

More details emerge on plans for Gosden Hill

Martin Grant Homes recently asked for a meeting with representatives of West Clandon Parish Council to share their thoughts on the proposed development at Gosden Hill Farm.

They were keen to stress that although they had put a fair amount of technical work into to the site an application for planning permission was not imminent and they proposed to wait for the outcome of the current Local Planning Process before proceeding.

The area at Gosden Hill Farm controlled by Martin Grant stretches from Merrow Lane, Burpham to the old carriage drive which runs parallel to Clandon Road in the East. The current scheme envisages a development of up to 2000 homes towards Burpham. The central section including Frithys Wood would see the retention of ancient woodland with areas of commercial woodland replanted with hard wood trees. The woodland would be managed by a Woodland Trust in perpetuity and provide recreational space and a firm boundary to the development. Martin Grant Homes stated their intention to retain the land on the Clandon side of the Wood for agricultural purposes.

Transport proposals centred on a proposed new railway station at Merrow Park and contrary to views expressed by others, including the CPRE, Martin Grant were confident that both Network Rail and SW Trains were supportive of this development. The key proposal, however, would appear to be a remodelling of the A3 junction at Burpham with a new southbound route onto the highway and remodelled southbound exit. The current Burphamsliproad would become two-way allowing access to the development from Burpham. No new bridge would be needed as northbound traffic would use the current Clay Lane bridge as at present. They categorically ruled out any prospect of a direct link into West Clandon "which would run counter to the logic and rationale for the scheme necessary for approval for development on Green Belt land and run counter to all they were trying to achieve."

Martin Grant representatives were again optimistic of Highways Agency support for their scheme which complemented current studies being undertaken by the Agency aimed at improving junction capacity on the A3 which is unusually restricted in the number of all-movements' junctions available. The remodelling would also enable proposed developments at Slyfield. It was accepted that the increased traffic from the development would add to congestion on the A3 at peak periods but again the Highways Agency were looking at this. Guildford and Surrey had both indicated interest in a possible Park and Ride facility within the development.

Precise plans for the site have not yet been developed but it was confirmed that Martin Grant Homes like to build houses with a mix of sizes. There would also be a small number of one-bed homes a village centre and a primary school but the emphasis would be on 'good quality homes. There was a statutory requirement for approximately 6 Traveller pitches.

Questions were asked about timescales but it was difficult to be specific as there were many uncertainties. A3 access would take two years from outline planning consent. As regards planning the Inspector's report was due in Sept 2015 with the Local Plan to be adopted by the end of 2015 although this might be delayed. Any planning application would follow. There would be 6-8 months for reserved matters approval and time to negotiate section 106 agreements. The lead in on site is rather lengthy.