Planning Application Reference: DC/23/1762
Erection of 5no. Two storey dwellings
Land North of Gennetts Farm, Gay Street Lane, North Heath

I **OBJECT** to this proposal for the following reasons:

1. *Planning, Design and Access Statement*

There are minor amendments to the main body of the document submitted for planning reference: DC/21/0155, in the sections 'Design - Appearance', 'Access' and extra paragraphs entitled 'Environment' and 'Biodiversity.'

There remain a number of concerning inaccuracies and omissions in the accompanying documentation.

1a *Description of the site and surrounding area*

The building surveyor wrongly asserts and regularly refers to North Heath as a '**village**' This is not a village according to the Collins Dictionary definition:

'A village comprises a group of houses, together with other buildings such as a church and a school, in a country area.'

The area referred to as a 'village' comprises a short ribbon of residential properties totalling some 20 homes alongside a 220m stretch of Gay Street Lane between the railway bridge crossing and the junction with Nutbourne Lane in a rural setting. Gennetts Farm cannot be described as defining the edge of the 'village' as there is no village.

1b *Brownfield Site*

The assumption that this is a '**brownfield site'** is also erroneous. The statement reads:

'The site currently comprises of (sic) redundant barns and outbuildings and is therefore a brownfield site.'

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (Annex 2: Glossary) defines a brownfield site now referred to as 'Previously Developed Land as:

'Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. **This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings..** and **land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.**'

Following years of decay, this description perfectly fits the structures in question as an inspection will show.

2 *Transport*

'The property has good access to the A29 where there is a bus service to Pulborough and Billingshurst'

As a resident of more than 30 years, I know the area well. I live directly on the intersection of Nutbourne Lane and Gay Street Lane. My house is situated opposite the entrance to the proposed development site at a distance of 30m. It is difficult to comprehend how access to the A29 can be described as 'good.'

Heading towards the A29, the railway bridge is sited on a sharp blind left-hand bend. Its 12'3 height limit precludes larger vehicles' access from the east and necessitates a detour through Nutbourne or via West Chiltington along narrow lanes littered with blind corners. The 800m journey to join the A29 from the proposed development is therefore not easy by road, but with no pavements and soft verges, extremely hazardous on foot. It is highly likely that children would be walking this route on their return from the late school in the winter with no street lighting is, the idea of which is, quite frankly, horrifying.

Furthermore visibility when joining the A29 and heading northwards is very limited. This junction has been the site of a number of accidents, some necessitating the need for medical helicopters.

2a *Road Layout*

The dangerous road layout in the immediate vicinity of the development already presents significant challenges to the rural community with a mix of equestrian use, agricultural vehicles, cyclists, walkers, local and delivery traffic. The proposed development will only add to the danger of this junction.







The approach road divides into two single track lanes. Signage 10 metres from the junction on the left hand roadway indicates the precise location of the proposed access road to the development. The right-

hand fork, Nutbourne Lane provides no official passing places along Nutbourne Lane, vehicles rely on field gateways and entrances to private driveways for 2 miles until the lane reaches Nutbourne. The left-had fork, the continuation of Gay Street Lane follows a similar pattern with the exception of a very short stretch until it reaches the junction with Stream Lane after 2.2 miles. There is no provision for pedestrians forced to walk on the soft verges to avoid vehicles.

Vehicular access from the proposed development requires traffic to give way to vehicles approaching along Nutbourne Lane. Gay Street Lane joins Nutbourne Lane at an angle of 340 degrees. Traffic is therefore obliged to pull out across these markings in order to gain a clear view of the left hand roadway (Nutbourne Lane).



Nutbourne Lane descends steeply from its high point at Beedings Castle as a single track road (left). It levels out as it approaches the junction. With neither speed restriction nor road markings, vehicles often access Gay Street Lane at speeds in excess of 50 mph. Photo taken in Nutbourne Lane, towards the hairpin junction with Gay Street Lane, at a distance of 25 metres. This clearly shows the lack of sight lines at the junction with Gay Street Lane.





With the national speed limit in force, the approach from the railway bridge (above) shows the lack of visibility around the corner for traffic turning left into Gay Street Lane. Vehicles rarely slow down as they approach the junction and veer sharply to the left. The view (left) shows the approach 30 metres from the junction of Gay Street Lane and Nutbourne Lane.

