Item No 04:-

16/03520/FUL (CD.1320/P)

Ashton House Union Street Stow-On-The-Wold Gloucestershire GL54 1BU

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#### Item No 04:-

Erection of 7 dwellings (amendment to design of Plots 2-8 approved under permission 14/02444/FUL) and erection of 1.8m high boundary wall to rear of Plot 1 at Ashton House Union Street Stow-On-The-Wold Gloucestershire GL54 1BU

Full Application 16/03520/FUL (CD.1320/P)	
Applicant:	Spitfire Properties LLP
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Martin Perks
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Dilys Neill
Committee Date:	9th November 2016
RECOMMENDATION:	PERMIT

#### Main Issues:

- (a) Design and Appearance
- (b) Impact on Residential Amenity

#### Reasons for Referral:

This application has been referred to Planning and Licensing Committee at the request of Cllr Neill. The original planning application for the re-development of the site was determined by Committee following a site visit. Due to the complexities of the issues raised it is considered appropriate that the application is considered by Committee Members.

#### 1. Site Description:

The application site measures approximately 0.3 hectares in size. It forms part of a larger 0.85 hectare site that is currently being developed to provide 20 dwellings.

The site is located within the Development Boundary for Stow-on-the-Wold as designated in the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011. It is also located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site was previously occupied by a vacant 1970's care home building. The building was demolished to make way for a development scheme of 20 dwellings granted under permission 14/02444/FUL.

The entrance to the site lies off Union Street to its south west. The entrance lies adjacent to Stowon-the-Wold Conservation Area.

The north western edge of the site abuts the town's fire station. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site adjoin existing residential development. Existing site boundaries consist of stone walling, timber fences and vegetation.

## 2. Relevant Planning History:

**Application Site** 

CD.1320/A 48 bed elderly persons house Granted 1971

CD.1320/F Various minor alterations to existing building Granted 1997

14/02444/FUL Demolition of former care home and redevelopment of site with 20 dwellings including garages and associated infrastructure Granted 2015

## Land Adjacent to Ashton House

CD.1320/C Erection of 5 houses and garages and new access. Granted 1978

CD.1320/D Erection of 4 houses and garages and new access Granted 1978

CD.1320/E Erection of 2 detached dwellings Dismissed at appeal 1997

CD.1320/G Outline application for residential development. Refused 1998

CD.1320/H Erection of a single dwelling Granted 2000

CD.1320/J Erection of a 4 bed dwelling Granted 2001

CD.1320/K Conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation and addition of first floor gable window (The Retreat) Granted 2006

## 3. Planning Policies:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

LPR10 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

LPR15 Conservation Areas

LPR18 Develop within Development Boundaries

LPR38 Accessibility to & within New Develop

LPR39 Parking Provision

LPR42 Cotswold Design Code

LPR46 Privacy & Gardens in Residential Deve

#### 4. Observations of Consultees:

None

#### 5. View of Town/Parish Council:

Object -see attached letter

## 6. Other Representations:

7 letters of objection received. Main grounds of objection are;

- i) 'The ridges and eaves are stepped, not straight as approved. You can see the difference if you look at the approved elevations on the original planning consent. These people continue to work outside of the permitted hours of operation. Typical construction company; riding roughshod and couldn't give a toss!'
- ii) 'The buildings are not as approved by the planners and are too high.'
- iii) There is visual intrusion into our garden and our garden wall integrity is threatened by the construction of the access road.'
- iv) 'The building line is higher, and different to that granted planning permission. It therefore obscures our view and makes the area seem substantially more built up than the original skyline.'
- v) We are appalled to hear that these buildings are being constructed to a design which was not on the original planning documents and are too high. We are put in mind of the dreadful fiasco when Beechcroft built the houses that now constitute King Charles Place. These buildings ended up 3 metres+ higher than the plans suggested they would. Giving us the go ahead to build our approved extension without the knowledge that the ridges could be over 3m higher was not only neglectful, but also gave us grounds to approach the Ombudsman and get some compensation, which is presumably money that comes from the taxpayer and is therefore not in the best interests of the community that you should be serving.
- vi) The design differs from the approved planning permission with the stepped roof line. The ridge and eaves heights are also higher than what has been approved. This application will significantly impact the surrounding neighbours.

vi) Please see attached correspondence and plans received from Andrew Eastabrook who lives at Rock Cottage adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

# 7. Applicant's Supporting Information:

None

#### 8. Officer's Assessment:

## **Background and Proposed Development**

Planning permission was granted in 2015 (14/02444/FUL) for the demolition of a former care home and its replacement with 20 dwellings and accompanying garages. Building works commenced on the site in late 2015. The developer has now completed Plot 1 at the front of the site and has recently reached roof level in respect of Plots 2-8. Plots 2-8 take the form of two terraces (Plots 2-5 and Plots 6-8). Plots 2-5 extends in a north east to south west direction with the front elevation facing towards the fire station to the west. Plots 6-8 extend in a roughly east west direction with their front elevations towards residential properties to the north of the application site.

