

Statement by Effingham Parish Council

By Arnold Pindar, Chairman

In the Appeal by:

**Wisley Property Investments Limited Appeal Reference Numbers:
APP/Y3615/W/16/3159894**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am Arnold Pindar, Chairman of Effingham Parish Council.
- 1.2 Effingham Parish Council **objects** to the development at Wisley and requests that the Appeal be dismissed. If the development was to be allowed Effingham, as a close neighbour, would be seriously affected.
- 1.3 Today, I will provide the Inquiry with the Effingham assessment of the proposed Wisley development and how it will affect our rural village.
- 1.4 Effingham Parish Council and Effingham Residents Association jointly conducted a survey to understand the opinions of local residents regarding the proposed development at Wisley Airfield. The results show that 96% of Effingham Residents returning the survey oppose the development. Effingham residents are not NIMBYs. Our almost completed Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for sustainable developments within Effingham Parish.
- 1.5 Effingham Parish Council and Effingham Residents Association have a joint working group looking carefully at how our parish will be affected by the proposed development. The results of our research break down into three areas: highways, public and private transport, and public services.

2. FIRSTLY HIGHWAYS

- 2.1 The proposed development is not sustainable from a highways perspective. It will have a severe traffic impact on the local road network. The developer has been chopping and changing their proposals right up to the opening days of this appeal. This failure to settle their plans, in my view, confirms that there is no sustainable solution to the highways problems. If there was an acceptable solution, I am sure it would have been proposed many months ago.

- 2.2 As other speakers have said, the local network is based on a rural infrastructure where there are many very narrow roads, where lorries coming in opposite directions struggle to pass. Often there are no pavements and pedestrians walk in the road. There are few cycleways, and cyclists, particularly leisure cyclists, are heavy users of our roads, including to access the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which start in Effingham. Given the minimalist nature of rural road infrastructure there are concerns about road safety for school children getting to and from schools, and more generally for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2.3 The road traffic safety hotspots, affecting Effingham residents, are: The Effingham Common Road/Forest Road/Old Lane junction, a very congested area at peak times; the narrow and blind hump road bridge at Effingham Junction station with a sharp right-hand turn into the station car park for southbound traffic; and the junction of Effingham Common Road with Orestan Lane at the entrance to Effingham village centre.
- 2.4 We also identify Old Lane, during peak morning and evening hours. This is a very busy road with traffic from Effingham, the Bookhams and further afield using this highway on a regular basis to get to and from the A3. Proposals to have an exit from the proposed site onto Old Lane are also undesirable as the road is narrow and not suitable as an exit for a development of this size.
- 2.5 Further the Appellants one-time offer, to create a cycleway along this narrow rural road, were we believe frankly unrealistic. The new proposals offer no cycleways, and no safe cycle routes to travel to the local stations. The traffic in Old Lane travels very quickly and the road is unlit, which will discourage most cyclists. Our concern is that people will tend to use their vehicles to get to Effingham Junction station rather than depend on a bus service, which will be comparatively expensive compared to the convenience of driving and parking. The bus service by definition will not be as flexible or convenient as using one's own car.
- 2.6 Effingham residents are very concerned about significant extra traffic, from the proposed development, using Effingham Common Road, The Street and Lower Road, in Effingham village centre, which are near to three schools – St Lawrence Primary, the Howard of Effingham and Manor House. These roads are danger hotspots as they are used by 2000 children each day going to and from schools in the vicinity.

- 2.7 The transport mitigation measures proposed by the Appellant are wholly inadequate to deal with the increase in volume of traffic caused by the development. There is nothing proposed to deal with the road safety dangers to pedestrians, cyclists, and increases in traffic in Effingham at these known congestion points. The proposed roundabout at the Forest Road/ Horsley Road/ Old Lane junction will merely serve to move the congestion from one road (Howard Road/Effingham Common Road) to another (Forest Road) as it does not add any capacity to the road network.