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1 - Gallina Driveway
2 - Public right of way and Driveway access to Glebe Farm
3 - Oakmere Driveway
4 - Bridleway and Driveway access to The Maples and Basset House
5 - Wanseys Driveway

As shown in this photo, including the lanes, there are 7 intersecting points of vehicle access with is already an impossible and dangerous junction. This proposal (6) will create an eighth!

2b Access

The notion that 'Gay Street Lane and the surrounding area is very quiet with movements on the adjacent roads ***probably not exceeding 10 per hour'*** has no factual basis in its expression of supposition. This statement may have been true when I first moved in to the area 30 years ago, but with the advent of Covid and the expansion in home deliveries along with local main road closures and drivers seeking alternative routes to West Chiltington, this claim is a complete fallacy. The most recent official survey conducted in Feb 2023 logged 1850 journeys in one week. The potential for an additional 60 trips per day, 420 per week, bearing in mind that vehicles may be leaving and entering the site together, is of great concern. This, taking into account that vehicles may well be fast-moving as the 60mph limit applies.

The completed application form allocates 20 car parking spaces to service the development. This is not an unusual ratio of vehicle ownership in new build properties of this nature. However it represents a 60% increase in the vehicle ownership in the 18 properties between the railway bridge and the 'Y' junction.

Following from the assertion that traffic flow is '*probably not exceeding 10 per hour'*, the claim *'Our proposal will not add anything that can be expected to result in any significant difference whatsoever'* is a fallacy. In an impromptu traffic survey between 9.00 and 9.20 this morning, 17 vehicles have passed my house. This equates to 51 per hour.

3. Housing

I strongly challenge the statement claiming that these 5 houses are appropriate for the area. This would constitute significant over-development in a rural setting with a 25% increase in housing stock in this location which is disproportionate and cannot be considered as reasonable on this basis.

4. Biodiversity

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was completed in February 2022.This is outside the optimal survey period (April - October) when hibernating species were not in in evidence. Data from a spring or summer survey would be more robust. We are fast approaching 2 years since this was completed and in accordance with CIEEM best practice guidelines, this should be repeated.

The compensation plans for the loss of existing habitats - 3 *'random piles of old cut down trees, rubble etc'* is woefully inadequate.

5 Services

The application form suggests that foul sewage would be disposed of by a mains sewer. This is an interesting development as all properties have private installations for this purpose.

4. *Disturbance and Noise*

The response to 7a of the CIL Form 1 Additional Information claims that no buildings are to be demolished. This is totally at odds with the Project outline which heads up the Design and Access Statement where the 'Removal of Redundant Buildings' is specified. This is endorsed in paragraph 1.7 of the PEA.

Seven of the derelict farm buildings on the site contain asbestos, (ref PEA 4.3.9. PRA of buildings). Noise created by vehicles required to remove the hazardous material safely from these buildings is of great concern. Despite all safety precautions, given the poor state of the buildings there remains the potential for this process to adversely affect the health of local residents, their families and impact wildlife. Furthermore traffic and noise associated with the demolition and construction will be highly invasive in what is currently a calm, countryside location.

5. *Other Impacts*

I appreciate that both brownfield and greenfield sites have ecological value. However despite the building surveyor's claim of brownfield status, this has been proven to be a greenfield site and is known to support protected species (hedgehogs, owls and bats). As such, were this application to be allowed, the development will result in the irreversible destruction of important natural habitats.

The short term increase in traffic during demolition and construction works will generate more carbon emissions and pollutants. An already hazardous junction will become yet more dangerous. With the increase in vehicles owned by occupants of the proposed dwellings, (20 parking spaces allocated) this will exacerbate ongoing road safety issues for local residents.

6. *Summary*

With so many inaccuracies and deficiencies in the documentation, I question whether there is adequate information provided to make an informed decision. At no stage was a site notice displayed which is, to my knowledge, a legal requirement. Clarification was requested but has not been forthcoming. The site is outside the Building boundary as defined by Pulborough Parish Council. Little has changed from the previous application (DC/21/0155) and the rationale behind the determination then remains relevant.