

[REDACTED]
5 Station Road
Warnham
West Sussex
RH12 3SR

Submission of objection to outline application DC/26/0585

Dear Sir/Madam

We strongly object to the proposed development to the north of Station Road for the following reasons.

1. Character

Station Road is a hamlet of 21 dwellings, 1 industrial unit and a smallholding bounded to the north by an area of woodland, to the east by Warnham Station and the London to Horsham rail line, to the south and west by green fields and woodland. The proposed development is set to take over land currently used as a small holding with an area of green space which was set aside by the leaseholder of the smallholding and has been used by the Station Road community since 1982.

The development proposes 24 new dwellings which would double the housing estate of Station Road and significantly increase the number of residents. This would have a significant impact on the character and location of Station road, with a development that would be difficult to integrate into the character of the rural setting and community of residents. The loss of green space would likewise take away an area of natural environment.

2. Planning Policy

The application sits outside of the Warnham Built Up Area Boundary and is classified as countryside under both the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and in the Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) dated June 2019.

Station Road was specifically considered and rejected as a housing allocation during the development of the WNDP for a number of reasons including access, liability to flooding and outside of the Built Up Area Boundary, all of these points remain valid.

The proposed development of 24 dwellings would more than double the existing number of dwellings at this location, remove areas of land that form an important part of its rural character and as a result fundamentally change that rural character of the area and its community. The application is for outline planning and provides no detail of the scale, layout and appearance or of any landscaping to mitigate the impact it will have on the rural setting.

The developments location on the boundary between North Horsham and Warnham parishes is contrary to the need for strategic gaps between settlement areas and further impacting their unique and individual character, allowing settlements to coalesce leading to unplanned sprawl, noted in the HDPF strategic policies numbered 25 – The Natural Environment and Landscape Character and 26 – Countryside Protection, and in the Horsham District Council response to proposed reform to the National Planning Policy Framework .

The existing smallholding and green space is currently used by residents of station road as an informal community space, to remove it would negate any value in this land as habitat for wildlife and its amenity value for residents.

3. Safety

Station Road is a rural road leading to a small number of houses and Warnham station. Residents of station road include families with small children who walk and cycle into Warnham village for local amenities and the primary school, there is no footpath leading pedestrians and users of sustainable transport to use the road between the A24 and the Station. The increase in traffic associated with the new housing development would significantly increase risk to vulnerable users, particularly at night where as a rural road there is no street lighting making it very dangerous for vulnerable road users.

The junction of Station Road, the A24 and offset to Bell Road has experienced a high number of accidents leading to loss of life, life changing and serious injury. This junction is unsafe and has been considered for restructuring as part of the review of the A24 between Dorking and Worthing. The increase of traffic turning in and out of Station Road would increase any risk of accident. There is no pedestrian crossing for residents of Station Road to access the village or for village residents to access Warnham Station.

4. Connectivity and access to local amenities

Station Road is served by Warnham station. The service is infrequent, falling below the threshold for regular service at just one train per hour in either direction. The line provides a stopping rail service between Horsham and London Victoria. Trains run Monday to Friday between 0600 and 2330 with no service after 1900 on Saturday and no service at all on Sunday. There is no bus service or connection between Warnham Station and Warnham Village a distance of approximately 1.5 km.

Local amenities in Warnham village include a primary school, 2 public houses a village shop and a village butcher. Station Road is not well served by public transport and local amenities, it would be necessary for any residents to use private cars to access shops, schools and medical services in Horsham and the local area.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the use of sustainable transport while Horsham District transport policies aim to reduce conflict between vulnerable road users and motorised transport. This development will only serve to increase risk. It is not possible for pedestrians or cyclists to access Warnham village or Horsham without crossing major roads. There is no separation between cars and vulnerable users on Station Road leading to the A24 at a point where a 40mph speed limit applies, likewise there is no separation between vulnerable road users and cars/lorries for access to Horsham via Mercer Road and Langhurstwood Road before crossing the A264 at an area of 70mph speed limit.

5. Increased Traffic

As noted above it would be necessary for residents to use private transport to access amenities including schools (other than Warnham Primary), shops, leisure and medical facilities. The Office for National statistics shows that 40.3% of Households in the Horsham area with 2 or more cars and 18.5% with 3 or more with it being necessary for car ownership to access local amenities it can be assumed that the number of cars necessary for residents of the new development would be in the region of 35 cars, however the outline plan does not show sufficient capacity for this number, leading to increased roadside parking either along Station Road or access roads to the proposed development, negatively impacting existing residents along with the increase in traffic movement.

6. Impact on local wildlife

As a rural settlement Station Road has a lot of resident wildlife including birds, reptiles, bats and wild deer. This development would have a negative impact on that wildlife resulting from loss of habitat in the immediate area of the development, increased air and light pollution and increased traffic movements. At a time when we should be protecting the natural environment and by not utilising rapidly reducing green space for new developments in the country particularly as there are already significant developments in North Horsham and other settlements in the Horsham area.

7. Increased flood risk and drainage

Station Road experiences flooding in the fields to the south of the road as a result of heavy rainfall and water flow through Boldings Brook where it regularly bursts its banks. Any new development would likely increase that risk, where as situated to the north of the existing housing any surface water run off is likely to flow into those properties. It is noted that Horsham District Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority has objected to this application based on disposal of surface water and that Southern Water have also objected stating that they would not permit connection to the foul water waste system as proposed by the application.

For these reasons we strongly object to the proposed development and planning application and ask that the officers reject it.

Yours Sincerely

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