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Eleanor Dash
Planning Department
Braintree District Council

21st August 2012

Dear Eleanor

Premdor/Rockways Draft Masterplan, Sible Hedingham

I have been instructed by St Giles Property Developments Ltd who have an interest in the Rockways site in Sible Hedingham. I am aware of and have read the relevant documents that were presented to and considered by the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee on 25th July 2012. I am also aware that the Core Strategy (CS) identifies the two sites as a regeneration area with uses to include housing, employment, a doctors' surgery, riverside nature reserve and open space and allotments, with the requirement for master plans for the redevelopment sites, to be approved by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The Illustrative Masterplan prepared by Bloor Homes that was considered by Members, indicated residential development on the Rockways site, which reflected and was consistent with my client's proposals and the discussions with Bloor Homes. Since the public engagement exercise in June and LDF Sub-Committee my client has considered a number of views expressed by the Parish Council and other local residents. My client has also considered viability and local market conditions and is contemplating a different type of scheme to that indicated on the Draft Illustrative Masterplan. The revised proposals are to develop a mixed use of a nursing home (Class C2 residential institution) and residential (C3 dwelling houses). The nursing home proposal is for approximately 100 beds and would be sited to the south of the Rockways site, with residential units to the north fronting onto Station Road and a part of the existing access road. A scheme is currently being designed, which will be forwarded to you in due course.

The nursing home would be developed for Forest Homecare, who currently run a nursing home of 35 beds in Alderford Street, Sible Hedingham. This home is over-subscribed and the operators are aware of the considerable need for nursing and care home accommodation in the district. Almost 20% of the district's population in 2008 comprised males of 65 plus years and females of 60 plus years and this is typical of the nation's aging population and increasing life expectancy.

Part of the CS Spatial Strategy in relation to housing is to meet the housing needs of all sections of the community, by providing an adequate amount and range of high quality accommodation, in particular affordable housing and that required for special needs. Consequently, the revised proposals are consistent with the CS, and will meet an acknowledged need. It is noted that there are no other specific policies relating to such accommodation in the CS.



This revised proposal would also provide other benefits, as below.

The existing Alderford Street Forest Homecare nursing home employs a total of 48 employees, many of whom are long term. It is estimated that a 100-bed home would provide approximately 60 jobs comprising full and part-time, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

In addition, there is strong local opinion for the provision of a new healthcare facility on the Premdor site and I understand that a site of 0.2 ha is to be reserved for this purpose. A nursing home within the regeneration area will provide added support and add viability for a new healthcare facility.

It is clear from the minutes of the LDF Sub-Committee that further amendments are being made to the Illustrative Masterplan. It is understood that the timetable is to present a final version of the masterplan to the LDF Sub-Committee on 5th September for approval, followed by formal adoption of the SPD at a Cabinet meeting on 24th September. Clearly time is short to meet this timetable and my client does not wish to prejudice this. Therefore, I am writing to you now, setting out my client's intentions and to agree the best way forward. In my view, the most practical way forward is for the existing Illustrative Masterplan that is being amended to be presented to the LDF Sub-Committee, i.e. showing housing (C3) on the Rockways site, as at present, plus an insert plan showing the mixed residential and nursing home proposals as an alternative option.

This would not delay the procedures and timetable, but it would enable my client to pursue both options with the Council.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW MARTIN MAUD DipTP(Distinction) FRICS FRTPI

CC: Tim Bluff, Bloor Homes Eastern
Frank Ladkin