During the course of the construction of Plots 2-8 the Council received a complaint that the plots were not being completed in accordance with the approved plans. The complainant stated that the eaves and ridges of the two terraces were stepped rather than unbroken. The applicant has submitted this application in order to regularise the matter. They have also applied to erect a 1.8m high stone wall alongside the rear garden of Plot 1. The approved drawings showed a 900mm wall along this particular boundary.

With regard to Plots 2-5 the step in eaves/ridges between each plot varies between 150-300mm. The drop in ridge and eaves height across the terrace as a whole (from south to north) is 675mm. The ground floor level to ridge height of each unit is show as 8.682m.

With regard to Plots 6-8 there is a difference of 150mm between the eaves height of each plot. The overall drop in ridge height across the terrace from east to west is approximately 193mm. The ground floor to ridge height of Plot 6 is shown as 8.795m and for Plots 7 and 8 as 8.688m.

The footprint and position of the dwellings remains the same as that previously approved.

## (a) Design and Appearance

The approved scheme was for 20 dwellings set in an arrangement of 5 terraces and a detached single unit. The scheme sought to reflect the character and appearance of traditional terraced development seen in the centre of Stow-on-the-Wold. The approved drawings for Plots 2-5 and 6-8 showed the two terraces having unbroken ridge and eaves. The works that have been undertaken give the terraces a stepped appearance. The eaves and ridges step down relatively uniformly across each terrace and as such there is a natural progression across the plots which ensures that the proportions and the balance of the terraces is retained. It is not unusual to see a stepped arrangement in the town. It is particularly evident at the recently completed King Charles Place which is located off Well Lane approximately 90m to the west of the application site. In this respect it is considered that the alterations are a natural means of dealing with changes of land levels across a site. The stepped arrangement also helps to break up the terrace and does add more interest to its appearance. The plots in question are set back from Union Street and are therefore not particularly prominent when viewed from the conservation area. Plots 2-5 are closest to the conservation area and are located approximately 45m from it. The views that are available of the aforementioned plots are primarily across the adjacent fire station site. Views from the site entrance are largely restricted by existing East View Gardens development. It is considered that the alterations to the design of the plots is acceptable and will not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the locality or the setting of Stow-on-the-Wold

Conservation Area. The proposed changes to the terraces are considered to accord with Local Plan Policies 15, 18 and 42.

The boundary wall proposed to the roadside garden of Plot 1 will be raised from 0.9m to 1.8m. The wall will lie alongside the road leading into the development. It will therefore be visible as you enter the site. However, it will also form the boundary to the rear garden of Plot 1 which would otherwise be open to view if the approved 0.9m high wall was erected. It will be constructed in stone and is considered to represent an appropriate form of boundary treatment for a side/rear garden. It will be more attractive than a fence and will avoid the potential incursion onto the highway that would arise from the planting of a hedge. 1.8m stone walls are evident along both Union Street and Well Lane and can act as a characterful addition to the streetscene. The raising of the height of the wall is therefore considered acceptable in this instance.

The applicant has also increased the height of the front boundary wall bordering onto Union Street. Following discussions the applicant has advised the following;

'Further to your recent email and our telephone conversation yesterday, I have discussed the boundary wall to the front of Plot 1, Ashton House with our construction team who have advised they will be removing 2-3 courses of stone and adding the cock and hen detail. I understand it was always our intention to provide the cock and hen detail in this location but we have recently experienced delays with the stone suppliers so a simple capping detail was added as a temporary finish in order to allow for the opening of the show home.

Works to the wall are currently being factored into the construction programme in order to ensure the wall is built in accordance with the submitted detail. This will also provide a better relationship with the existing fire station wall.

The applicant is therefore proposing to remove the top 2-3 courses of the existing wall and replace them with a cock and hen capping to match the adjoining fire station wall. This will be consistent with other walls in the locality and is considered acceptable.

Overall, it is considered that the design and appearance of the revised scheme is acceptable.

## (b) Impact on Residential Amenity

One of the principal concerns that has been raised relates to the additional increase in height of the dwellings under construction and a resultant increase in overlooking. Particular concern has been raised in respect of Plots 6-8 in the correspondence received from the occupier of a neighbouring property called Rock Cottage.

The approved scheme showed the terrace with a ground to ridge height of approximately 8.5m. The plans now submitted show Plots 7 and 8 with a ground floor to ridge height of 8.688m and Plot 6 with a height of 8.795m.

The eaves to ridge height of the approved scheme is 3.5m whereas it is 3.638m in the as built Plots 7 and 8 and 3.745m in Plot 6. The ground floor to eaves level in the current application is shown as 5.05m whereas the ground level to ridge height is approximately 5m in the approved scheme. The occupier of Rock Cottage states that the ground to eaves height of the approved scheme is 4.8m. In response to these comments the plans and elevations now submitted show the ground floor finished floor levels (FFL). These levels were not shown on the originally approved drawings. A condition was therefore attached to the original permission requiring the submission of level details. The ground floor FFLs were subsequently agreed under condition compliance application 15/03718/COMPLY. The FFLs shown in the current application match those agreed under the aforementioned condition compliance application. The elevations now submitted show the FFL of Plots 6-8 being between 0 and 200mm above ground level. This is a fairly standard height above ground level for internal ground floor FFLs. When the height above ground level of the FFLs is taken into account the overall ground level to ridge height of Plots 7 and 8 is approximately 8.8m and for Plot 6 it is approximately 8.9m.

