

Correspondence sent to Manor Oak Homes

Dear xxxxxx

The points that concern the Parish Council about access, and also a significant number of residents, are as follows:

The Ruddery (aka Ashwell St) forms part of the Icknield Way. It lies within the Conservation Area and also marks the Southern boundary of the Ashwell Settlement Area. Those qualities are supported by its condition as an unsurfaced carriageway and Right of Way. The concerns have 3 elements:

- The minimum encroachment onto the Ruddery to enable access to the development site should be the goal. Ideally the existing gateway to the field should be used rather than creating a new entrance point further Eastwards down the Ruddery. In the plans you provided it appears that the proposed site access is approximately 25 metres to the East of the current field access gate. Why is that necessary, or could the 25 metres be reduced?
- The plan proposes a widening of the track to 5 metres and a new 'Shared Surface' for a distance from Woodfords Close to the site entrance of approximately 50 metres. The community preference would be for that new shared surface to be physically as close a structural form and appearance as the existing unmetalled surface. Could it not be something like an MOT base surfaced by gravel given that District Council Refuse lorries use the current unmetalled surface without issues? Why does there need to be a 'raised table' between Woodforde Close and the Hunts Ridge house? We would suggest that nothing like tarmac or concrete would be appropriate for the new shared surface.
- It is recognised in the Transport Note that the Ruddery will provide the main pedestrian access point to Station Rd transport services. Indeed it is currently used extensively by dog walkers, walkers and parents with children to access the Primary School. There is a clear safety conflict between vehicles and pedestrians as the Ruddery has in parts steep, vegetated banks on either side of the 4+ metre track. The vehicles associated with 14 new houses will potentially increase the number of vehicle movements along the Ruddery while it continues to have the status of a BOAT. Regardless of the shaping of the new 'Shared Surface' at the site entrance we fear that any determined drivers will simply use the Eastward section of the Ruddery to access Station Rd. So for reasons of pedestrian safety it is strongly suggested that a fresh application is made to the Rights of Way Officer at Herts CC to redesignate the BOAT as a Restricted Byway, and install bollards at the Eastern boundary of the Ruddery access point to the site, thereby preventing 'through vehicular traffic'. Such a measure will not inhibit Refuse lorries, tractors, emergency service vehicles etc from accessing any part of the Ruddery. It will simply, but importantly, inhibit and eliminate 'through' or 'rat-run' traffic using it as a shortcut between Kingsland Way and Station Rd, and therefore reduce the level of safety concerns for pedestrians.

The Parish Council would also appreciate any and all measures that can be taken to ensure that the 'affordable housing' element of the plan is prioritised ('ringfenced' ideally) for Ashwell

residents as described in Part 1 of the Affordable Housing Covenants paragraph 1.8. We would be willing to explore with you and the NHC Housing Officer what options may help achieve this in terms of the Housing Association selected to manage this aspect of the development.

xxxxx, please let me know if you need any more detail from the Parish Council at the moment. We appreciate your willingness to work with us over the delivery of the development as we wish to help make this a positive development for the Ashwell community.

Best regards

Graham Lee – Chairman Ashwell Parish Council