

Reed Parish Council

Land Between Royston Road And, Cambridge Road, Barkway, Hertfordshire – Case Ref No: 24/01883/RM

Reed Parish Council makes the following comments on the above application which is for approval of reserved matters. The development concerned is a very substantial one on the border of Reed. Its size and location will have significant impact on residents of this Parish and on all users of The Joint running past Reed between Barkway and the A10.

Reed Parish Council urges that the planning authority give full weight to and implements the requests concerning conditions being submitted by Barkway Parish Council. On behalf of Reed we highlight the following matters as being of particular importance.

1. The Joint

The Joint as the mostly de-restricted route between the A10 and Cambridge Road. it is used by cyclists and horse riders as well as motor traffic. The Joint is certain to be the main point of ingress for construction traffic associated with the proposed development. It must therefore be a condition that works are so organised as to avoid *at any time of day* the parking of plant or waiting construction traffic on the Joint, or indeed on Royston Road or on Cambridge Road. Moreover, the incidence of heavy goods traffic on the Joint in the construction period, and then the long term increase in road traffic when the development is occupied, will affect the road condition and maintenance requirements on The Joint. There are already dangerously deep potholes/craters each side of The Joint along its entire length. This is a problem that has existed for some years and will be exacerbated by heavy construction traffic. Highways should be required, therefore, to ensure that an enhanced programme of regular, periodic maintenance be applied in future, beyond pothole-patching in order to preserve the edges of the road and ensure retention of usable width on the highway.

2. Sewage Capacity

There is clear evidence of the inadequacy of existing sewage infrastructure resulting in unacceptable sewage discharge into the River Quinn, an environmentally fragile and precious chalk stream. This is one consequence of the already significant increase in housing in Barkway. We urge therefore that any development of 140 houses be accompanied by a guarantee of an upgrading of the sewage system by Thames Water before the development is completed.

3. Fresh Water Supply

It is also essential that Affinity Water are able to provide assurance that the pumping station at Chipping can cope, or be adapted to cope, with the increased demand. Fresh water supply from Chipping has been an intermittent and recurring problem in Reed over the last five years. Inconvenience in Reed and in Barkway will only be intensified by the addition of 140 new houses without appropriate upgrade to the fresh water supply.

4. Design

We strongly urge that the totality of the development and design features of individual buildings be required to be more consonant with the rural setting and the character of Barkway as a historic village. The design examples for houses in the submitted application show no such consonance. They are undifferentiated transplanting of designs used on Redrow sites in more urban or semi urban settings like Royston and Bishop Stortford. Reference to rural stylistic tropes in the examples given in the application are minimal and cursory. The developer should instead come up with design features more suitable to this sensitive landscape location. The Barkway Neighbourhood Plan contains design codes based on a detailed survey of building styles and functions in Barkway. Those codes provide the developer with a guide to how modern buildings might be articulated with features which better reference the village setting and the rural location. Given that the Barkway Neighbourhood Plan is currently at the Examination Stage and with a referendum pending, we argue that its provisions should be treated as material and given strong influence. It is in effect “emergent” in the same way as was the District’s own Local Plan between 2018 and 2022, during which time its provisions were treated - before its formal adoption - as material and important. The same should apply in this case with the design codes in the draft Barkway Neighbourhood Plan. This would improve design of the proposed development and its impact on the landscape.

5. Public Transport

There is currently a limited bus service through Reed and Barkway to and from Royston. We recommend that this service provision be upgraded to meet the demand of the large number of new households and to mitigate dependence on car use in Barkway and surrounding villages.

6. Bridleway

We note and approve the requirement to maintain the existing bridleway which runs through the development site. However, we cannot see how a proposal to tarmac its whole length through the site is appropriate in this rural setting. An alternative solution should be found.

Reed Parish Council
22nd September 2024