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Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

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Your ref: n/a

Our ref: 2010-1714

Date: 10th November 2016

Dear Sirs,

RE:- APPLICATION TO VARY A S106 PLANNING OBLIGATION AT LAND TO REAR OF FORMER ST JOHNS SCHOOL, MILL LANE, WETLEY ROCKS, STAFFORDSHIRE

REASON(S) FOR APPLYING FOR VARIATION

This application seeks to vary the terms of the S.106 that was attached to planning application 11/0069/FUL, which granted planning permission for the erection of six affordable homes on land at the rear of the former St John's School on the 28th August 2012. The approved scheme was amended by an application proposing an amended access road that was approved in June last year.

A planning application was recently determined by Planning Committee on 6th October 2016 that proposed two affordable units that would be provided through a registered provider and available for rent. This approach was put forward due to changes in the construction and financial industries that would not allow the original approved scheme to proceed. The proposal to develop a part affordable and part market scheme was not accepted by the Council and subsequently refused, as the Council consider that 100% provision of affordable is required on the site.

During the course of the assessment of planning application SMD/2015/0747 the Council suggested that Discounted Market Sale Units should be considered. Unfortunately at the time and with the projected figures available, it did not favour such a proposal as it would have resulted in a overall loss financially. This resulted in the realistic prospect of the former school, which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and the 6no. new builds not proceeding, at a time when the District and Wetley Rocks itself really need low cost homes.

Since the refusal of planning application SMD/2015/0747 the client has held various meetings with contractors, suppliers and property professionals to explore if a Discounted Market Sale scheme can be made viable. The outcome of the recent negotiations is the client is now confident that the scheme can be delivered without making a loss financially. However, it should be recognised that the client is not going to make a profit like other commercial developers would expect as they consider the delivery of the low cost housing and preservation of the former St John's School through its conversion more important factors.

The variation of the existing S.106 agreement on extant permission 11/00069/FUL to allow the affordable housing to be provided in the form of Discounted Market Sale Units is the only realistic way that the provision of 100% affordable housing can be delivered on this site. The Council is therefore politely requested to support this application, so that the development can be delivered.

Yours faithfully

Wayne Johnson Dip. T.P.
For and on behalf of Sammons Architectural Ltd.