

Planning Application: DC/26/0933

Land Between Muntham Drive and Smugglers' Lane, Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex.
Erection of 31 dwellings with access from Chapel Road including roads, parking and open space.

Attn: Ms Alice Johnson

[REDACTED], Rye Farm House, Rye Farm Lane, Barns Green RH13 0QB

Commenter type: Member of the Public, Local Resident of 33 years

Stance: Object

Reasons for Comment and Objection:

- Previous planning decisions
- Planning policy
- Design and appearance
- Highway, safety, traffic and parking
- Loss of trees, hedges
- Infrastructure and services: Surface water, sewerage, electricity

Previous planning decisions: The Planning Application DC/25/2057, for 68 dwellings on the adjacent field was recently refused (04.08.26). Many of the issues underlying this refusal are also pertinent to the current application, which should also be refused.

Planning policy: The site is not identified within the Barns Green and Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan (2025) as a high priority for development. The site was designated in 2018 as 'Not Currently Developable' in the HDC SHELAA Report (ref: SA510). The proposal is speculative, not addressing identified needs. It is a greenfield site which currently adds to village appearance and amenity. Its development would result in countryside loss, and impact on four adjacent Listed Buildings. Originally the Developers suggested 25 houses; this has been increased to 31 which represents overdevelopment. The housing mix does not include sufficient affordable three-bedroom homes to meet identified national demand; indeed the rural location may deter interest from Registered Providers.

There are available houses in the recently built development at Sumners Field. With many of these houses unsold, there is little evidence of demand for additional new houses in the village.

Design and appearance: The centre of Barns Green village is traditional in style. The proposed development would not blend well within the existing village character.

Highway, safety, traffic and parking: Chapel Road is a narrow village road, well known for busy traffic. This includes (as well as residents' cars) delivery vans/lorries to the shop and pub, tractors, cars with caravans, motor homes, taxis (to Muntham House School, etc) and occasional buses. The proposed access to the site can only add to this bottleneck with, probably, at least 45 additional residents' cars. Unfortunately, the inadequate bus service to the village requires residents to use their own cars for the majority of journeys.

During the construction phase, there would be frequent movement of large vehicles delivering materials to the site; there is insufficient room for this. The vibration caused by movement of

heavy vehicles could undermine the stability of adjacent Listed buildings, whose foundations (if any) could be compromised.

Additional traffic creates potential danger for pedestrians; a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit should be undertaken.

Loss of trees, hedges: The site has mature trees and hedges which provide habitat for wildlife, including rare bats. A survey must be undertaken to measure the inevitable impact on wildlife. The rural nature of Smugglers Way bridlepath would be lost by the proximity of new buildings. The ancient hedge along Chapel Road is an important natural habitat. It also serves to reduce the flow of surface water onto Chapel Road; its breaching is inappropriate.

Infrastructure and services:

Surface water: Flooding of streets and some properties in the village regularly results following heavy rain, particularly in the region of Chapel Road. Surface water drainage is already inadequate. The proposed further housing will worsen an already serious situation, despite the Developer's proposed amelioration measures. Altering the existing culvert into an open ditch is unlikely to resolve this, and adequate ditch maintenance cannot be guaranteed. Climate change has already generated three named storms in January 2026, and this situation is likely to worsen over time.

Sewerage: The capacity of the existing sewage plant is insufficient for the current population; there are already discharges of raw sewage into the water courses. Further development will exacerbate this problem, and plans have already been approved for a further caravan site off Emms Lane, and new holiday units are being established at Sumners Ponds. There is also a plan to close the obsolete sewage treatment facility in Itchingfield, and to pump the waste to the Barns Green treatment plant, which will further increase pressure on capacity. Southern Water has no firm plans to enlarge or better maintain the current system; planning permission should therefore be withheld for further housing in the village until adequate sewage treatment is established.

Electricity Supply: It appears that network supply is already inadequate, as witnessed by the fact that local generators have been required to supply the new housing at Sumners Fields. A further development, using air-source heat pumps, will create additional demand.