

## VILLAGE HOUSING INITIATIVE

### TOR HOMES DESIGN WORKSHOP MEETING

5 APRIL 2011

**Present:**

Cllr Mike Saltern Executive Member for Housing SHDC-Chair  
Cllr Suzie Cooper SHDC/NNPC  
Malcolm Elliott Planning Officer SHDC  
Debbie Holloway  
John Halliday DCC Highways  
George Wyatt DCC Highways  
Gareth Jones Head of Development Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust  
Robin Thorn Tor Homes  
Eleanor Stark Development Officer Tor Homes  
Graham Rogers Senior Council  
John Young Chairman NNPC  
Alan Cooper Vice Chairman NNPC  
Tom Taylor NNPC  
Peter Gough NNPC  
Shona McDonough Clerk to NNPC  
Mr Peter Hoskin Landowner  
Fred Hoskin

Cllr Saltern advised that it was important to reach a final position- the proposals had been ongoing for some time and that there had been misunderstandings.

Ms Stark outlined the present position. The current meeting was being held following the workshop on 24 February. The plans favoured at that meeting and shown at the Annual Parish Meeting were those that currently were on the table and that which Tor Homes wished to submit.

Tor Homes had consulted the Parish on 16 December when plans were displayed following advice from engineers, drainage, highways, SHDC and on costs. There was a proposal for 16 units- the northern terrace being approached by a road, the southern terrace abutting Parsonage Road.

It was the constraints with the latter which had caused misunderstandings. Ms Stark referred to the sewage run which was marked by a red line on the plans- the easement for the same being shown by a dotted line. It was not possible to build on that line. There was a Western Power electricity cable running along the north side. The north side was flat then dropped. The southern side dropped more steeply. Highways advised that there couldn't be a junction near the entry which allowed conflict for cars coming together at this point. There was also the opposite junction across Parsonage Road to factor in. (John Halliday did not contradict this point). A turning head to adoptable standard was needed.

Therefore it was for the above reasons that the plans were devised and presented to the Parish on 16 December.

Feedback from the meeting showed that it was felt the southern terrace was too close to Parsonage Road and overbearing. The majority felt that it should replicate the northern terrace. Ms Stark advised that this was not an option. They did however try to accommodate with a request from NNPC to have another look at it.

The next plan showed the houses on the southern terrace being turned by 90 degrees. There would be gable ends to the road. It could address concerns re overbearing nature. However

the highways, western power, sewage and topography constraints remained. Those present at the meeting on 24 February felt that whilst the new plan had some merit, the original scheme had more merit. It was pointed out that the original scheme could be amended by reference to materials, making the properties feel more individual, more unique character looking as if they had been evolved rather than 'dumped'. There had been some criticism that it looked like 'council housing'.

The architects therefore worked on the original scheme and also focused on the corner property of southern terrace. It was seen to be key as it was the first property people would see as they came into the village. The revised plan shown therefore showed the southern terrace in concept the same but staggered. The corner property was in stone. There would be other detailing to soften it.

Ms Stark was asked about the position of the sewage system. She advised that they were not allowed to build within 3 metres of it. It could be moved to a limited extent but there was only a small amount of latitude. It would be out of the ground because of the gradient and would require burying.

It was accepted that the southern terrace would be forward of the building line of neighbouring properties. Malcolm Elliott confirmed that in planning terms this was satisfactory. There had been a lot of consideration given to access arrangements. From a design approach the terrace facing the street to give frontage could give an attractive approach to the village. John Halliday advised that there used to be a building line relating to the width of highway space so that in urban areas there was space for a public highway. This didn't apply in Newton Ferrers. Development may be stepped forward of existing building line and it was not a constraint Highways would wish to impose where there was a very wide highway envelope in front of the development.

The meeting was asked about the possibility of there being a road in front of the southern terrace to step it back. The meeting was advised that the northern terrace road was much narrower than usual roads and 2 cars could not pass. It was much better than having a T junction at the front or back of the development. One at the back was better because of the access hub. As it was so complex near the front of the development they did not wish to overcomplicate it.

Mr Rogers advised that his key concerns with the plans showing the southern terrace at right angles to Parsonage Road had been that it did not provide quality of life to the residents as the original plan did. A consultation had been held and amendments made. Whatever the process it was not going to please everyone. He wondered whether the objectors realised what advantage the current proposal had over the scheme where the houses were at right angles to the road. He thought the shortcomings of that plan needed to be shown. He suggested that the Parish Council were not on trial. They had been consulted, they had commented and Tor homes had listened and amended the plan. One or two people didn't like them.

