

Having read this planning permission in principle I was impressed that it was so comprehensive in its listing of the relevant policies that would affect it, but surprised to see that hardly any of them had been understood or mitigated in the application. To find that the applicants know of their constraints but are unable to mitigate them in their own application is shocking. I will outline them below:

2.2

The Parish is set in a historic rolling, agricultural landscape which is predominantly arable, with pockets of horse (and other) grazing near its settlements. Its historic settlement pattern is one of settlements and farms.

Despite understanding that the site is situated within the Green Belt and a Conservation Area, and mentioning that they intend to demolish the horse paddock and stable, they do not seem to realise that the paddock and stable are a feature of the Conservation Area and help designate it as such. They wish to remove one of the very features that make it what it is. This fundamental problem cannot be overcome. Developers cannot remove defining aspects of protected land. Doing so immediately discounts the idea that this is “grey belt” land. Harm in doing so is significant.

I am curious to now how the developers came to the conclusion that the paddock land is “underutilised”? 3 horses live here, and they graze the field behind my house. Their range extends into the field adjacent to the paddock that runs behind and borders the curtilage of Hornbeam Court, a grade II listed building. One of the reasons I bought my house was the beautiful rural sight of the horses grazing from my property window. I would be devastated to see the loss of these beautiful animals, whom I know of by name.

2.6

The site proposed borders the curtilage of the grade II listed Grange Farmhouse. The agricultural building, if not within the curtilage itself (unknown to me) is in keeping with the rural nature of the farmhouse, and along with the horse paddock are integral to the rural nature of this village. The proposed development site is next to buildings or features that contribute to the character of a conservation area, and intends to replace one of them entirely.

The Government’s 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁵ sets out its planning policies for England, and how these are expected to be applied. It is based on the fundamental principle that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, i.e. growth which ensures that better lives for us does not mean worse lives for future generations; and which reflects the fact that our natural environment is essential to our wellbeing. Destroying our rural environment via a process of death by a thousand cuts such as this is an insidious way of achieving what larger developments cannot.

The Wymondley Neighbourhood Development Plan was made on 26 September 2019 and forms part of the Development Plan for North Hertfordshire. This was mentioned in the policy section of the application and ignored:

- Vulnerability to development was identified in relation to smaller paddocks and fields dedicated to horses and equestrianism in close proximity to the settlements
- 92% of survey respondents indicating that they objected to any development on Green Belt land
- Preservation of the Parish’s Green Belt land is fundamental to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the Parish. It acts as a protective barrier, shielding the settlements from being

swallowed up by urban sprawl from Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth; and by the same token protecting the historic character and heritage of the Parish – particularly around Great Wymondley. It affords residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy the appearance and feel of rural village environments and small communities. The essence of what draws people to live in such environments as ours.

- Policy GB1: Development proposals impacting on Wymondley Parish must comply with Government Green Belt policy; primary consideration will be given to effective use of brown-field sites, which are not of high environmental value. Additionally, assuming that the Parish population concurs with national demographic trends, we are most likely to have a shortfall in suitable accommodation for older parishioners. A mix of affordable public and private sector retirement bungalows would therefore seem to be ideal, and have not been proposed in this plan.
- Parish surveys identified transport links as an issue of concern, particularly in relation to the local bus service and the Parish road infrastructure. Improvements to the latter were demanded, to increase safety and improve access. Most people felt there were sufficient footpaths and bridleways, although concern was expressed about their maintenance and comments made about connectivity. This was expressed back in 2019 and the situation is far worse now than then and we have had no improvements on the situation. A further housing development would impact us horribly in terms of road traffic and pollution. There is a concern that the Parish of Wymondley currently has dangerous levels of NO2 and CO2, which need to be monitored at peak hours. Any development, which adds traffic to the parish, has the potential to cause rises in levels of NO2 and CO2 to illegal and health-damaging levels.
- Education infrastructure shows schools in the area at capacity with no safe routes to schools via foot or bicycle from Great Wymondley. We have one bus an hour 6 days a week going each way. Building further in the area is not sustainable in the slightest.

5.31 I am disgusted this is being spoken of as a “vacant site” as per my previous comments. The site does not meet any conditions for development outlined in The Wymondley Neighbourhood Development Plan as I have also stated.

5.47-5.49 A worrying and limited account that ignores completely of the lack of footpath access, limited public transport services, and completely impassible by bicycle roads in the area. We are surrounded by 60mph zones, with a 40mph road with no continuous pavement between us and Little Wymondley. And towards Hitchin there is a 60mph road with no pavement. We are completely isolated without cars.