



Raymond, I have lodged a simple objection on the planning portal (reference **OWPC32478**), but wish the more detailed comments set out below to be taken into account please.

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Arun District Council

Application: BN/142/20/OUT

We wish to object to this proposed development which abuts our property - we own the land adjacent to the full length of the south west boundary of the site.

There are numerous reasons why we think this application should be refused.

Neighbourhood Character

The development itself and its proposed density are completely out of keeping with the character of this part of Barnham. Church Lane leads into the Conservation Area which is the original mediaeval settlement of Barnham. The surroundings are agricultural land and the Conservation Area has a distinctive rural character. An informal pattern of development enhances the rural character, together with mature planting, flint boundary walling and grass verges.

There is a duty on the planning authority to preserve and enhance the character of an area like this. The fields in question should be recognised and preserved as open countryside as part of this historically important area. The value of this site is its scenic quality in the context of this historic area of Barnham, with the recreational value of the area including the countryside nature of the footpath across the site allowing access to countryside for all residents of Barnham.

It seems wholly inappropriate for the developer to cite the existing strategic planning allocation the other side of the Bognor railway line as a reason to justify this proposal - in fact it should be quite the opposite. What will be left of the green space as that area is developed needs to be preserved.

We would strongly refute the assertion in the applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment statement that the site offers little in the way of landscape value. For the many residents of Barnham who enjoy the character of Church Lane and access the path to Felpham for walking, cycling and other leisure activities, the view across the green field site is an intrinsic part of the character and ambience of this part of Barnham. The claim in the applicant's Planning Statement that the views of the site are well contained and highly localised is just wrong - from Church Lane this development will be a complete eyesore and replaces the open fields which are completely in keeping with the area. The suggestion that this development will "integrate" is utterly fanciful.

This is an amenity for the whole of Barnham with very many people using this area for walking, cycling, horse riding and other exercise and leisure activities. The area and its ambience is key to this as a community asset and would be destroyed by the nature of the proposed development.

The proposed development would have a hugely negative visual impact on this part of Barnham and a negative effect on the character of the neighbourhood, which has a country feel with views over open fields. It will negatively impact the existing Conservation Area and ignores the proposed extension of the same. It definitively will harm important views into, out of and within the Conservation Area.

The proposed development is over-bearing and completely out of character for the immediate area.

There would be a loss of critical open and green space and the development is high density and constitutes an over-development of the site.

Highway safety.

The junction at Church Lane/Marshall Close/the B2233 is already a “pinch point” and this proposed development would increase the traffic at this junction by at least five-fold based on the numbers of existing properties compared to this development. This is in the context of the B2233 becoming ever busier with recent and permitted proposed developments currently approved/underway. The junction is already a difficult one and inadequate even for current traffic levels and will be overwhelmed with the levels of traffic movement 200 further houses would generate, which by the developer’s own assessment could be nearly 1,000 movements in a 12 hour period.

There is a busy pub and butchers at the junction, already generating many traffic movements, parking demands and obstacles to the free flow of traffic.

In addition Marshall Close, even improved as proposed, is an inadequate road for the likely level of traffic which would be generated by this development. This would turn a quiet residential cul de sac into a major traffic thoroughfare in a wholly inappropriate manner.

The junction is already at a very narrow part of the B2233 and there is no footpath along the section of Church Lane leading to the junction. Many pedestrians, cyclists and indeed horse riders use Church Lane including in order to access the path between Barnham and Felpham. Church Lane is an extremely popular route for cyclists accessing the path to Felpham and I understand there have already been a number of incidents at the junction.

Church Lane itself is a dead end with the only other access via Hill Lane, a private road, so not technically a permissible route. It is already often difficult joining the B2233 at the junction of Church Lane and this will be exacerbated by the traffic that will be generated by this development.

The traffic survey undertaken is flawed in several aspects, being taken as it was in 2020 with the impact of Covid-19 reducing traffic movements, in particular as a result of the lack of commuters coming to Barnham to use the railway, including parking vehicles at this very junction, with many people working from home. In addition it appears to have been conducted at a time designed to show less traffic. There are peak flows of traffic in the morning, at school run time and (normally) at commuting times. It also does not appear properly to take into account traffic movements that will already increase as a result of developments already underway or planned in the wider area that will use the B2233.

Over-development of Barnham

Significant development has already been permitted in Barnham (including the redevelopment of nursery sites “Angels” and “Hyde” on Yapton Road/B2233).

There is also the very significant site already allocated for strategic development, the “BEW” Barnham/Eastergate/Westergate (SD5) allocation of some 2,300 dwellings and up to 3,000 in total. This more than meets future housing development needs for the area.

