



Caring about Hadleigh - yesterday, today and tomorrow

Richard Fletcher,
on behalf of
The Hadleigh Society,
6 Lister Road, Hadleigh,
IPSWICH, IP7 5JN.
01473 827891
secretary@hadsoc.org.uk

Sustainable Communities,
Development Control Section,
Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils,
Endeavour House,
8 Russel Road, Ipswich,
IP1 2BX

25 January 2023

Dear Sirs,

**DC/23/00014 - Full Planning Application
Erection of 1 No. dwelling
Land Rear Of 13 Meadows Way, Hadleigh, Suffolk**

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Hadleigh Society, one of whose aims is:-
"To protect and enhance Hadleigh's heritage and environment by supporting and promoting high standards in planning, conservation, regeneration and development of features deemed to be of historical or environmental significance in the town."

The site lies within the Hadleigh Conservation Area, close to several Listed Buildings and adjoining a distinctively designed modern housing development. It also lies within the draft designated Town Centre Boundary, with the site area shown to be in the primary shopping area with a secondary shopping frontage.

The proposed site currently comprises part of a busy and well used off-street parking and service yard for several commercial and residential properties situated on the High Street and Meadows Way; the proposed development would directly remove 4 existing parking spaces within the courtyard and restrict access to and use of the remaining spaces.

On-street parking to serve the existing commercial and residential properties at the northern end of the High Street is limited and this scarcity has been increased with the recent loss of some 6 on-street parking spaces in the vicinity of the site to accommodate a new vehicular access of Manor Gardens onto the High Street which is set almost opposite the site.

It is considered that the proposal is objectionable on grounds that :-

1. The proposed dwelling, if permitted would appear as an awkward projection into the service yard and has a poorly related design to the distinctive jettied appearance of 13A Meadow Way and the asymmetrical roof design of the High Street building it is to be set against. [Contrary to Policy CS15 as it fails to respect the local context and character of the area & in particular regard to CS15 i & ii](#)

2. The proposed two storey building will adversely impinge upon the setting and character of several Listed Buildings bordering the site and adjoining service yard, and it will fail to provide good separation from the High Street properties that the Planning Appeal Inspector identified as being particularly important to maintain so as to avoid an unduly cramped appearance and harm to the character of the Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings. [Contrary to Policy CS15 as it fails to respect the local context and character of the area & in particular regard to CS15 i & ii AND ALSO Contrary to Policy CN06 & CN08 as it neither preserves nor enhances the special historic and architectural character of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.](#)

3. It removes and restricts existing off-street parking, loading and unloading to both commercial and residential premises to the detriment of their amenities and damaging to their trading facilities, thus prejudicing the areas town centre commercial attraction. [Contrary to Policy CS15 as it weakens the retail and employment vibrance of the town centre locality and is also Contrary to Policy TP15 as the development will reduce existing car parking provision so low that on-street parking associated with the development would create a highway safety and amenity problem.](#)

4. The proposed rearrangement of parking retained in the service yard does not compensate for the net loss created by the proposal, particularly as some spaces would be difficult, if not impossible, to manoeuvre into or out of due to some parking spaces restricting manoeuvrability into and out of garages and other parking spaces serviced via the yard. [Contrary to Policy TP15 as the development will reduce existing car parking provision so low that on-street parking associated with the development would create a highway safety and amenity problem.](#)

The detailed reasons for objection are set out below:-

Town Centre Development and safeguarding of its vitality and vibrance

The site lies within the designated Town Centre Area as identified in the adopted 2006 Local Plan (policy HD04), and is also shown in the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan - July 2019 as lying within the Town Centre Boundary, its primary shopping centre and secondary shopping frontage. The policies for such an area are to encourage new commercial uses whilst at the same time safeguarding the viability and vibrance of existing retail and service units from developments that will adversely affect the trading strength of existing units.

The approach of balancing new development with safeguarding the towns existing viability and vibrance are found in:-

Policy CS03: Strategy for Growth and Development which states:-

Town centres and Core Villages are the main focus for retail, leisure and community uses in the district. A healthy mix of uses and range of shops and services will be promoted in the two principal town centres of Sudbury and Hadleigh to ensure that these centres are active, vibrant and well used.

Policy CS06: Hadleigh which states;-

Hadleigh will be promoted as a visitor attraction and a wide range of diverse uses and facilities will be encouraged. Development for town centre uses and refurbishments that enhance the retail quality, choice and vitality / viability of Hadleigh town centre will be encouraged.

Policy CS15: Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh states;-

development should protect or create jobs and sites to strengthen or diversify the local economy

It is considered that the proposal's need to take up so much of the service yard it will adversely affect the operation and potential continued viability of 4 business by depriving them of important off-street parking facilities for staff, clients customers and deliveries. Policies CS03 & CS06 make it clear that it is policy to make Hadleigh town centre, within which these businesses are located, are kept active, vibrant and well used and that only development that underpins this policy will be permitted. Similarly the policies imply that the centre ought be protected from adverse development that endangers jobs and its viability. The concern is not imaginary as may be noted from the real fears expressed previously by the affected local businesses. Also as this area has suffered a recent loss of on-street parking at the northern extremity of the town centre their viability is more fragile and sensitive to adverse changes in the locality.