Whilst the overall height of the dwellings has increased it is of note that the majority of the increase has taken place in the roof. There is also a gap of approximately 100mm between the top of the first floor windows and the eaves in the currently submitted scheme. In the approved scheme the top of the first floor windows lay directly under the eaves and as such the eaves were lower than now proposed. It is evident that the majority of the increased building height has taken place above the top of first floor windows. The ground floor FFLs are the same as approved under the condition compliance application. In addition, the centre of the first floor windows in the scheme now proposed are approximately 4.3m above ground level whereas they were shown as approximately 4.2m in height on the approved scheme. The window heights in the current submission do not therefore vary significantly from those approved under permission 14/02444/FUL.

In terms of overlooking it is considered that the scheme now proposed does not have a materially greater impact on the privacy of Rock Cottage or any other neighbouring dwellings than that previously approved. The window heights are very similar to those previously approved. They are not significantly higher than originally approved and do not therefore materially increase the level of overlooking above that already agreed. A photograph has been provided by the occupier of Rock Cottage that shows the proposed development in relation to his rear garden. However, it is evident that the existing hedging and walling will screen the majority of the windows. The seating area is also lower down than the height that the photograph was taken at thereby providing users of that area with a greater degree of privacy than if stood by the door of the Rock Cottage. Overall, it is considered that the development now proposed will not result in a materially greater level of overlooking than the originally approved scheme.

A cross section showing the relationship between the Plots 6-8 and Rock Cottage was submitted at the time of the original planning application. The application site was also visited by Members of Planning and Licensing Committee prior to them approving the application. The impact of the development on Rock Cottage was not ignored during the consideration of the previous application. Officers have also responded to the complainant's concerns about the development by requesting the submission of this application. The Council has therefore responded to his concerns both prior to and following the issuing of the original planning decision.

In terms of light and overbearing impact Plots 6-8 are located over 7m from the boundary of Rock Cottage. The plots are sufficiently distant from the aforementioned dwelling so as not to breach guidelines in BRE guidance Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight. The additional height of the dwellings is primarily incorporated within their roofslopes. As a consequence most of the additional height will be in parts of the terrace that are sloping away from Rock Cottage and are therefore recessive when viewed from the aforementioned dwelling. Overall, the proposal is considered not to have an adverse impact in respect of light and overbearing impact.

With regard to Plots 2-5 the front of the terrace faces towards to fire station. The changes in eaves and ridge heights do not result in a material increase in overlooking of any existing residents. In addition, the changes do not result in a loss of light or have an overbearing impact on neighbouring dwellings. It is considered that the alterations to Plots 2-5 are acceptable.

Each plot will also be provided with the same garden area as previously agreed. Overall, it is considered that the amended scheme will not have a materially greater impact on residential amenity than that already agreed. The revisions therefore accord with Local Plan Policy 46.

In addition to the above it must also be noted that the site was previously occupied by a large care home development that was approximately 9.2m high. The previous building on the site was therefore taller than the dwellings now being erected. Moreover, a number of windows in the original building also faced towards Rock Cottage.

## Other Matters

In response to the comments of the Town Council regarding the issue of enforcement the Case Officer can advise that Officers generally request the submission of a new planning application when there has been a material change to a planning permission. The new application is then open to public consultation and all parties can comment on the changes. The option suggested by the Town Council would require Officers to serve an Enforcement Notice on the developer. The developer could subsequently appeal against the Notice. A decision would then be made by the Planning Inspectorate (after several months) rather than the Council. For deviations from the approved scheme such as that now before use the most expedient, transparent and efficient means of dealing with the breach is through the determination of a new planning application.

Paragraph 011 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance states;

Paragraph: 011Reference ID: 17b-011-20140306

When might formal enforcement action not be appropriate?

Nothing in this guidance should be taken as condoning a wilful breach of planning law. Enforcement action should, however, be proportionate to the breach of planning control to which it relates and taken when it is expedient to do so. Where the balance of public interest lies will vary from case to case.

In deciding, in each case, what is the most appropriate way forward, local planning authorities should usually avoid taking formal enforcement action where:

- there is a trivial or technical breach of control which causes no material harm or adverse impact on the amenity of the site or the surrounding area;
- development is acceptable on its planning merits and formal enforcement action would solely be to regularise the development;
- in their assessment, the local planning authority consider that an application is the appropriate way forward to regularise the situation, for example, where planning conditions may need to be imposed.

#### 9. Conclusion:

Overall, it is considered that the development now proposed is of an acceptable size and design. It is also considered not to have a greater impact on residential amenity than the scheme approved in 2015. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved.

