

Objection Letter – Change of use of land from agricultural use to residential use, creating 4 No permanent private gypsy plots with associated parking, landscaping and facilities, Land off Church Lane Barnham (BN/97/25/PL)

Dear Mr Davis,

As concerned Church Lane residents and neighbours to the proposed development for four non-permanent gypsy plots under application BN/97/25/PL, we are again writing to outline our formal objections to the development within the Barnham Conservation Area. This proposal, and the original under BN/61/25/PL, are deeply concerning and, if approved, would have a significantly harmful impact on the historic and environmental character of the area as well as presenting some safety concerns.

Irreversible Harm to the Conservation Area

Barnham Conservation Area is designated for its historic rural character, vernacular architecture and its close relationship with the surrounding landscape. It is enjoyed by many residents of Barnham village and the surrounding area.

The construction of four plots and additional outbuildings, despite some effort to adopt local style (although slate roofing is not typical for the area), would visually disrupt the traditional setting, introduce incompatible building forms, and undermine the area's protected status. This is in clear conflict with Policies HER DM3 and H SP4 of the Arun Local Plan, which require that any development in conservation areas must preserve or enhance their character and appearance. A similar opinion has also been previously shared by the Conservation Officer under the previously withdrawn application, stating that 'the impact of the proposed development would result in harm to the conservation area, as well as some harm to the setting of the designated other identified heritage assets and therefore harm their significance'.

The site in question has already been subject to rural character damage through the unlawful felling of trees and clearing characterful hedging, replaced by dense laurel screening. Indeed, although an ecological survey has been conducted, this was of May 2025 and after the land had been cleared of the above vegetation. Again, the Conservation Officer has previously commented on this, describing the development as 'not one that I believe is appropriate for the sensitive context [and] should not rely on hedging as a means of mitigating new development'.

Newly included (and inconsistent) illustrations of the proposed 4m hedging are now included in the application which undeniably demonstrate how the defining rural character of the area will be destroyed from both Church Lane and the now redirected footpath. There is a clear discrepancy between the Street Scene BB projection and those included in the Design & Layout section - the former shows a hedge barely the height of a person whereas the latter shows an excessively tall hedging. Whilst yes there is a dotted line on the Street Scene to show the future hedge retention height, the way it has been communicated does not reflect the long-term character of a mature hedge.

Whilst the excessive and uncharacteristic hedging may help to shield visibility of the development and offer some mild privacy to neighbours at ground-level, it's presence completely compromises the Conservation Area. Why is such a large hedge required if the proposed buildings are supposedly finished to 'help them sit comfortably within their surroundings', whilst not providing the adequate privacy to neighbours? As expressed previously by other concerned residents, such hedging already encloses the footpath into a significantly dark shielded corridor that members of the public already feel uneasy walking along given the lack of visibility ahead or behind.

The new application now also includes details of the significant land raising required to avoid flood risk zones, which again would further harm the character of the conservation area. The Conservation Officer has again noted that this 'would further alter the character of the area and increase the ground level of the new development. This would increase the prominence of the development in the surrounding context'. Again, to mention the representation of the Street Scene provided is totally misleading.

Surrounding Development

On occasions, the application references the development of housing to the North, under BN/149/22/PL, often using it as a justification for the development. However, this separate development is:

1. Outside the Barnham Conservation Area
2. Includes community facilities
3. Already going to contribute to increased traffic in Church Lane
4. Includes plans for wild meadows and ponds/lakes, as well as increasing the natural boundary foliage between the applicant's land and that development

Thus, the already approved development of BN/149/22/PL should be considered as a reason not to approve BN/97/25/PL, rather than a catalyst.

Highways and Access

Whilst access to the site currently through the two means of access is relatively infrequent, increasing the use of these would pose the following concerns:

1. Both access gates are in proximity of an existing blind bend in Church Lane with no passing place, which already presents issues with car traffic, pedestrians and cyclists.
2. The West Sussex Highways assessment only considered car access, whilst the application clearly states provision for touring caravans.
3. A public footpath also meets Church Lane between the two access gates, thus adding to the safety concerns.

Conclusion

There are additional reasons to refuse this application which we will not mention in detail here, but would include:

- Privacy concerns to existing neighbours/residents.
- Concerns over proposed (and existing) dense hedging
- History of unauthorised development in the local area.
- Location next to a designated floodplain and the effect on raising/levelling the proposed site.
- Increased light and noise pollution.
- Concerns for sewage already outlined in application responses.
- Existing provision for the applicant on the same road.
- Current noise disturbance from the usage as dog accommodation.