The Vice Chairman pointed out that it had been felt that the amended plan shown at the Annual Parish Meeting had not been much different. It was felt that a neighbouring resident had seen the second plan with the buildings at right angles and liked that one. Not all NNPC members had seen that plan until the last NNPC Meeting on 24 March.

Mr Gough outlined the main difficulties. People did not realise that the NNPC were consultees not that SHDC/Tor Homes could in effect proceed with their planning application as they saw fit. There had been much contact by a neighbouring resident regarding Cllr Cooper. It was felt that the resident may have concerns about devaluation to their property. Mr Gough continued that there had been significant feedback from the Parish wanting the southern terrace set back further from the road. How much further could it be pushed back? If there was a Devon Bank and it was pushed back the local residents fears may diminish. It was a question the Parish Council would be asked at the next Parish Council Meeting on 14

April. There was also concern that the landowner's property had not been put in the right place.

Cllr Saltern confirmed that the landowner was coming to the meeting. It was his understanding that the landowner's property was where the landowner had requested. Unless he heard different that was the position.

Gareth Jones then addressed the meeting. He was head of development for Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust and representing the thousands of pounds that had been spent on getting the design to this stage. There had been the normal statutory consultation that professionals engage in to get to the current position. If the planning application went in now it would have the full backing of the planning department. It had been going on for 2 years. If the project had been up and running under the previous different funding arrangements they could have keyed into more significant funding. Monies were being drained including for affordable housing. In the next week they had to decide whether the project was likely to happen and which ones they should include in for an application for government funding.

It was pointed out that by pushing the houses back it would affect the amount of garden for the tenants.

The Vice Chairman pressed for an answer to the question as to how far the houses on the southern terrace could be pushed back. The Parish Council were keen to see it as an example of excellence and to avoid the Bishops Court experience. Ms Stark advised that it had been pushed back as far as it could go. They could not encroach on the sewer easement- they could put parking over it but no permanent structures. The line of the terrace where the buildings had been turned at right angles were the same distance from the sewer. Malcolm Elliott suggested that as part of the Design and Access Statement that Tor homes detail the background to the application and how the resulting scheme had emerged.

Gareth Jones emphasised that their ability to secure funding for the project hung on a knife edge. Their ability to secure funding over the last 2 years had diminished.

Mr Rogers confirmed that he was 100% behind the revised scheme. He asked if something could be put in writing to assist the Parish Council.

Malcolm Elliot confirmed that he was having a meeting with Carrie Griffiths and her husband.

*Peter Hoskins and his father joined the meeting.*

Highways confirmed that they were happy with the layout. The NNPC representatives confirmed that they had heard that from the Highways Dept.

*The Highways Dept representatives left the meeting.*

Mr Taylor advised that at the last workshop the scheme at a right angle to the road had been rejected due to

-the dynamics of living there wouldn't make happy tenants- walking in front of each other's houses.

-the common area in front wouldn't have been valued.

The architect at the last meeting had felt that the right angled scheme was not the best and to leave the southern terrace in the same position as the original plan.

The meeting was advised that the scheme was on a financial knife edge. The corporate objective was to make it an example of excellence. If the project was put in but then the Housing Trust could not deliver they would lose grant and reputation. It was a Village Housing Initiative-they did want community support. It fell outside the normal scope. They had gone the extra mile to take peoples wishes.

The Vice Chairman asked about the alternative scheme presented by a local architect. Most people who had seen it liked it. Ms Stark advised that he was not their architect or part of their process. It really first highlighted the highways constraints as it showed cross roads that highways objected to. It was why the plan was rejected. She accepted the design may have been liked. There were topography limits.

Mr Rogers suggested that there needed to be a simple bulleted statement before 14 April showing the constraints. Ms Stark would send this. It would cover the alternative design, building line, why the houses could not be pushed back further and environmental issues regarding solar panels. It was their aim to get the plans in as soon as possible. People could object to the plans in the usual way.

Mr Hoskin was thanked for his involvement. He confirmed he would make do with the position of the position of his house on the plan. On being pressed he confirmed he was happy with the position of the house. He did however need a few alterations which would be discussed after the e meeting.

It was confirmed that the rental properties would be for those who have a local connection- not necessarily homeless. It was confirmed SHDC would prepare an information pack showing the summary of the scheme, how it had developed, the constraints of the scheme, how localism of the people would be policed. Malcolm Elliot confirmed that any permission would be subject to a S 106 agreement to retain in perpetuity.

Ms Stark asked if the NNPC representatives were asking them to delay submitting the plans until after the next NNPC meeting. It was confirmed that this was not the case and that they should go ahead now.

Mr Taylor pointed out that the elderly in the village were well provided for in terms of housing. Housing was needed for young people to balance the community. The Village Housing Initiative would save villages.

Meeting concluded 4.05pm

A second meeting then took place with the landowner.