## 10. Proposed conditions:

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawing number(s): 1545 03 E, 1545 04 E, 1545 11 O, 1545 13 F, 1545 16, 1545 107 A, 14005/110D, 14005/120H

**Reason:** For purposes of clarity and for the avoidance of doubt, in accordance with paragraphs 203 and 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The development shall be completed fully in accordance with the details agreed under 15/04853/COMPLY, 16/01250/COMPLY and the tree, surface water and foul water details agreed under 15/03718/COMPLY.

**Reason:** To ensure that, in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 42, the development hereby permitted is completed in a manner appropriate to the site and its surroundings.

All door and window frames shall be recessed a minimum of 75mm into the external walls of the building.

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**Reason:** To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 42.

No bargeboards, eaves fascias or exposed rafter feet shall be used in the proposed development.

**Reason:** To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 42.

All drystone walls shall be constructed in natural Cotswold stone.

**Reason:** To ensure the development is completed in a manner sympathetic to the site and its surroundings in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policy 42.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, or any other statutory instrument amending or replacing it, no fences, walls or other means of enclosure shall be erected, sited or constructed in or around land forming part of Plot 1, other than those permitted by this Decision Notice.

**Reason:** Plot 1 occupies a prominent position at the entrance to the site and adjacent to Stow-on-the-Wold Conservation Area. It is important that a degree of control is maintained over the future boundary treatment of the site in order to ensure that future development is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the locality in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policies 15 and 42.

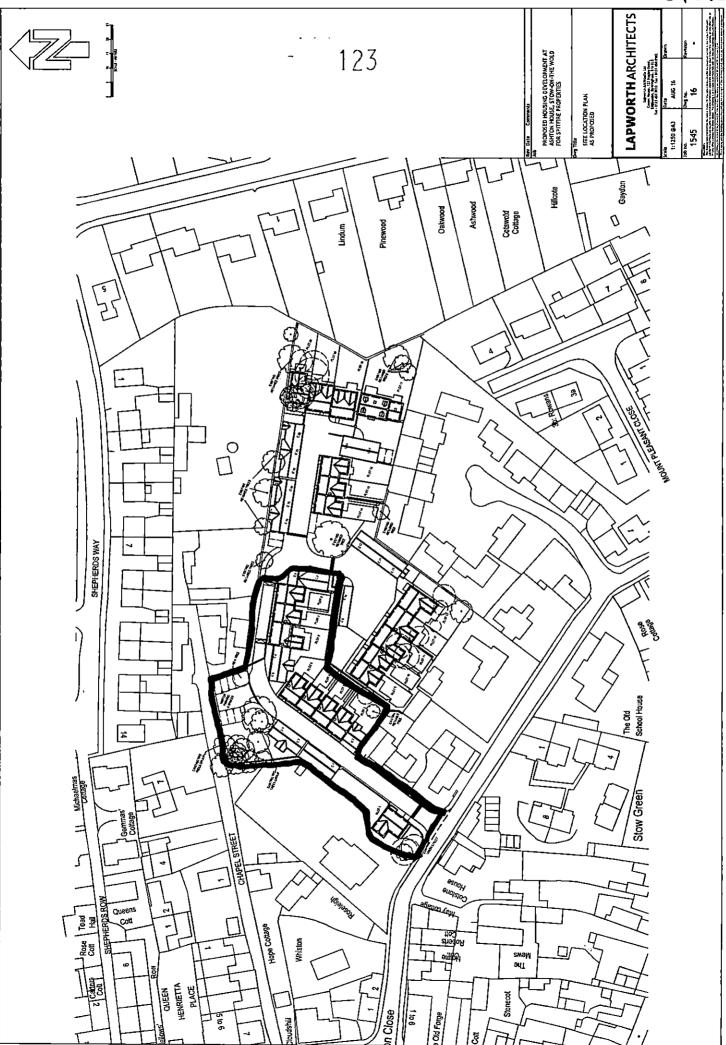
Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, or any other statutory instrument amending or replacing it, no extensions shall be added to any of the dwellings hereby approved.

**Reason:** It is important that the Local Planning Authority retain a degree of control over the future development of the site due to the terraced nature of the development and the relationship of dwellings to neighbouring residential properties in accordance with Local Plan Policies 42 and 46.

Within 3 months of the date of this decision the top three courses of stone in the boundary wall adjoining Union Street to the south of Plot 1 shall be removed and replaced by cock and hen capping as shown in drawing 1545 107 A.