That said, I believe that the Conservation Officer summarised the previous application well, of which can and should be applied here: ‘you [Mr. Davis] will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application’ of which are not only non-existent but actually harms the existing public benefit the are already provides through its natural rural character.

Therefore, we strongly urge the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.

Kind Regards,

Mr M. De La Pole and Miss S. Holliday

4 Field Cottages, Church Lane, Barnham

From: Nicola Oktay on behalf of Planning.Responses
Sent: 10 July 2025 10:31
To: Planning Scanning
Subject: FW: BN/61/25/PL

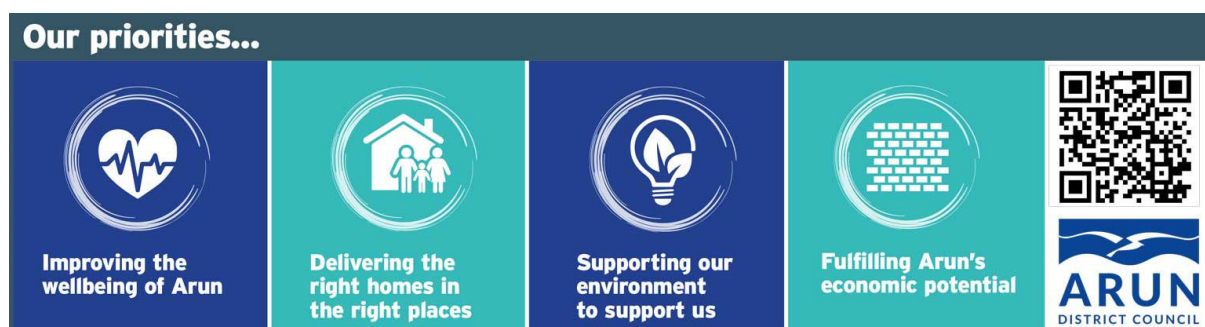
Conservation Officers response

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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Conservation Officer
Sent: 09 July 2025 10:48
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: BN/61/25/PL

BN/61/25/PL

Land to the West of Church Lane Barnham

Change of use from agricultural land to create 4 No. permanent private gypsy plots with associated parking, landscaping and day room facilities. This application may affect the character and appearance of the Church Lane, Barnham Conservation Area, may affect the setting of listed buildings, is in CIL zone 3 (CIL liable) and may affect a Public Right of Way.

A map-based assessment has identified the following assets:

Curacoa

Curacoa is an early C19 cottage of two storeys which is faced with flints with red brick dressings, quoins, and a modillion eaves cornice. It has a hipped tiled roof and casement windows. It is considered to derive its significance from its architectural and historic interest.

The cottage sits amongst at loose arrangement of residential properties and is set well back from the roadside to the south-east, within a flint and red brick boundary wall which defines a small garden area. The application site forms part of the wider setting of the cottage.

Barnham (Church Lane) Conservation Area

The Conservation Area includes the original medieval settlement of Barnham, lying to the south of, and separate from the principal village. Barnham Court and St. Mary's Church are an historically important and imposing pair of buildings; the former dating to circa 1640 is one of the finest brick houses of its date in the county. These buildings highlight those two seats of power and control in the medieval period (the Church and Manor), as well as also representing the administrative and social focus of the community. More modestly scaled and proportioned residential dwellings are focused on Church Lane, Hill Lane, Fating Ground Lane and Highground Lane.

Surrounded by agricultural land, the conservation area has a distinctive rural character with buildings of various styles, ages and materials; principally brick, flint, plain clay tiles and natural slate. An informal development pattern, mature planting, flint boundary walls, and grass verges enhance its rural character.

The area has an important relationship with the surrounding agricultural land. The fields between Church Lane and the Rife are also important to the immediate setting and rural character of the settlement. The application site forms part of the agricultural landscape both inside and around the conservation area, providing separation between the historic core of Barnham from the more modern part of the settlement, as well as forming part of the land that helped form its economic base

Minstrel's Barn

Minstrel's Barn is a former agricultural building which is identified on the Barnham Tithe Map of 1846 and continued to grow and expand over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, before more recently being converted into a residential dwelling. Whilst the setting is now focused on its surroundings within the conservation area, being one of the first buildings to be experienced on entering the from the north, it would also have been associated with the surrounding fields. It is considered to derive its significance from its architectural and historic interest.

The Proposal

The proposal involves the change of use of the agricultural land to four permanent private gypsy plots. I note from reviewing the design statement that each of the four plots will contain a static mobile home, a day room, parking for two vehicles, together with space for a touring caravan, a private garden area, screened with hedgerow planting.

