



The Midhurst Society

10 July 2019

Stedham Sawmill

Following the Inspector's Report dated 18 June 2019 the SDNPA Local Plan was adopted on 2 July 2019. The Plan includes several items that are of particular interest to Midhurst.

This post relates to the site known as Stedham Sawmill. Unlike Midhurst, Stedham with Iping submitted their own Neighbourhood Plan, to be incorporated into the Local Plan, based on a proposal to allow mixed housing development of 16-20 units and 3,000 sqm of business use. We kept our comments to a minimum, as this is obviously what the Parish wants - not something being imposed from outside. We were generally supportive. However, the Inspector found it wanting, restricting housing units to a maximum of 16 and business use to a maximum of 1,500m².

The detail:

SD92 – Stedham Sawmill, Stedham

223. This 1.3ha site encompasses both commercial and undeveloped land south of the main part of Stedham and not far north of the Iping Common SSSI. The land is allocated for 16-20 dwellings and up 3,000m² of Class B1 business use. Policy SD92, with its supporting text, in effect, prescribes business uses to the west side of the site and up to 20 dwellings on the east side and requires a public cycle and pedestrian route through the residential portion of the development to connect with a public right of way to the north.

224. The mixed-use allocation raises issues of potential adverse impact on the nearby SSSI, the type and form and deliverability of the development allocated, including with reference to the loss of the present employment land, and the overall design of and access to the future redevelopment of the site.

225. There is evidence of significant potential for adverse impact on the Iping Common SSSI from the substantial redevelopment of the Stedham Sawmill site. The proposed amounts of residential and commercial development, with encouragement of public access through the site, raises the prospect of increased public pressure on the SSSI, especially due to dog walking. As submitted, Allocation Policy SD92 provides insufficient assurance that the development proposed could be accommodated, in the manner envisaged, without undue harm to the SSSI and is accordingly unsound.

Therefore:

MM95: An ecological survey and mitigation plan of the site will be required and the southern portion of the site will be kept free of development to serve a range of functions, including land for biodiversity enhancements, a transition from development to the Common and concentrating development to the north of the site thereby ensuring that Stedham remains a village focused on School Lane (in accordance with its historic character) and not joined to the A272 to ensure that development enhances opportunities for local ecology and protected species to flourish. Given the history of commercial use on the site, development proposals should be informed by a land contamination survey.

MM99: Land at Stedham Sawmill, Stedham is allocated for mixed-use development for up to 16 (not 20) residential dwellings (class C3 use), and approximately 1500m² employment uses (not 3,000m²) (class B1b & c Business use) and approximately 0.35ha of land for biodiversity protection and enhancements. Planning permission will not be granted for any other uses.

(Apologies for this truncated and slightly edited version. Stedham residents may want to study the report in more detail.)