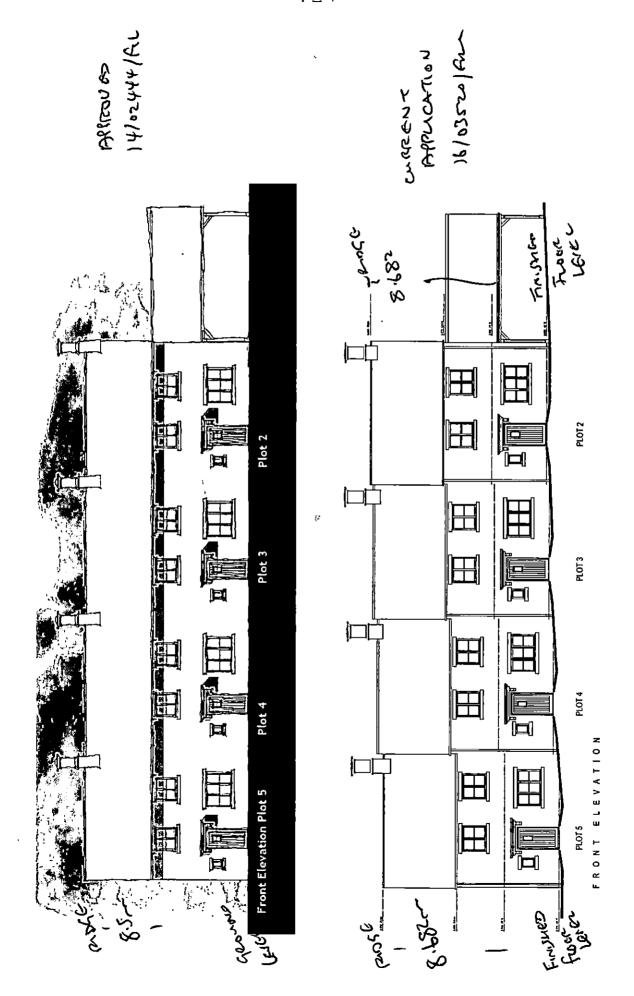
**Reason:** To ensure that the front boundary wall is of a size and design that is sympathetic to the character and appearance of Stow-on-the-Wold Conservation Area in accordance with Local Plan Policies 15, 18 and 42.

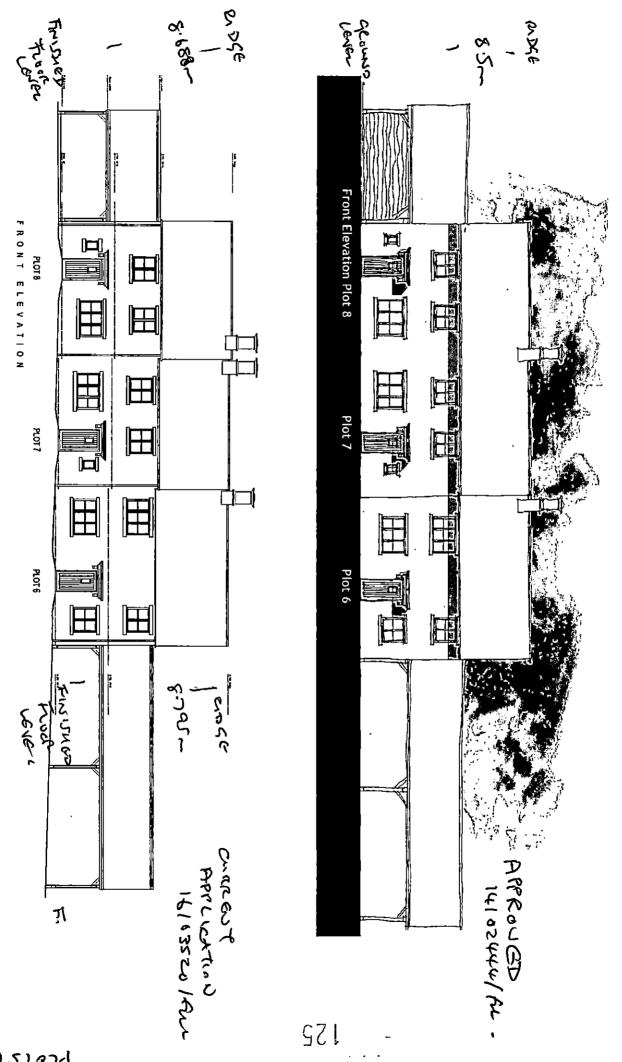
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#### Eastabrook

Rock Cottage Chapel Street Stow on the Wold GLOS GL54 1DA

21st September 2016

Ref: Ashton House CDC03

The Planning Officer
Cotswold District Council
Trinity Road
Cirencester
GLOS
GL7 1PX

Dear Sir

Erection of 7 dwellings (amendment to design of Plots 2-8 approved under permission 14/02444/FUL) and erection of 1.8m high boundary wall to rear of Plot 1 Planning Ref: 16/03520/FUL

My Wife and I write to object to the application reference 16/03520/FUL which seeks to regularise the illegal construction which has taken place on this site and which we drew to the Council's attention. We, and our neighbours, have made many representations to the Planning Department concerning the behaviour of Spitfire and have no satisfactory resolution. This latest application demonstrates the contempt in which Spitfire hold the Planning laws and their arrogance in believing that they can get away with building the work incorrectly and then making a retrospective application which will be easily passed. We hope that the Planning Committee will take a different view.