From these policies it is interpreted that any new development that prejudices the vibrancy, and viability of town centre uses and economic well being should not normally be permitted and thus so this proposal ought to be refused

Adverse affect upon the Character of the Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings

The proposed scheme is designed as an extension of a previously approved dwelling that, projected in to the service yard and this current proposal projects further into the yard such that it cuts the yard into two separate spaces, as the proposed new building is taken to within 5 metres of the rear wall of the Sue Ryder retail unit set on the High Street.

The proposal in its design, with its cranked floor plan, rendered wall finish, and a one and a half storey height, if permitted, would create a jarring contrast to the adjoining buildings, and appear out of scale with them. It would also result in a somewhat cramped appearance with the building squeezed into this modest service yard. Additionally the proposal would intrude upon the immediate settings of the Grade II* and Grade II listed building on High Street, including nos. 106, 108 and 110, 114, 116 and 120 and 122.

It is noted that the Planning Inspector when determining the previous Appeal decision (DC/19/02901) commented that, that proposal was acceptable as it continued to maintain a good separation from the rear of the properties along High Street and thus would not appear unduly cramped.

Regrettably now however the additional westward extension of the development will encroach on the rear of the buildings flanking High Street, leaving little separation and a clear degradation of the appreciation of the listed buildings from this open space between Meadows Way and High Street. The current proposal if permitted would therefore increase the adverse affect upon the special character of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby Listed Buildings and thus be contrary to the provisions of Policy CH06 & CN08

Policy TP15 - Parking Standards - New Development

The current planning policy for proposals of all types of new development are required to provide parking in accordance with parking standards adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

In regard to off-street parking provision the Suffolk Guidance for Parking, Technical Guidance, Third Edition – May 2019 produced by Suffolk CC Highway Authority provides the latest adopted standards and it sets out desirable minimum parking for various uses.

The minimum parking Standards given in the guidance are;-

1. A1(excluding Food Stores) 1 space /20 sq.m. floorspace
2. 2. C3 1 Bedroom flat = 1 / dwelling
3. 2 Bedroom = 1.5 to 2 spaces / dwelling
4. 3 bedroom dwelling = 2 spaces / dwelling
5. A beauty salon incl hairdressing -sui generis =50sq. m.

For the 6 business and residential units served by the communal courtyard for parking the minimum off-street parking requirement is estimated to be ;-

A. Three shop units at 45 sq. m floorspace/unit = 3 spaces per unit = 9 spaces

B. B. 2flats=2spaces

C. 13 MeadowsWay(BeautyRooms)=say 3 spaces Total requirement = 14 off street parking spaces.

The service yard, in accordance with the plans approved for the recently approved dwelling to which the current proposal is to be attached it showed 13 spaces in the service yard, plus 2 new spaces for the proposed dwelling.

The development in the current application now shows the loss of 5 parking spaces in the service yard thereby reducing the provision to 8, [including the retaining 2 spaces for the approved dwelling] but in addition the new flat requires an additional parking spaces.

The applicant however specifically makes no provision for off-street parking for the proposed development and casually suggests it can be accommodated in the already

heavily used and limited on-street parking that is provided in the northern section of the High Street.

Thus whilst the existing uses served off the service yard and the new development are calculated to require a minimum of 14 off street parking spaces the development proposal has reduced by 60% the car parking provision to just 8 spaces, as well as reducing manoeuvring space for goods vehicles to service the shop units.

Whilst in the past nearby on-street parking was available for use by visitors/customers to this northern part of the High Street to make up the deficit. Unfortunately 6 on-street car parking spaces close to the development site have recently been removed to provide driver visibility splays for a new housing scheme taking access off the High Street next to 109 High Street. This has adversely affected casual calling to business and residential premises, and also resulted in increased on-street parking in Meadows Way with drivers and passengers using the walkway to now access northern High Street properties. Inspection will show it is normally heavily parked.

The Society is aware that a Planning Inspector in considering the proposal for an earlier additional dwelling in the Service yard which they allowed and commented that they did not perceive any pressure on car parking facilities in the yard and on the High Street, It should be noted however that the Inspector viewed the site whilst the Covid lockdown restrictions were in force and on the day of their inspection, 12 April, non-essential retail had only just been allowed that morning to commence opening, and hotel and b&b operations operating in the area and served off the parking court were still in lockdown. Therefore the Inspector obtained a false impression of the parking pressure experienced in this part of the town and erred in their conclusion.

With the current proposal of removing 4 existing off street parking spaces and adding an additional parking spaces will create increased congestion on the High Street from employees, residents, residents visitors, customers, and commercial vehicles seeking to access the existing dwellings and retail and hospitality units served off the service yard. Such poor provision of off street parking and loading and unloading facilities will result in more on street parking, loading and unloading in the already congested northern section of the High Street.

CONCLUSION

The Hadleigh Society, in pursuing its primary directive of caring about the well being of Hadleigh, consider this proposal to be detrimental to the town by reason of its ;-

1. Poor design, cramped appearance, and out of scale massing with its surroundings,
2. Adverse impact upon the special character of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings,
3. The undermining of the viability and vibrance of a group of town centre business by

depriving them of their existing off-street parking and service areas.

4. Creation of increased traffic congestion and loss of amenities to nearby residents and businesses by losing off-street parking and thus causing added pressure on the already restricted and limited on-street parking facilities of the High Street

The Society therefore requests that the Council refuse planning permission for this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

R. Fletcher

Richard Fletcher, M.R.T.P.I.(Ret'd)

Secretary of The Hadleigh Society