It should also reinforce the need for Arun to protect remaining green spaces, such as this site, in the context of the overall development proposals for the area.

With such extensive further building nearby in due course, it is even more important that we preserve green and open space as part of the overall amenity of Barnham. The area in question should be preserved as agricultural land and open space allowing the right of way across the site to enjoy and retain the countryside feel of this part of Barnham.

We are already bearing more than our fair share of the development needs of Arun. The Barnham and Eastergate Parish already has 15% of Arun's proposed housing development with only 3% of its total population.

Infrastructure

We are already suffering from inadequate infrastructure, particularly sewage and surface water runoff in the area with ever more frequent flooding immediately "downstream" from this site - rainwater flooding from water runoff now regularly overwhelms the sewers causing escape of effluent into the local fields. More recently this has included effluent being discharged into some residential properties, ours included (three times in the last 3 years).

Public amenities are also under severe pressure already, including the local schools and health services as well as the village centre and the impact of traffic and parking. This development will merely add to that burden.

Flooding Risk

The site is within and adjacent to a flood zone. As noted the site itself flooded in 1987, from the local drainage network. There has also been significant flooding in the immediate vicinity in 1993, 2000 and 2012 and Barnham Rife is regularly overwhelmed in winter, with flooding to the fields in front of our property occurring frequently already. We understand that Marshalls Close itself has been flooded in the past.

With the development proposed this will only worsen and we note that the Environment Agency agrees and objects to the planning application. Of the 15 hectare site we note that approx 10 hectares is to be developed with 65% of that area being impermeable surfaces. Barnham Rife frequently fails to cope with the current levels of surface water discharge into it. With changing climate patterns this is already worsening and a development of this size, in this location, will significantly increase the flood risk.

In addition the main Barnham sewer line runs along the fields in front of us and adjacent to the site, towards the Lidsey Treatment Works. The sewer is also overwhelmed regularly now, with raw sewage discharge into the fields. Any additional sewage and rainwater burdens placed on the existing system are unacceptable. We note that Southern Water has rightly identified that there is inadequate capacity within the foul sewerage network to accommodate foul water flows from the development.

We also believe additional runoff water caused by the development will enter our fields and the waterway that currently runs along our common boundary with the site (its south west boundary). That ditch is likely to be overwhelmed even more frequently than it currently is, as the rife itself cannot cope already. This will lead to further flooding of our fields, which has already increased in recent years. This needs much greater attention paid.

It is inconceivable that this development will not increase the risk and frequency of flooding downstream from the site.

Planning policy considerations

This proposed development is a green-field site, outside of the established development boundary for Barnham.

It is outside the built up area boundary (BUAB) and none of the exceptions to allow development apply.

It is also outside the proposals recommended in Arun's own Local Plan and in the Neighbourhood Plan. Under the Local Plan this site should be regarded as countryside with very limited justifications for any development, and the historic character of the area respected. It is very much a key part of the local natural environment with everything that flows from that for the protection of the landscape and habitat.

There is a proposal to extend the Conservation Area which reflects the desire of Barnham residents to protect this area as countryside. This completely contradicts that direction of travel for this part of Barnham.

Brownfield and infill sites should be prioritised over green field sites like the present one. This is consistent with national planning policy.

The application dismisses the current process to revise the Neighbourhood Plan, as being in its infancy and attributing no material weight to it. This is inappropriate and undemocratic. The views of local residents should be afforded much greater weight and respect than that.

The revisions to the application set out in the Statement of Community Involvement are inadequate to address the concerns expressed in that process and in the objections already made to this proposal.

It is acknowledged that the site is identified in Arun's housing and economic land availability assessment (HELAA), but this does not mean that planning should be granted. This remains an unallocated site and the identification of sites in the HELAA should not be seen as an intention to allocate these sites for development, or that planning permission will be granted (to quote Arun's guidance). Land allocations can only be made through the statutory Development Plan for Arun which includes the Adopted Local Plan 2018 and made Neighbourhood Plans.

We appreciate that Arun is under some pressure as a result of the need to meet the 5 year housing supply requirements, but this should not result in permissions being granted by default and without due regard to their context and a wider plan for development in the area. If permission is granted for this application we believe it would not be on its own merits within that context, but as a direct result of the absence of considered strategic approach to the local housing need. This should not be allowed to override the existing policies which are in place for good reason. The applicant seeks to ignore those as "out of date" and rely on paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework. We would expect Arun to resist the suggestion that the application is justified under that paragraph and in any event there are strong arguments that the application can be resisted under both limbs of paragraph 11d.

Thanks.

Mark & Katy Waghorn.