- It has been established in correspondence with Colin Davies, your Enforcement Officer, that there are two relevant drawings governing the appearance of houses 6-8. These are Lapworth Architects' drawing 1545/04/D and Banners Gate engineering drawing reference 14005/110/B. We attach a copy of these drawings and also of the email from Mr Davies of 16.08.16 confirming that these are the correct drawings.
- 2. Condition 14 (14/0244/FUL) is explicit in that information is to be supplied concerning inter alia the eaves and ridge heights of the proposed buildings and any neighbouring building adjacent to the site. This was not done at the commencement of the development as far as we can ascertain and, astonishingly, Mr Davies asserts in his email of 24.08.16 that the eaves and ridge heights were magically interpolated from the floor levels given on the Banners Gate drawing despite there being no evidence of eaves or ridge heights that can be found until drawing 1545/04/E was submitted with this retrospective application. An explanation of how these eaves and ridge heights were interpolated would be much appreciated.

- 3. The only way to determine the eaves and ridge heights is by measurement of drawing 1545/04/D which shows <u>GROUND LEVEL</u> to eaves at 4.8m and 3.2m eaves to ridge. The first floor lintels are only partially visible at the eaves.
- 4. Looking at the levels actually given on drawing 1545/04/E this shows <u>GROUND FLOOR FINISHED FLOOR LEVEL</u>, not ground level, to eaves at 5.05m and 3.6m approximately eaves to ridge. This information also applies in generality to Plots 2-5. Note that the first floor window heads are shown with the lintels fully exposed.

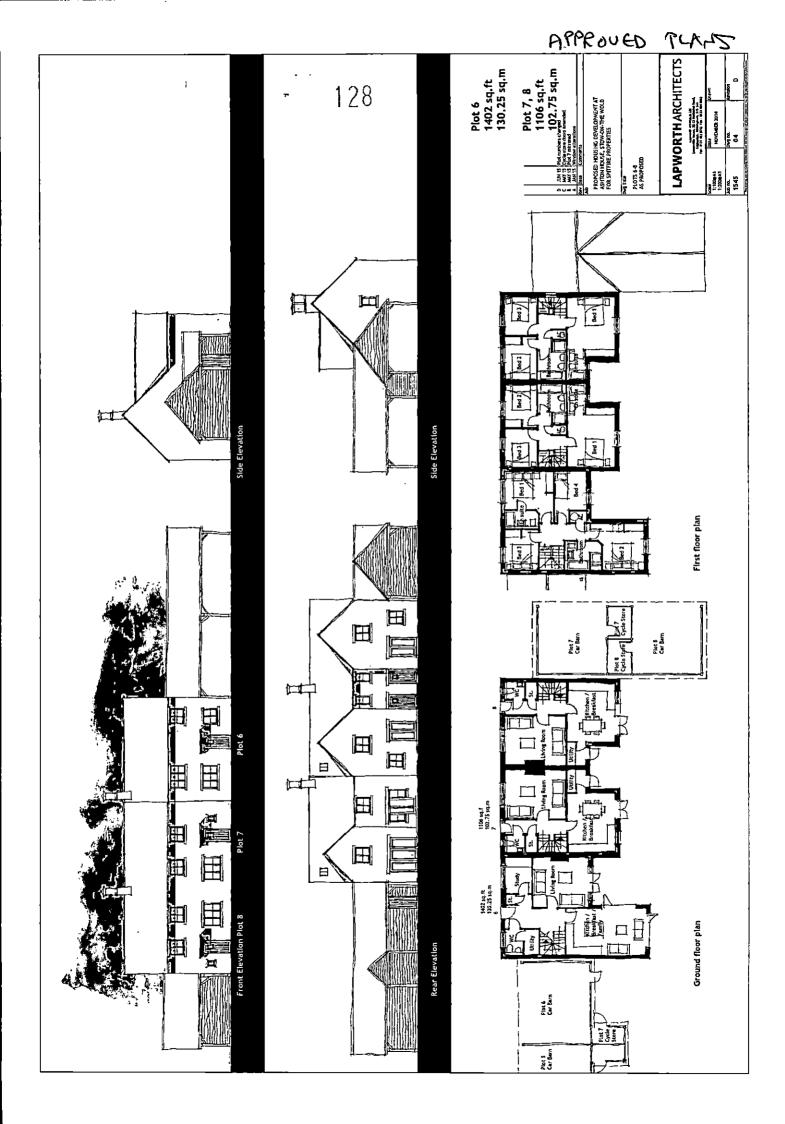
The houses are not only taller to the eaves but are also taller again to the ridge and the stepped roof line makes the units look even more "gawky" and unbalanced than before. There has been no consideration of the ground levels by the Architects nor has the Planning Officer considered the effect of approving the floor levels for Units 6-8 and the devastating affect it has had on our enjoyment of our garden. The drawing 1545/15/P1 is completely wrong and we told Mr Perks this on 14.05.15 and were completely ignored. Two photographs are attached showing a window of Plot 7 taken from our back door. No attempt was made by Spitfire or their Architects to ascertain the level of our garden nor did the Planning Officer carry out even the most elementary of his duties by enquiring of us the level of the garden or considering the effect that these houses will have upon our residential amenity.

