

**Mulberry Barn
Eastergate Lane
Walberton
BN18 0BA**

Mr Neil Crowther
Group Head of Planning
Arun District Council
By email: neil.crowther@arun.gov.uk
26th May 2021

Objection to planning application: **WA/32/21/PL**

Dear Mr Crowther,

I refer to the application for planning for 30 houses on the field adjacent to our property, Mulberry Barn. Our objections are principally threefold:

1. Drainage:
The application is poorly researched and includes a wilful misrepresentation of facts to the drainage officer. The field acts as flood protection for our house and properties in Barnham Lane, Eastergate Lane and Walberton Green. The haphazard approach to this risk to surrounding property is very likely indicative of the applicants' other methods of research.
2. Manipulation:
From what has been seen concerning the applicant's poor approach to the main risk of flooding I call into question their "research" as to availability of places in the area to fulfil the council's requirement for housing. Of course, it is their financial interest to manipulate figures as to availability of stock in the area, and I see no reason why they would not have done so.
3. Financial damage to residents:
Should the application proceed the absence of flood protection from the field will raise the spectre of future residents in Barnham Lane, Eastergate Lane and Walberton failing to raise a mortgage on the property, or finding it uninsurable.

I set out the reasons for these three objections in further detail below. Needless to say, I also object on the grounds of despoliation of the area, increased traffic use of Eastergate Lane and incursion into a conservation zone.

1. Drainage:

The Evidence;

a. Application 26/4/21 states at section 11 that the "proposal will [not] increase the flood risk elsewhere" and that they are relying on a 'sustainable drainage system and soakaway'. The Letter-in-Situ Infiltration Testing concludes: "the soils in both locations were shown.... to have the potential to support soakaway drainage. Although the rates were variable" (my emphasis).

b. Letter-Groundwater Level Monitoring, email to Paul Cann, the Drainage Engineer from Arun was told on 19 Nov that the development would be "around 21 residential development". He suggested the need to gather "sufficient information for the winter period" but these specialists, Forge Environmental or the applicants' "did not realise it would be necessary to undertake groundwater level monitoring between October and March".

The Argument:

- i) The development on this flood plain only has a “potential” for a sustainable system. It strikes me that this is under current conditions and should be properly tested and include potential impact from climate change
- ii) The developers probably have an idea of sustainable development on this plot of 21 properties. Their application for 30 houses is an attempt to mislead the council into what they actually require. I consider the misrepresentation to have been wilful on their part as I see no attempt to withdraw or correct the position. I am not sure if I know of anyone using “around 21” in colloquial conversation!
- iii) Not only has the investigation misrepresented the position to council officers by 30% (21/30 houses applied for) but their investigations were conducted for only 57% of the time period. (103 days reviewed/183 days required by Mr Cann).

2. Manipulation

a) the Evidence:

a) The applicant’s principal rationale for overturning the planning zone restrictions which have been clearly set out and democratically agreed is the national requirement for housing stock and the council’s duty to provide space. They have conducted research intended to demonstrate that the council’s provision is not as great as suggested.

b) the Argument:

As can be seen their approach to the drainage issue there has been at the least a ‘sloppy’ approach to gathering data and potentially intentional misrepresentation. The council has every reason to dispute their figures on this occasion.

3. Financial damage to residents:

a) The evidence:

- i) In applying for a mortgage on this property in 2020 (June through November) my initial application was withdrawn due to “risk of flooding in the area”. I had to apply to the environment agency for historical records and make a case for the mortgage to be underwritten ‘sensibly’ taking into account the field in its fallow state as the main protection against inundation.
- ii) Obtaining insurance on the property was also fraught with difficulty. The insurer of our old property would not transfer cover to Mulberry Barn requiring me to find new insurers. I relied on the evidence obtained in the environmental review to obtain this insurance.

b) The Argument:

i) Mortgage and Insurance providers use data sources to inform their decision to offer their products. These data sources clearly show our area to be at risk. The field provides valuable protection against that risk. Agreeing this application would impact the data sources of financial service providers and cause harm to current residents from being unable to sell their properties.

Thank you for taking our comments in to consideration when reviewing this application which we trust that you will refuse.

Yours sincerely

[Unsigned – sent by email](#)

Clive and Laura Thompson