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Dear Sirs

MO/2019/2163/PNLTIND – Unit 5, Dene Farm, Hole Hill, Westcott

I refer to the proposal above and write in my capacity as the lead for planning matters for Westcott Village Association (WVA).

You may be aware that the WVA occasionally makes representations on behalf of the Westcott community and specifically with regard to compliance with the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP). The WVA has now met to discuss this proposal and I am writing on their behalf.

It is noted that this matter is not strictly speaking a planning application but prior notification for the change of use of light industrial buildings (Use Class B1c) to 7 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) under permitted development rights (PDR).

WVA accept that the existing use of these former agricultural buildings is now a category of Class B1. This enables the applicants to convert to residential under permitted development rights where the circumstances of the proposals meet the criteria in the Planning Act. We trust that MVDC will satisfy itself that the criteria have been met in this proposal.

WVA observe that the intended application of PDR is to put redundant office stock, typically in town centres, into a beneficial use and to meet housing needs. PDR has been controversial as it often fails to address the specific local housing needs or investment in higher quality design.

The circumstances for this site at Hole Hill are somewhat different to a typical B1 to residential PDR. Although the established use is B1, the relevant buildings are former agricultural modern portal framed sheds. The site falls within Green Belt, AONB and an Area of Great Landscape Value. It also sits between two sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

Whilst WVA is not against the principle of residential development on this site we believe a PDR proposal which proposes to convert buildings which are not suited to residential conversion misses an opportunity. That opportunity is to improve the character and appearance of the site whilst also addressing an identified need for 2 and 3 bedroom houses in Westcott.

WVA would prefer to see a scheme reflecting the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan, in particular a focus on Policy WNDP 1 - Size, Architectural Style and Character of Housing Development.

We trust the applicant and MVDC would share our view on this and we hope that these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully,

James Leaver

Planning Lead, Westcott Village Association

Cc Paul Harman