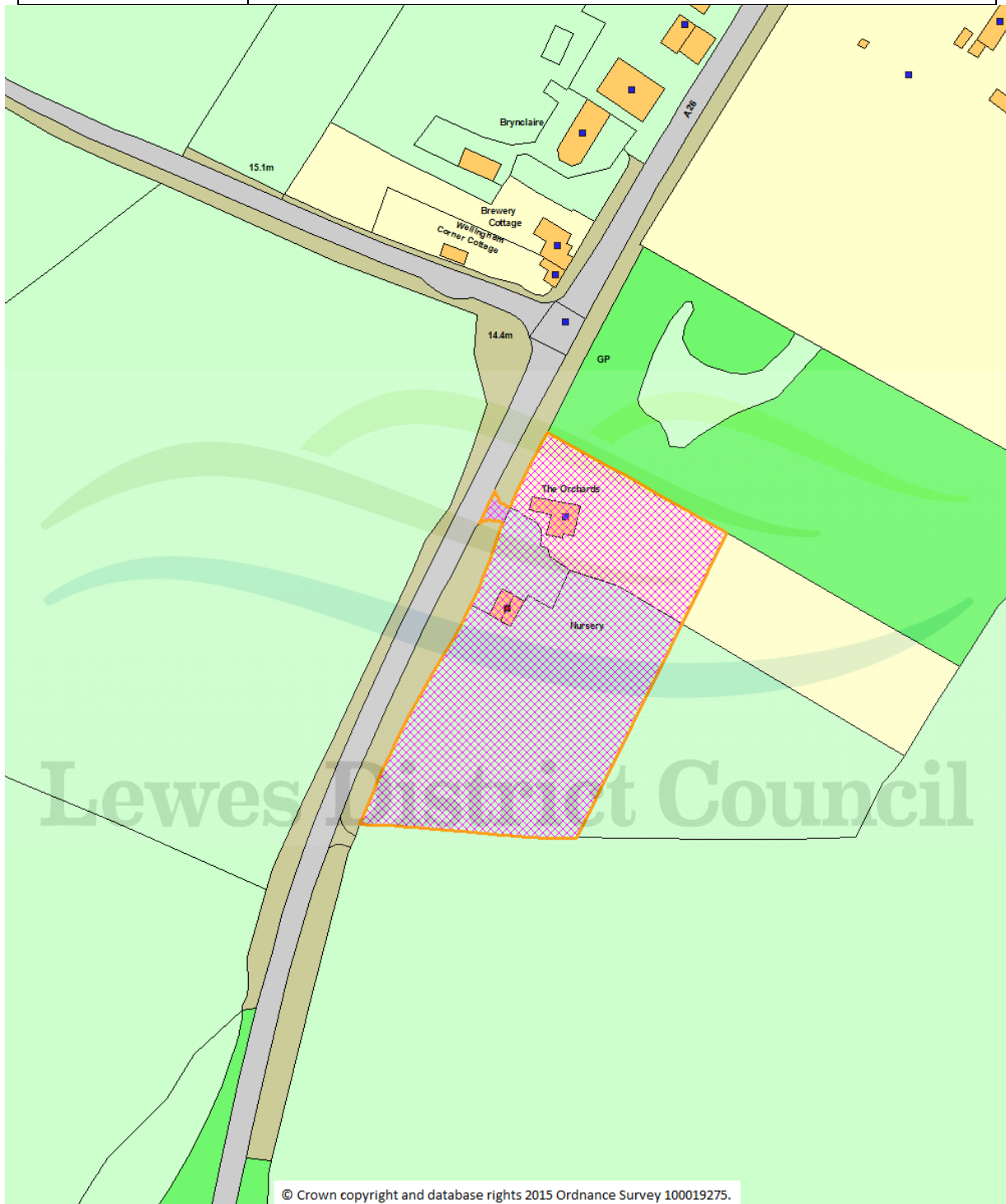


APPLICATION NUMBER:	LW/14/0830	ITEM NUMBER:	8
APPLICANTS NAME(S):	Mr M Tebutt	PARISH / WARD:	Ringmer / Ouse Valley & Ringmer
PROPOSAL:	Planning Application for Demolition of existing farm shop and dwellinghouse and erection of 11 dwellinghouses, with associated car parking, bund and landscaping.		
SITE ADDRESS:	Boathouse Organic Farm Shop Uckfield Road Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5RX		
GRID REF:	TQ4413		



1. SITE DESCRIPTION / PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application site lies on the eastern side of the A26, Uckfield Road, approximately 2.2 km to the north west of Ringmer. The site is currently occupied by a single dwelling, known as The Orchards and a small farm shop and associated car parking. The shop is currently vacant and not trading.
- 1.2 Planning permission was granted in 2015 for the redevelopment of the site with 11 new dwellings, made up from a mix of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom dwellings. As part of that approval the applicant signed a Section 106 Legal Agreement securing (amongst other things) the provision of two on site affordable dwellings.
- 1.3 The applicant is now seeking a Deed of Variation to replace the provision of the two affordable units with a commuted sum payment.

2. RELEVANT POLICIES

LDJCS: - CP1 – Affordable Housing

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 As set out above planning permission was granted in 2015 for the redevelopment of the application site with 11 new dwellings. Whilst not sought by officers as it was not a policy requirement (on the basis that the proposal falls under the threshold for affordable housing) the applicants offered an affordable housing contribution as part of the development proposal. This was welcomed by Members and the Section 106 was agreed accordingly. This delivered the on-site provision of two three-bedroom dwellings as affordable units that would ultimately be transferred to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).
- 3.2 Since signing the Section 106 Agreement the applicants have made concerted efforts to partner with an RSL. Nine RSLs have been approached in total with only one showing any interest in delivering the on-site affordable housing. The various reasons given by the other RSLs for not being interested in the scheme included:
 - Location of the development
 - Number of units available
 - Size of units
 - Not delivering intermediate housing; and
 - Not operating in the Ringmer area.
- 3.3 The only RSL that showed interest were Landspeed Homes, however their one concern was that the three bedroom units earmarked were too large. Landspeed were concerned that the size of the units would severely limit their affordability and therefore the number of people who would be able to secure a mortgage.
- 3.4 A number of options were explored between officers and the applicants however the only way to create the smaller units sought by Landspeed resulted in the need for a new planning application. On the basis that the original application was approved prior to the introduction of our CIL levy, any revised application would be subject to this charge which would significantly increase costs at the site. The applicants have advised that this would present funding and contract issues for them. Additionally a revised application would delay the development for an unknown period of time and introduce uncertainty to the

process, along with the associated additional costs related to updating the application submissions.

- 3.5 In light of these difficulties and following discussions with officers it was agreed that in order to progress the development and deliver the housing, the signed S106 should be amended so that an alternative affordable housing contribution can be secured. This will ensure that whilst no affordable housing will be provided on site, the money can be used to help deliver affordable housing elsewhere in the District. Such an approach is permitted by Core Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 3.6 A commuted sum of £201,497.10 has been agreed with the Council's Housing Policy and Development Manager.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Whilst there is still no policy requirement for the scheme to deliver affordable housing (either on site or in the form of a commuted payment) the applicants are clearly keen to deliver on their earlier promise. On the basis that all other avenues have been exhausted and that it is clear that on site provision will not be delivered which could ultimately prevent the delivery of the scheme in its entirety, it is considered that a commuted sum is an appropriate way forward.
- 4.2 It is therefore recommended that a Deed of Variation is secured that removes the requirement to provide two affordable units on site, and is replaced with the payment of a commuted sum of some, £201,497.10 to be put towards provision of affordable housing, elsewhere in the District.