

Canterbury City Council Local Plan Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation

The Forge, Faussett Hill, Lower Hardres

Representation submitted on behalf of N Betteridge

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1. These representations are submitted on behalf of N Betteridge, the owner of The Forge at Faussett Hill in the local service centre of Lower Hardres as shown on the plan at appendix 1.
 2. We are concerned that the Local Plan strategy for the area to the south of the city is unsound as it is based upon an excessive reliance upon a number of draft allocations involving large mainly greenfield sites beyond the settlement boundary such as land at Merton Park (C10) and land south of Littlebourne Road (C15). These are likely to result in substantial objections and problems of delivery which would significantly impact upon the council meeting its objectively assessed housing need.
 3. The Plan also relies upon a number of allocations carried forward from previous adopted Local Plans. Some of these have failed to come forward for development in spite of their inclusion in several adopted Local Plans. And this questions their deliverability.
 4. In order to address this we put forward a site which is available, suitable and deliverable.
 5. Lower Hardres is identified as a local service centre in the draft Local Plan.
 6. Policy R13 – Local Service Centres - supports new housing development where it accords with other policies in the Plan. Sub-paragraph 1a) allocates development in subsequent policies R14 to R19. These six policies provide development allocations at the local service centres of Adisham, Barham, Broad Oak and Hoath. We consider that a further development allocation – Policy R20 – should be included within the Local Plan for Lower Hardres.
 7. The plan at appendix 1 supports that suggested Policy R20. The identified site lies within the settlement boundaries of Lower Hardres. It is a brownfield site which contains a dwelling and several buildings relating to the original and historic use as a forge and farmyard. These buildings are now used predominantly for a variety of small businesses with extensive outdoor storage.
 8. The site is located within the Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) and the Lower Hardres and Street End Conservation Area. Overall, the site fails to preserve or enhance the character and the appearance of the conservation area and stands out as a rather harsh edge to this part of the village widely visible from the AHLV.

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9. Development proposals for the site would incorporate a substantial landscape buffer around the south western and north western edges of the site to provide a softer transition from the settlement boundary to the adjacent countryside.
 10. The inclusion of the site as a development allocation would involve a mixed development of residential and commercial uses. It would include the retention and enhancement of the non-designated heritage assets, the removal of unattractive structures and storage and the creation of a development which would deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits within this local service centre. The inclusion of this site would be consistent with the overall spatial strategy of the Local Plan. It would also be consistent with the approach which the council has taken with other local service centres.
 11. The suggested policy is as follows:

Policy R20 – Land at The Forge, Faussett Hill, Lower Hardres

Site R20 is allocated for mixed-use development. Planning permission will be granted for development which meets the following criteria:

1. Development mix

Across the site the development mix will include:

- a) Approximately 7 new dwellings including an appropriate housing mix in line with Policy DS2.
- b) The retention and enhancement of the two single storey buildings in the south western corner of the site for employment purposes.
- c) Open space provided in line with Policy DS28.

2. Design and layout

The design and layout of the site should:

- a) Provide a high quality built environment in line with Policy DS13 with an average net density of around 20 DPH; and
- b) Be informed by a heritage statement and where appropriate sustain and enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets on the site.

3. Landscape and Green Infrastructure

The green infrastructure strategy for the site should:

- a) Incorporate opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancements; and
 - b) Provide a landscape buffer on the south western and north western boundaries of the site adjacent to the countryside.
12. In our opinion, the Plan does not include a strategy which will deliver small and medium sized sites which NPPF paragraph 73 recognises as an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly. In that respect, we consider that the Plan is not effective. The inclusion of this site at Lower Hardres which is available, suitable and deliverable, would provide faster and better-quality development than some of the proposed sites.
13. Its inclusion would also be consistent with the NPPF requirements to encourage brownfield development and sustainable development.
14. This site is in a sustainable location, within the identified settlement boundary, close to existing services in this local service centre and with good bus links to and from Canterbury.
15. The site would be available for development immediately and there are no technical constraints which might hinder its deliverability.
16. The inclusion of this development allocation and the above suggested policy would therefore address our criticisms.

Appendix 1: Indicative Concept Master Plan