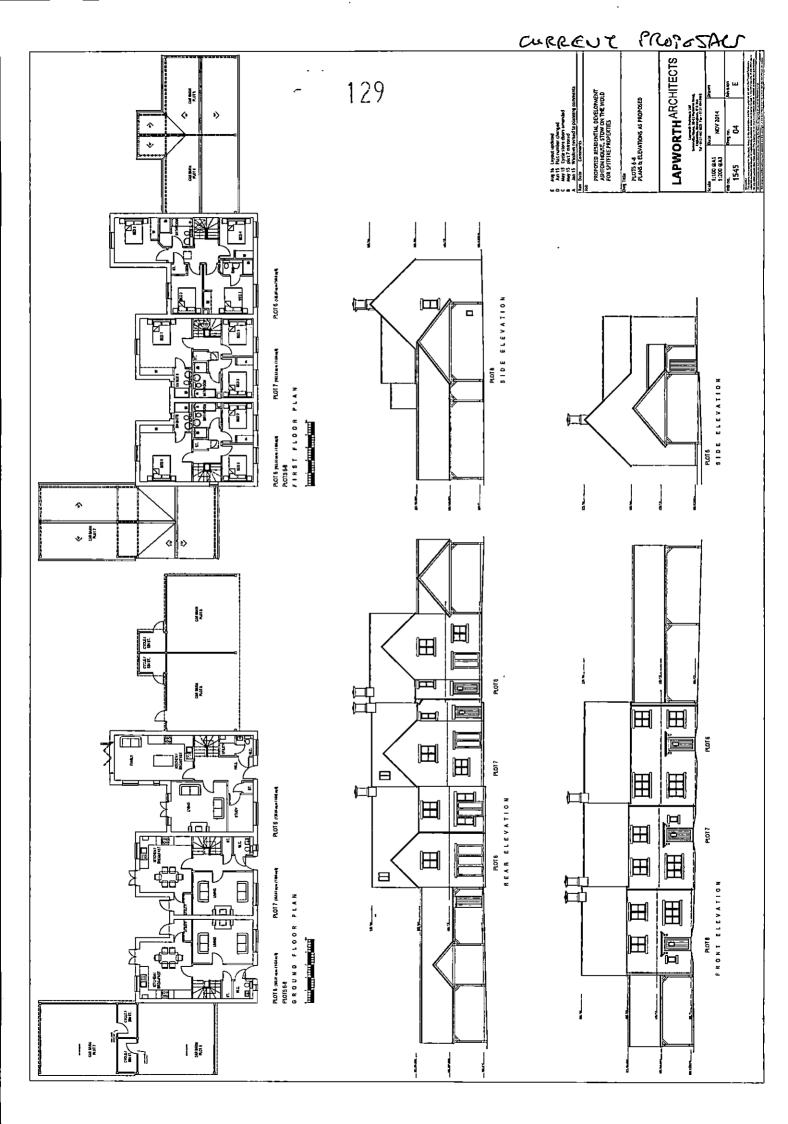
Spitfire do not observe the Conditions set out in the original Planning Permission and we and our neighbours have complained on many occasions only to be completely ignored by all parties. See the attached letter to Spitfire which sets out our complaints. There is little point in having Planning Permissions which contain Conditions which are to be observed if the Council will not ensure that those Conditions are observed. We have made every effort to bring the Council's attention to this but nothing is being done. I hope the Planning Committee will refuse this application and tell Spitfire to build the approved scheme to the originally approved eaves and ridge levels in 3. above. At present this retrospective application is the typical cynical developer response to their being caught riding roughshod over their legal obligations. They should be made to pay.

Yours faithfully

#### Andrew and Delyth Eastabrook

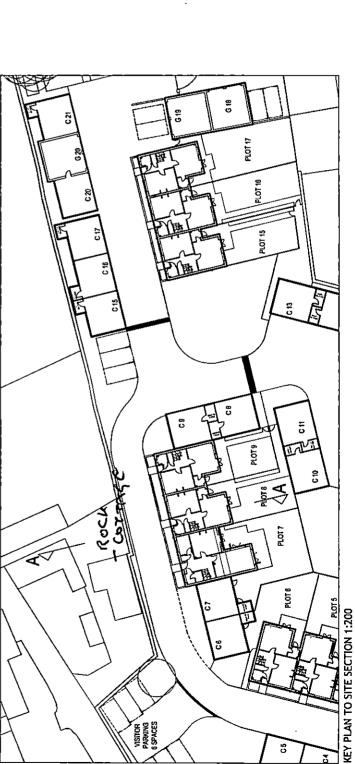
cc: Councillor Richard Keeling Stow Town Council Kevin Field, CDC

