

I am writing on behalf of the Holcombe Residents Association regarding the plans for development at Southdowns Road, Holcombe. The Association has over 330 members in the village.

The Association recognises that outline planning permission for up to 20 houses has already been obtained on this site, but we object to the detailed plans submitted on the following grounds.

1. The five affordable houses are bunched together in the NW corner of the site and appear rather cramped when compared to the open market houses. Even the road leading to these houses is narrower than the road in the rest of the development. Plan Teignbridge, paragraph 4.13, and Policy WE4, states that:

“Housing sites to which policy WE2 applies should be developed to ensure the creation of inclusive, mixed communities as follows:

- a) affordable and market housing on a site should as far as practicable be visually indistinguishable from each other in quality, whilst allowing for buildings to be individual and have character;
- b) affordable and market dwellings should be intermixed within the site, avoiding concentrations of affordable housing in any part of the site. Exceptions should be clearly justified.”

Whilst we note that the applicant has been in contact with Teign Housing and this organisation supports the affordable housing being together, primarily because it is easier for them to maintain, the above Policy was not put in place to assist Housing Associations. We feel that Teignbridge should insist that policy WE4, and the intention behind the policy, is implemented.

2. Although most of the houses appear to have off road parking for two cars, there will clearly be on road parking e.g. visitors, cars that are not garaged and also households with more than two cars. The parking situation will clearly be worse near the affordable houses given that the present plans do not allow for two cars per home. The width of the road is also narrower than the existing Southdowns Road and particularly narrow on the approach to the affordable homes. Of equal concern is the absence of any pavements for pedestrian safety. We feel that cars will end up parking on the grass verges or on the road itself, making it difficult for vehicles and pedestrians to pass safely. The road layout, parking situation and absence of pavements needs to be addressed. We fundamentally disagree with Devon County Council Highways that the arrangement being put forward is safe.
3. We note that the housing density proposed is significantly greater than the surrounding area e.g. Southdowns Road and Underwood Close. Whilst we recognise the need for the development to be commercially viable, a reduced number of houses would enable the points raised at 1 and 2 above to be addressed and also for the new houses to blend in better with the existing environment.

In addition to the above, we feel the development will be highly visible on the skyline and potentially impact on the amenity of those properties bordering the site in Southdowns Road and Underwood Close. The applicant could partly mitigate this by reducing the pitch of the roofs and ensuring that the land itself is not “raised” when ground work is undertaken – for example we understand that plot 6 will be higher than the present ground level. We would also encourage Teignbridge DC to prohibit extensions in the lofts of these properties should these be forthcoming in future.

We would ask that Teignbridge rejects the current plans put forward and ask the applicant to address the above issues.