

Graham Swann
13 Royston Road
Barkway
SG8 8BU

Formal Objection to Reserved Matters Application

Reference: 25/03149/RM

I write to formally object to the above Reserved Matters application. In light of the recent refusal of the application for 240 houses along Barkway Road Royston on grounds of sustainability and traffic movements I find it hard to believe that a village 3 miles further away from Royston with even less sustainable transport links is still viable.

For the reasons set out below, it is considered that the proposal fails to adequately reflect the approved masterplan, does not fully comply with the Inspector's findings or required Main Modifications, and raises significant concerns in relation to layout, mitigation, sustainability, safety, and placemaking. Taken cumulatively, these matters justify refusal or substantial revision of the scheme.

1. Site Layout, Legibility and Compliance with the Approved Masterplan

The proposed layout relies heavily on long, straight lines of sight, resulting in a scheme that lacks legibility, permeability, and visual interest. The arrangement does not provide a clear or intuitive movement framework through the site and represents a notable departure from the principles of the approved masterplan. While it is acknowledged that this approach was reportedly informed by discussions with the Council, the resulting layout fails to reflect the original design intent and undermines good placemaking practice.

2. Northern Boundary Treatment and Bridleway Interface

The proposed landscaping along the northern boundary adjacent to the bridleway is insufficient in both depth and density. The planting appears to prioritise residential amenity rather than providing an effective buffer to mitigate noise, activity, and visual impact. This is of particular concern given the proximity to Newsells Park Stud and the rural character of the bridleway.

The proposals conflict with the Inspector's recommendations and the requirements of Main **Modifications MM216/FM112 and MM220**, which specifically seek to reduce the impact of built development, noise, and increased activity on Newsells Park Stud. A stronger, deeper, and more robust landscaped buffer is required to protect both the Stud and users of the bridleway.

Furthermore, given the proposed construction activity, including a second compound located close to the northern boundary near Royston Road, it is essential that boundary planting is implemented at an early stage of development rather than deferred until completion.

3. Removal of the Local Shop from the Reserved Matters Scheme

The removal of the local shop from certain drawings, with its delivery deferred to a separate Reserved Matters application, is strongly objected to. The approved outline permission was expressly granted for up to 140 dwellings and a local shop. The omission of the shop at this stage undermines the approved development concept, reduces local sustainability, and risks the loss of an essential community facility.

This issue is specifically referenced in the Inspector's conclusions and subsequent updates to MM216/FM112. Should the shop be excluded from the current Reserved Matters submission, the proposal would effectively result in two separate applications, raising procedural and policy concerns. If the Council is minded to permit a separate application for the shop, a robust Grampian **condition** would be required to ensure its delivery prior to the completion of the residential development.

4. Visitor Parking Provision

Visitor parking is unevenly distributed across the site. The western portion of the development comprises 96 dwellings but provides only 28 visitor spaces, while the eastern area accommodates 46 dwellings with 18 visitor spaces. This imbalance is likely to result in on-street parking pressure, reduced accessibility, and potential conflict, particularly in the higher-density western area. This could create extra pressures with any overspill going onto Royston Road, Cambridge road or the adjacent car parks of the recreation ground or village hall.

5. Distribution of Affordable Housing

There is a complete absence of affordable housing within the North Eastern areas of the site. Affordable rented and shared ownership dwellings are concentrated elsewhere, resulting in poor tenure integration. This approach conflicts with established placemaking principles and local and national policy objectives aimed at creating inclusive, mixed, and balanced communities.

6. Refuse and Recycling Storage and Collection

The application lacks clarity regarding refuse and recycling arrangements for dwellings without direct vehicular access. It is unclear whether adequate space is available for the full range of required bins, including residual waste, recycling, food waste, and garden waste, or how these will be collected safely and efficiently.

7. Southern Boundary Hedging

While hedging is now indicated along the southern boundary, further detail is required regarding species selection, planting maturity, long-term management, and its effectiveness as a visual and acoustic buffer.

8. Hedgerow Alignment Along the Bridleway

The proposed hedgerow adjacent to the bridleway appears to be located very close to the carriageway. Consideration should be given to setting the hedge further back to reduce the risk of startling horses and to enhance safety for equestrian users.

9. Site Access and Highway Infrastructure

The agreed access route via the A10 and along The Joint requires a comprehensive programme of highway improvements, including the provision and upgrading of passing bays, as previously identified in application 20/02778/S73. These works should be implemented prior to commencement of development.

The Joint is already experiencing subsidence, potholes, and verge damage, particularly near the A10 junction and Brickyard Lane. Addressing these issues would benefit the development, existing residents, and highway safety more generally.

10. Lighting Strategy

The application does not include a lighting strategy. Barkway is characterised by low levels of light pollution and functions as a dark-sky environment. Any proposed lighting must be carefully designed to minimise environmental impact, protect rural character, and reduce the overall carbon footprint of the development.

11. Pedestrian Access to Bus Stops

The bus stops on Royston Road serve as school pick-up points for schools in Royston and Buntingford. While access through the site boundary hedge is indicated, there are no clear proposals to improve pedestrian routes along this section of road. Without appropriate footway provision, pedestrians may be forced to walk along the carriageway. A continuous footpath linking to the existing route near No. 20 Royston Road should be provided.

12. Housing Design and Local Character

Barkway is an historic former coaching village with a strong and distinctive character, reflected in its listed buildings and rural setting. The proposed housing relies predominantly on standardised house types drawn from the developer's generic catalogue, with only superficial references to local architectural features.

This approach results in a homogenous suburban estate that fails to respond meaningfully to the unique identity of Barkway and represents a missed opportunity to deliver a context-led, locally distinctive scheme, contrary to good design principles and relevant planning policy.

Conclusion

In summary, the Reserved Matters submission fails to adequately reflect the approved scheme, does not fully address the Inspector's findings or required Main Modifications, and raises significant concerns in respect of layout, mitigation, infrastructure, sustainability, and design quality. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that the application be **refused or substantially revised** to address the issues identified above.