

Barkway Parish Council's Position on Proposed Planning Condition Changes under 24/01994/S73

Concerns Regarding Condition 3 Amendments

Barkway Parish council would like to raise their concerns regarding the further proposed amendments to condition 3 under the Section 73 Application. We are particularly focused on how these changes could alter the anticipated layout for the approved development of 140 houses and a shop in Barkway. If condition 3 is changed without adequate safeguards, Redrow may choose to modify aspects no longer considered desirable, even though these elements remain achievable.

If condition 3 is changed further safeguards would need to be put in place with regard to the original master plan and the reserved matters application that accompanied the original application and the illustrations within the master plan. This is the information the inspector took into account when the application was finally passed. What is the point of a master plan if it can so easily be ignored as illustrations at a later stage.

Support for Existing Protections and the Introduction of Condition 26

We believe that, with the minor revisions already made and the addition of a new condition 26 Redrow can proceed with the development while still adhering closely to the original illustrated masterplan as approved by the planning inspector. The inclusion of condition 4 would require Redrow to transparently explain each proposed deviation from the plan, with every variance being individually assessed based on its justification. If the master plan is greatly altered using the fact that it was only an illustration as a reason then what is the point of submitting an illustrated master plan at the point of reserved matter other than for access if it can then be changed and altered at whim.

Flood and Drainage Consideration 20

Following further investigation by Redrow, it has become clear that the current flood and drainage proposal is not viable. For this reason, we do not oppose modifications to condition 20, as these changes will enable Redrow to implement the necessary measures to meet the requirements of the Flood Risk Assessment.

Design and Parking Concerns

The Parish Council has worked collaboratively with Redrow to ensure the development's design respects the rural character of the area, including softening the southern edge and upholding the original masterplan features such as front and visitor parking. However, we remain concerned that the scheme could take on a more urban character if rear block parking replaces private parking at the front of homes. This could increase on-street parking and potentially create spaces conducive to antisocial behaviour.

The design should take into account the accepted Neighbourhood plan for Barkway and Nuthampsted and the design statement within it.

Driveways to the front of homes tend to foster better community spirit than rear block parking, because they are designed to create front-facing, walkable, and social spaces that promote resident

interaction, whereas rear parking often leads to a car-dominated, less social environment with less connection between homes and streets.

Drawbacks of Rear Block Parking:

- Car-dominated environment: Parking at the rear often results in a less attractive, more car-focused environment that can feel isolated and uninviting.
- **Reduced social interaction:** People are less likely to encounter their neighbours in a setting where they are primarily focused on getting from their car to their home via internal pathways or alleys, rather than the street.
- Less visual appeal: Parking areas located behind homes can detract from the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood.
- **Potential for noise and activity:** The constant coming and going of cars, especially from internal parking courts, can be a source of noise and may not foster a peaceful living environment.
- Increased antisocial behaviour. This type of design can foster such activities as reduced visibility, a lack of community surveillance, and increased opportunities for illegal activities like drug use, fly-tipping, and noise disturbances to go unnoticed

Critical Importance of Wastewater Capacity Improvements

It is crucial that condition 9 requiring an upgrade of wastewater capacity at the local sewage works, is fully met before any construction begins. This requirement should not be relaxed or deferred to enable early commencement of building works under any changes in condition 3.