3. SECONDLY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT

- 3.1 The car park at Effingham Junction station is already full on many days in the year, especially during winter months, with cars overflowing to park on Effingham Common Road. This overflow parking is a road safety danger, in itself, as parking starts the south side of the narrow and blind humpback road bridge at Effingham Junction. With increased users, parking on the road will increase.
- 3.2 As evidenced by Keith Robinson (transport consultant to the Horsley Parish Councils) there is currently insufficient capacity to absorb the parking requirements of the planned increase in population expected over the next 10-15 years, including from new developments in Effingham, without taking into account the extra and substantial demand created by the proposed Wisley development. Effingham Junction is the nearest station to the development and we expect it to be the station of first choice by the development's residents.
- 3.3 To mitigate the parking problems at the local stations a bus service is planned by the Appellants between the development site and stations. Without long-term funding by the developer we question the long-term viability of this bus service in a rural area where cars are the predominant mode of transport. We further question how many people would use this service rather than their cars? Our reasoning for this is that the Wisley site is remote from significant local shops and amenities, hence, necessitating regular private car use. Therefore, it is certain that the convenience of the private car will significantly reduce the use of public transport in the area, unless frequent and running into the late evening.
- 3.4 Parking within Effingham village itself is extremely limited and currently there is on-street parking which causes additional dangers for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. It is reasonable to assume that

this situation will be exacerbated by the proposed development, as residents of the development seek to access the services available in Effingham – schools, leisure services, and shops.

4. THIRDLY, PUBLIC SERVICES

- 4.1 No date is given for the opening of the medical facility on the proposed development site and there is no indication that it would be a GP surgery. Will it be fully funded by the NHS or the developer? There are no indications that funding provision has been considered.
- 4.2 So, where will residents of the proposed development go? If to the Horsleys or Bookham, all the GP practices in these villages are close to capacity and will find it challenging to cope with planned growth that is already set to take place in Effingham, Bookham and the Horsleys.
- 4.3 Half of Effingham residents use the GP surgery at the East Horsley Medical Centre, Kingston Lane, East Horsley. Others attend either Eastwick Park Medical Practice or Fairfield Medical Centre, both in Great Bookham. With these services close to capacity the 5000 people from the new development will need their own GP provision.
- 4.4 There are examples where a developer has proposed such medical facilities but for one reason or another plans have not come to fruition. If the appeal was to be allowed the proposal by the developer for a medical centre on site must be made into a fully funded and planned commitment for a GP surgery to be built and to be functioning by the end of Phase 1.
- 4.5 The proposed development, using Surrey County Council, Education Department statistics, will have around 1000 children needing primary and secondary schools. Some of the nearest schools are in Effingham and these schools will not be able to cope with an extra 1000 children looking for places.
- 4.6 Whilst plans for primary and secondary school provision at the proposed development are welcome, there are a number of questions to be answered. Will they be fully funded? Why are the schools coming on stream comparatively late in the development - in the meantime causing a shortage of school places especially in Effingham? If the proposed through-school on site is not realised where will these children go?

- 4.7 If the appeal was to be allowed, the proposal by the developer for primary and secondary school provision must be a fully funded and planned commitment for the schools to be built, available and to be functioning by the end of Phase 1.

5. FINALLY,

- 5.1 As mentioned earlier, Effingham is producing a Neighbourhood Plan. We have received the examiner's report and he has recommended that the Plan proceeds to the final stage i.e. Referendum, subject to some required amendments. The Neighbourhood Plan, therefore, carries weight. One of our policies would be impacted by the development, Policy ENP- G2 This is on Landscape, Heritage, Character and Design. In the policy, we have identified views to be protected. If the proposed development goes ahead views at or close to at least three of these protected views from the south of the village, in or close to the ANOB, will be changed by the sight of the five storey buildings on site, especially when the leaves are off the trees. The protected views are:

- S2 – Bowles Green, Footpath 122
- S3 – Effingham Golf Course Boundary, Footpath 123
- S7 – The Grove towards Great Ridings Wood, A246

We accept that for these locations, the buildings will be at some distance away but we request that should the appeal be allowed, a height restriction of three storeys be imposed to minimise changes to these views.

- 5.2 Thank you for the opportunity to present the concerns of Effingham residents and the reasons why we have these concerns. To reiterate Effingham Parish Council **objects** to the proposed development at Wisley and urges that the Appeal be dismissed.