As identified the conservation area has a distinctive rural character, and this is partly informed by the agricultural land, some of which is located within it (which affords views out). It is also formed by the spatial distribution of the various buildings, the materials found and the amount of vegetation. The application site is located within the conservation area and forms the entrance into the developed part of the historic village. Until recently the site has been fully visible from the lane which enabled views of the flint walling and agricultural character of the locality. Both features remain, even though a new hedge has been planted behind the wall.

The land remains in some form of agricultural use and also forms part of a tract of undeveloped land between modern Barnham and the conservation area (which focuses on the historic core of the settlement). Even though new hedging has been planted there are still opportunities to understand its agricultural use and function as a gap between the built developments. The site in its undeveloped appearance therefore provides a key function in separating the two different character areas.

The proposal incorporates a number of structures into the site. this includes day rooms which will be constructed from what is described as "traditional knapped flint brick with slate tiled roofs to reflect the surrounding architectural styles found locally". Although, it is not clear if this flint work would be hand laid or constructed using flint blocks. I also note that the static mobile homes would have flint elevations in an attempt to reflect the vernacular.

Whilst it is clear that the applicant has attempted to use materials found in the local area, the result would be to introduce modern development in this sensitive context. The open rural character will be altered – it would remove the agricultural context for the conservation area. The proposal would leave only a very small undeveloped gap between the two character areas which would negatively impact on the ability to experience and appreciate the separation between the historic settlement (conservation area) and modern Barnham. Further, the proposed development, including the hedging would lead to not only the loss of view of the field, but also loss of the view of the surrounding countryside. The development would also be visible in views into the conservation area from the footpath. It is considered that this would harm the established character of both the lane and the conservation area.

I note that the applicant is keen to identify that the hedging would shield the proposed development from view, but the use of the land would remove the agricultural context. Further, I note that comments have been made that the hedging would screen the large housing estate in the fields further to the west. However, when I visited the site, I could look over the gate and still see the development being constructed. It is assumed that if permission were granted, this view would now be of the new proposed structures along with any of the new housing estate.

The hedging itself is unfortunate, and not one that I believe is appropriate for the sensitive context. It is a shame that a more traditional or area specific hedging was not used. The latter would have had a more positive impact upon the conservation area. I also believe that we should not rely on hedging as a means of mitigating new development. Especially in allowing it to grow so tall. All new development should be appropriate and acceptable in its context.

I also note from reviewing the associated flood risk documents that there would have to be a significant amount of land raising in part of the site to deal with the issue of flood risk. This would further alter the character of the area and increase the ground level of the new development. This would increase the prominence of the development in the surrounding context.

The site forms part of the setting of both the listed and the Locally listed building and the loss of the agricultural land which forms part of the setting / context for them. This cannot be said to be positive.

Conclusion

These comments are from a built historic environment perspective only. It is concluded that the impact of the proposed development would result in harm to the conservation area, as well as some harm to the setting of the designated other identified heritage assets and therefore harm their significance. The proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024). As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of section 66 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

REP

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From: Susan Haley <Susan.Haley@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Planning
Sent: 02 September 2025 08:53
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: BN/97/25/PL - Objection Letter

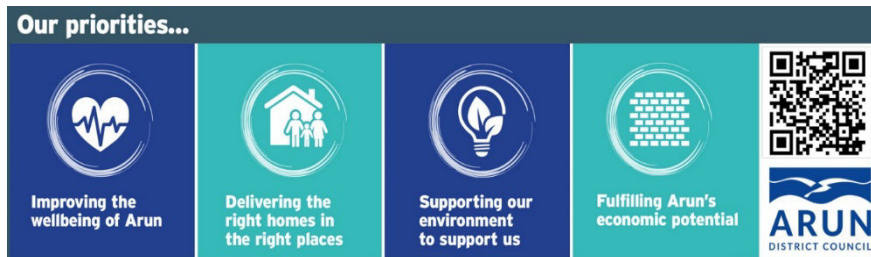
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Please note: I am out of the office every Thursday.

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From: Matthew De La Pole [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 September 2025 18:03
To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: BN/97/25/PL - Objection Letter

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. You should take extra care when clicking links or opening attachments - if you are unsure the content is safe contact the IT Helpdesk before clicking or opening.

Please find attached objection letter for the above planning application.

Please also see attached the original Conservation Officer response to the previously withdrawn application on the same site earlier this year. This document is referenced in the above objection letter and we feel is extremely relevant to this new application, and should be considered by the planning officer.

Kind Regards,
Mr M. De La Pole and Miss S. Holliday