals and birds ___these are glossed over by the developer because they have gone to extraordinary lengths to produce an extraordinary array of documents to prove they are not doing any damage by building on 50.1 hectares of green fields. This inverted logic only proves what everyone else knows ___the Standen development application is **damaging to our environment**. Once green fields are lost to development, they are lost for ever.

Local Saved Policies have always stated the commitment to “conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area. Environmental Policies 41.1, 41.2 support sensitive development and Policy Env.9/4.3, 20, 21 undertake to protect wildlife corridors. We expect these policies to be regarded and honoured with regard to the Standen development.

SCHOOLS

There is a great deal of concern and disquiet about the provision of 210 primary school places on the development. Firstly, the developers have only promised **a site and not a school building**. Because of the time scale of the development and also being realistic, there will be **NO** primary school places available on the site until at least half way through the development AT LEAST. Already, most primary schools in Clitheroe are full and only one has any physical space to expand (to the detriment of playing fields, though). Given the number of houses__1040__there would be an expected figure of c. 300 children on the new Standen development. Using the County Council’s formula, 309 extra primary places would be needed to cater for this application alone. So before the first house is up, there are significant problems with primary school placements. Likewise, for secondary school pupils, all current schools are full and would be unable to provide an extra 221 places that would be required by this planning application alone. There just is NOT ROOM for a development on the scale of 1040 houses in Clitheroe. Existing parents are rightly

extremely worried that such an influx would lead to a deterioration of the exceptionally high standard of education which our children enjoy at the moment. A new school will not be built for some time so overcrowding will inevitably occur.

Any new school to be built, will, according to government legislation, have to be a free school or academy with no input from Lancashire County Council Education Department. Accordingly, the new school could set its own admission criteria which would not necessarily be for just children on the estate> Where would the “overflow” go? All of these problems about schools **have not been resolved before the submission of the planning application which contravenes par. 72 NPPF and it is not acceptable that this application should even be considered until this vital issue is resolved.**

It is also not totally improbable that the “Calderstones” situation is repeated here . Land set aside for a school was never used as such and is now covered in more housing. Standen could be a second local example of promises not being fully honoured by developers.

In the application, it is stated that it would only be “a ten minute walk to an existing school”. This is just not true, even downhill, and the return journey would take longer. Also, the proposed school site is close to the entrance of the development and as such would be an extremely long walk for many children on the estate. Because it would not be within walking distance, it contravenes pr. 38 NPPF.

The applicant for this development at Standen, is showing no concern whatsoever for the future education of all children in Clitheroe. The plans have airbrushed out all difficulties, but in reality they remain.

Clitheroe cannot cope with an influx of population on this scale.

HEALTH CENTRE

In the Design and Access Statement, the applicant disingenuously describes Clitheroe town centre and health amenities as 1600m away and “ within relatively easy access”. More than 1 and ½ kilometres!

Hardly walking distance with children.

Clitheroe Health Centre has nowhere for further expansion of the building to accommodate more doctors or expand all the other services currently available on the site. Staff at Clitheroe Health Centre are already under great pressure. With over 1000 more families, there is no way whatsoever they can be accommodated. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT. The town medical infrastructure could not accept such an influx as it is barely coping now and other large planning applications are in the pipeline. Yet nowhere in this application is there any mention of the difficulties in providing for this most basic need of medical attention for the people they propose to cater for. This total lack of concern reveals that the applicant is basically only interested in making money from the Standen site and all existing Clitheroe residents will just have to put up with substandard health provision. It is not **their** problem, they proclaim loudly.

UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

From the documents provided, it would appear that problems of standing water on the site could create difficulties and need to be fully addressed to prevent flooding problems. United Utilities have been somewhat bland about their capacity to deal with these but it is obviously doubtful whether these could be resolved in the timescale required.

TOWN CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE

As ever when a new housing development is proposed, Clitheroe residents become exasperated at various developers' reluctance to even recognise that an ancient town like Clitheroe which has developed slowly and organically over centuries cannot suddenly change its layout to accommodate thousands more cars. Quite literally in the case of the planning application under consideration where 1040 homes will produce at least 1500 more cars. Parking has been a problem in Clitheroe town centre for over 50 years. As the number of residents has grown, so has the problem. That is not taking into account Ribble Valley Borough Council's assiduous programmes to encourage more and more tourists in the name of economic prosperity for the town. All very laudable and necessary, but where can people park?

It does not take a great deal of understanding to posit the theory that with the Standen development being so close to the A59, many families living there will turn their economic back on the town and go shopping

elsewhere with easier parking and a wider range of shops. Yes they will use the schools, health service and leisure facilities of the town but not the shops. So much for the economic benefits of this development.

They simply will not happen.

Clitheroe Civic Society has tried with no success to ascertain the current status of the Core Strategy.

Because of this, it is difficult to insist that although NPPF is in force, saved policies from the Local Plan are still valid. This was the case until April but with no confirmation available from Ribble Valley Borough Council, despite asking, it is difficult for us to know whether or not this deadline was extended in the case of Ribble Valley Borough Council (as it was in some councils).

However, we will content ourselves with using the quotation used by the applicant in the design and Access Statement P. 12 "The Vision of the emerging Core Strategy states ' we will seek to create an area with unrivalled quality of place, respecting the unique natural, social and built heritage of the area.' "

Yes. Clitheroe is a unique place. Furthermore, NPPF p15 instructs councils to establish a strong sense of place and respect local character, history and reflect its identity. This is what all Clitheroe residents want.

It may be the favourite expansion option of Ribble Valley Borough Council but it is certainly not for the residents of Clitheroe.

Therefore, Clitheroe Civic Society has reached the only conclusion possible__ that planning application 3/2012/0942 for the development of 1040 houses at Higher Standen Farm **should be firmly refused on all of the above grounds.**

For and on behalf of Clitheroe Civic Society



Pauline Wood chairman Clitheroe Civic Society

Chairman:- Pauline Wood. 13 Derwent Crescent. Clitheroe BB7 2PW. 01200 429187 nauline.wood1@talktalk.net