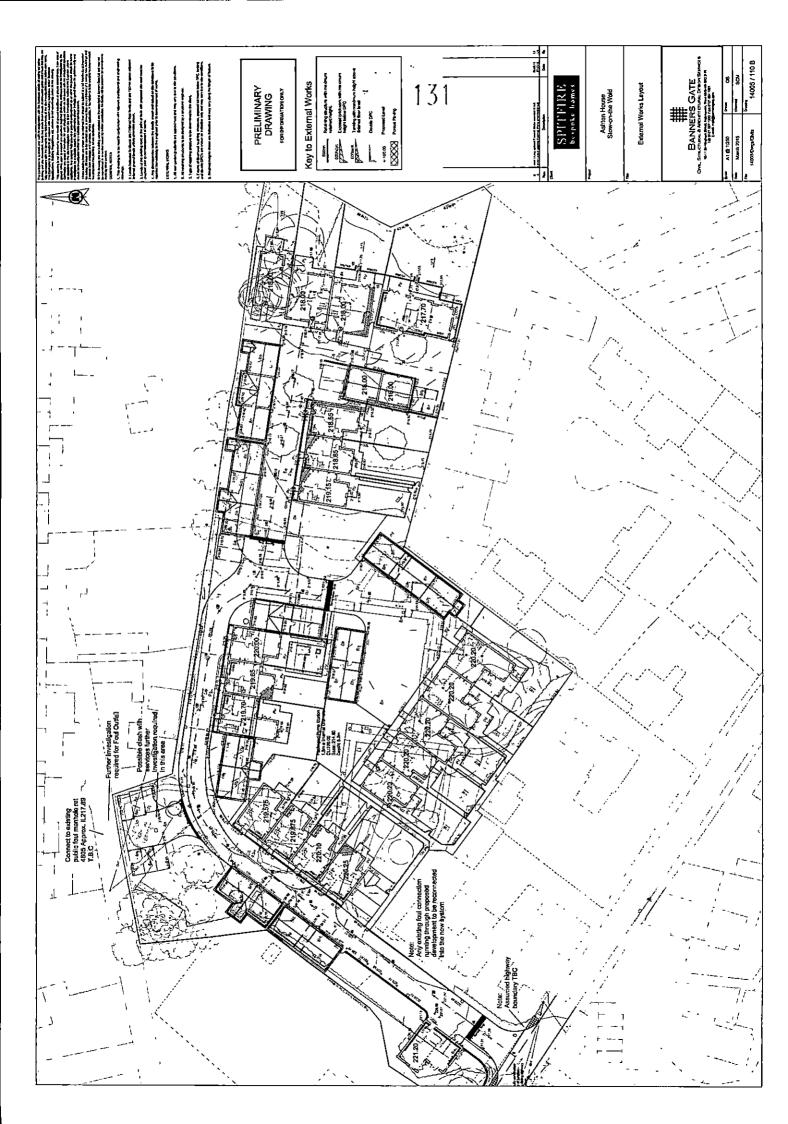




KITCHEN / BREAKFAST

BEO 1







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# Stow-on-the-Wold Town Council



Stow Youth Centre, Fosseway, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire GL54 1DW

Telephone:

Email: Website:

Town Clerk & RFO: Heather Sipthorp

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016

Mr Martin Perks
Cotswold District Council
Trinity Road
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1PX

Dear Martin

PLANNING APPLICATION NO 16/03520/FUL - FULL APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF 7 DWELLINGS (AMENDMENT TO DESIGN OF PLOTS 2-8 APPROVED UNDER PERMISSION 14/0244/FUL AND ERECTION OF 1.8 M HIGH BOUNDARY WALL TO REAR OF PLOT 1 AT ASHTON HOUSE, UNION STREET, STOW ON THE WOLD

The Council have asked me to write on their behalf with regard to the above application. For the reasons outlined below the Council objects to these revised proposals and urges the CDC to ensure enforcement action is taken to remedy the errors perpetrated in this case.

This is an egregious example of a developer having failed to build consistent with the approved plans and in contravention of the conditions laid down. However, it appears rather than instructing the developer to make the alterations needed to comply, the Case Officer has invited these revised drawings so that the departures from what was agreed can be waved through.

The developer had clearly not investigated the site fully before buying it outright. That has resulted in extensive piling being required to cope with the fact that much of the site is old quarry workings. This has resulted in considerable, avoidable, inconvenience to neighbouring residents. Further inconvenience has been caused by wholesale breaches of conditions on working hours by the various trades employed on the site. These have resulted in many justified complaints from neighbours but little attempt to ensure compliance with conditions.

The appearance of the properties constructed is inferior to that initially proposed as miscalculation has resulted in taller, stepped houses rather than the original smooth terracing. Details of this are included in Mr Eastabrook's letter of 21 September 2016. Where stone boundary walling has been created rather than the cock and hen top that features on existing walls the new walls have been built too high and capped with cement. The effect is particularly offensive where new walling adjoins existing walling. Council is also concerned that the proposed revised alignment of the access road to the lower part of the site (a realignment brought about by inadequate thought being given to its initially proposed course) would, if approved, compromise a silver birch that is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

Council understand that the Case has already been referred to Cllr Richard Keeling who has been a great help to the Council during a period of no representation. However, as I am sure you are aware there was a by election last Thursday and Cllr Dilys Neill was elected to represent the Stow Ward. Council will be meeting with her and will ask her to request that this application is considered by the Planning Committee and not decided under delegated powers.

Yours sincerely

Heather Sipthorp Clerk of the Council