

I strongly object to the proposed development contained in this application.

on the following grounds:

The proposed development is not within the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan for 2018-2031 and was specifically assessed as “not currently developable” in the preparation of that plan.

I set out my objections on each of these points in more detail below.

Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan 2018- 2031

The Plan was formally adopted following a referendum in May 2021 after extensive consultation and detailed appraisal of potential sites for development undertaken by AECOM on behalf of the Parish Council. The plan states specifically that “any potential application for development not within the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to be approved.”

The site, the subject of this application, was assessed by AECOM in a detailed report on sustainability as “not currently developable” and hence was not included in the Neighbourhood Plan as adopted.

The report observed that the site is located within the River Adur SNCI: a site that has substantive local nature conservation and geological value, development would have an urbanising effect on the setting of St Peter’s Church which is a listed building and Church Farm Walk is narrow and winding and it is unclear whether it could accommodate large vehicles required during construction and refuse vehicles.

For these reasons it was concluded that the site did not meet the sustainability criteria set out in the AECOM report and therefore it was “not currently developable.”

This conclusion was not changed as the plan progressed to adoption and as there has been no change in the issues raised on sustainability since the plan was adopted I conclude that the application should be refused as not being in compliance with the Neighbourhood plan

Access

The AECOM report referred to above is correct in its observation that Church Farm Walk is narrow and winding. Currently, the refuse vehicle does not drive along the full extent of the road due to the fact that it is narrow with a sharp curve well before the site of the proposed development. We do not believe that large vehicles, let alone articulated vehicles, could navigate along the road without going over the pavement and causing significant damage to both the road surface, which is brick block, and the adjacent pavements and private grass areas. This alone should be a substantial ground for rejecting the application.

Access to Church Farm Walk via Church Lane which doubles as a Footpath cannot sustain any further trafficthe safety of the local School Children using this Lane as an access route to their school....parents with toddlers attending the Church Hall for weekly toddler groupsthose using Church Lane for access with their Disability Vehicles and the many dog walkers....local residents walking to their yoga and art classes and the

increased footfall to the new Church Cafe must all be considered. I understand that photographic evidence for this has been previously supplied.

It is not solely construction or works traffic that gives rise to highway safety concerns. Any increase in local traffic would exacerbate existing hazards along Church Lane. Each new four-bedroom dwelling is likely to generate at least two private vehicles, in addition to associated visitor, servicing, and delivery traffic. When combined with traffic arising from other recent or proposed developments, this represents an undeniable increase in vehicle movements and a corresponding increased risk to pedestrian and highway safety along Church Lane.

Bats

Once again the rare and highly protected Barbastrelle bat has been recorded in the close proximity of the proposed development along with the Serotine bat and many other species.....12 in total out of the 18 known in the UK.

The proposed development fails to demonstrate compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in respect of the Barbastrelle bat which has yet again been recorded in the vicinity of the proposed development at Church Farm.

European Protected Species. Barbastrelle bats are exceptionally sensitive to artificial lighting and are reliant on dark, undisturbed habitats for commuting and foraging.

The introduction of lighting and associated disturbance would result in the loss of functional habitat and the high probability of its roosting areas in the woodland next to The Sele Priory and the ancient St Peter's Church.

Given the species' known light intolerance, these impacts cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated.... the development would be contrary to Regulation 9, the Habitats Regulations, and paragraph 186 of the NPPF, and should therefore be refused.