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To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Comment OWPC39578, relating to application BR/129/21/OUT

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From: Jill Dickin Schinas [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 August 2021 11:47
To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: Comment OWPC39578, relating to application BR/129/21/OUT

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Dear Sirs,

I have just made a comment on the planning application BR/129/21/OUT.

Unfortunately the contents box allows only 3,800 characters, and so I am sending the full content herewith :

I wish to object to the latest development proposal for 26, Burnham Avenue.

1 - Logistics

The proposed development will increase pressure on an area which is already excessively busy and strained to its limits.

It will increase physical pressure on the roads (and on the drains - see below), and it will increase social pressure, thereby threatening to cause an increase in crime.

a) Burnham Avenue was one of the first roads to be cut through this previously agricultural area, a little over 100 years ago, and, perhaps for this reason, it has become a very busy thoroughfare. To be exact, it has become a 'rat run' for drivers taking a short cut between Victoria Drive and Linden Avenue. The creation of new homes in the area will add to this pressure.

The creation of a new housing development in this street cannot be seriously countenanced without, as a minimum, the creation of a permanent physical barrier immediately east of No. 26, thereby creating two cul-de-sacs and obliging through-traffic to use the slightly longer route via the roundabout on Victoria Drive. *This is obviously a suggestion which would need to be discussed with the police and the fire brigade, since they would no doubt have an opinion on the pros and cons of such a 'traffic taming' measure.*

b) Although the proposal includes off-road parking, it is bound to attract more cars than are provided for. This will increase parking pressure on an area which is already heavily used not only by residents - many of whom have already converted their front gardens into parking bays, because of this problem - but also by shoppers and commuters and church-goers. Burnham Avenue is within easy walking distance of both the railway station and the shopping precinct, and people from all over the western half of the town use this street as a place to leave their vehicle while shopping or while commuting to London.

The inevitable reduction in parking spaces caused by this development would obviously necessitate the creation of a car park elsewhere in the vicinity. *If the development is to be allowed to proceed, this matter must be addressed and resolved before permission is given.*

c) Finally, this area of the town already has a high incidence of crime, much of it associated with the Refugee Centre which adjoins 26. Police visits to the street are a regular occurrence. To put it bluntly - I've only been resident on this street for three years, but already within one year I had seen more crime and violence than I have ever seen throughout 30 years living in a suburb of Chichester. I believe that this is directly related to population density; and the addition of more houses, further adding to the population density, is very likely to bring about a further increase in crime and violence.

2 - Ecological concerns

Having been first developed more than 100 years ago, this area features well established gardens, and such a network of gardens has recently been recognised by scientists as extremely important ecologically. To be exact, a large percentage of England's birds and animals, and amphibians and insects too, are nowadays utterly dependent on the preservation of such suburban habitat.

The owner of No. 26 has already removed several trees and bushes which previously formed a wonderful, dense coverage over much of the garden, providing food and 'lodging' for a wide variety of animals and birds, including wood mice, hedgehogs, frogs, and foxes. (The owner once told me that, during the clearance of the garden, he found two fox dens and, wishing for their removal, called in a professional 'pest controller'. This is said to have resulted in the deaths of eleven foxes, most of them cubs.)

In the current Environmental Crisis, with habitat loss having been recognised at international level as a driver of Global Warming, the removal of even such a relatively small 'wildlife reserve' is regrettable; and plainly, the construction of buildings over the site will cause further loss, diminishing still further the opportunities for birds and animals. It will simultaneously release the carbon biomass which is stored in the soil. (This is a very important factor, and one which is often overlooked. The removal of trees removes only one third of their 'carbon capture', because two thirds of a tree's biomass is underground, in the soil.)

3 - Local environmental concerns.

The development will cause a further depletion of the amount of open ground in this vicinity, leading directly to a reduced opportunity for rainwater run-off. And it is to be noted that this is a vicinity which is already excessively covered in concrete.

Due to the parking problem, aforementioned, a high percentage of residents have paved their front gardens. This has caused stress for the few remaining trees. In point of fact, the tree in the corner of our own garden is now seriously stressed, our neighbour having recently tarmacked her drive, which is immediately adjacent to the tree's trunk.

More directly, the increased percentage of concrete in the area, and the vastly reduced opportunity for water to soak into the ground, now causes flooding of the streets on a regular basis. This did not occur in the past. My husband's family have lived in this street for 100 years, and he assures me that the flooding which inevitably follows after a rainstorm is a new thing.

Due to the fact that a higher percentage of the rainwater is now unable to soak into the ground, the volume of water in the Edwardian drains is now considerably increased - and this excessive increase causes the drains to back up, sometimes resulting in an overflow. Twice, during recent years and during heavy or continuous rain, our drain has backed-up and overflowed and the garden has become covered in raw sewage. I understand that at least one of our neighbours has experienced a similar problem. This situation presents a serious public health risk - and the construction of new buildings and laying of new areas of tarmac will inevitably exacerbate this problem.

All this is to say nothing of the direct increase in pressure, through the fact of having more people adding effluent to the system. The Edwardian drainage system was adequate for the number of houses for which it was built. If there is to be an increase in pressure on the drains, through the construction of new homes, the developers should be required to renew the drainage system. **There is no reason why this renewal should have to be met by the taxpayer.** *Furthermore, the work of improving the drains must be done before any other part of the project is begun, and its satisfactory completion must be a condition of any other work being allowed to go ahead.*

The renewal of the drains and the creation of the traffic barrier described in my first objection, should be a minimum requirement for the council to set, if they are minded to allow the project to advance in contradiction of the opinions and wishes and direct knowledge of the people who live in the immediate vicinity.

3 - Wider concerns for the preservation of Bognor Regis, its restoration as a seaside resort, and its ability to pay its own way in the modern world.

No. 26 is a classic Edwardian house. It is, in fact, one of the finest and most attractive houses in the town. Its removal to make way for the proposed development would have an extremely adverse effect on the neighbourhood.

We are further told that the garden boasts a genuine WW2 bomb shelter (one of our neighbours recalls hiding in it as a child, during an air-raid), and this, too, is worthy of preservation. It is part of our town's history.

If Bognor is to recover its status as a seaside town suitable for 'staycations', each and every planning application placed before the council must be considered for its likely effect on this status. If the town is not to moulder away and go under the waves as a place filled with cramped housing, crime, and drug pushers, then we must define and preserve its character.

As a quiet backwater - a genteel place, still treasuring its Edwardian roots and still nurturing wildlife (from foxes and hedgehogs through to seagulls, nesting on the rooftops) - Bognor Regis has great merit. This is an image that will sell. It is an identity which we can actively pursue and promote, in the interests of making the place attractive to holidaymakers and thereby attracting money and jobs to the town.

If we can preserve its historic character, there is absolutely no reason why Bognor should not be as attractive to holidaymakers as Cornwall. Meanwhile, over-pressuring the suburban neighbourhoods and destroying classic buildings threatens to turn our town into little more than a ghetto.

Thank-you for your attention.

Yours,
Jill Schinas and family