

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: APP/21/00647

MAJOR HOUSE BUILDING IN LANGSTONE- SOUTHMERE

I am writing to object to the application submitted by Persimmon Homes South Coast (PHSC) to build 65 new homes on the land adjacent to Langstone Road (A3023) south of the Mallards.

My objections are as follows:

1. This land is not designated for housing. When the development of The Mallards started, the then landowner covenanted with Havant Borough Council to the effect "that no house or other dwelling unit shall be built on the land and the land shall not be developed to provide residential accommodation of any sort." The Borough Council has previously acknowledged the binding nature of this covenant and maintained and honoured its effect on the site. The present Administration must be reminded of its obligations and reject the application submitted.
2. A Transport Assessment was required for Hayling Island as part of the preparation of the Local Plan. Some of these elements remain unresolved. To avoid further stressing of the A3023 before the Adoption of the new Local Plan, the Borough Council resolved to refuse permission for any new accesses to be formed onto that road. Persimmon Homes South Coast proposes to defeat that restriction by forming an access to their development from the existing Mallards access road. This would create an unacceptable overload on the junction with the A3023 and compromise the use of other access within The Mallards development.
3. There are very few green areas remaining in Langstone, which is now being subsumed into urban Havant. Bosmere Field has already been lost to developers and we, as local residents, have to put up with litter and traffic congestion from both the Premier Inn and Langbrook Farm Family Restaurant. Developers excused the loss of that field by arguing the habitat for the displaced wildlife would be replaced at Southmere. Conveniently, that agreement has been forgotten.
4. My understanding is that planning permission has already been approved for residential building by the Civic Centre Campus (for 225 dwellings) and Market Parade (for 130 dwellings).

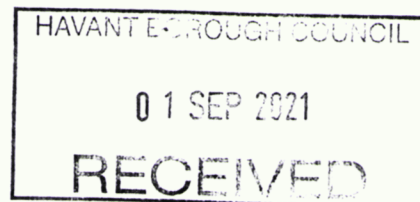
Please take these objections into consideration when finalising your decision.

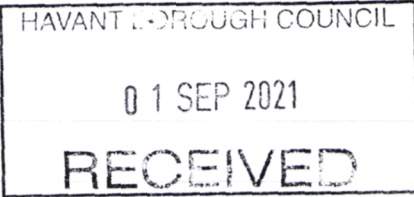
Name: *FELICITY COUTTS*

Address: *3, THE MALLARDS
HAVANT PO9 1SS*

Signature:

F. Coutts





3, The Mallards,
Langstone,
Hants PO9 1SS

The Planning Officer, (Re: App/21/00647)
(Southmere Field, Langstone).

Havant Borough Council,
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant PO9 2AY

1st September, 2021.

Dear Mr Ellis,

There are times when I think we are cocooned in a comfort blanket of modern living, somehow insulated from the reality of climate change, until it affects us.

People are often airily dismissive of the past, but the inhabitants of Havant and Langstone were no fools. They knew their environment was the natural recipient of rainfall from the South Downs. It emerged as springs in Havant, and overlaid by the Lavant stream, with the springs flowing 24/7, industries sprang up producing beer, parchment, gloves and water-cress. The Town Mill and West Mill (Mill Lane) were corn or fulling mills. Other mills were busy in Bedhampton and Langstone Village. Barges carried corn, bread and other produce around these harbours. They lived by the tides.

Certain times of the year, often in February or the late autumn, heavy rains sent a surge of water into Havant. The Homewell & Mencap springs combined with the Lavant, sent this surge south through the mill race. Bosmere field or Lower Flash (flood) field is the clue. Farmers used sluice gates on the western side of the stream, south of the Town Mill (A27) down the stream's course to irrigate their water meadows. It was a beneficial way of managing and using flood water to improve grazing, for their dairy herds. As I said, they were no fools.

As time went by, due to silt building up, the lower part

of the Lavanat no longer had the impetus it once had. West Mill required a solution. This was the re-engineering of the stream into a canal. This is what you see today, running along the western boundary of Southmere Field. When it reaches the south end of its 6 foot drop, it strikes a bund which directs it westwards towards the mill race. The bund extends eastwards as well, along the southern boundary of Southmere Field. The bund joins the wall bounding Flint House. Before any houses existed, Southmere Field drained into its ditch in Mill Lane. Today, like the stream, when it reaches the bund and the wall seeking a ditch, it flows east into Mill Lane's road ditches (now drains of course!)

It seems likely, that canal water striking the bund may well be seeping east into Southmere Field. Also with the installation of utilities in the 1970's across or under the canal from Southmoor into Southmere, disturbing the bank and the field for the first time, water from the canal may have found the smooth pipes a conduit to escape the canal.

However, from Southbrook, via the Mallard gardens to the trees beside the farm buildings (demolished recently), the canal was unable to cope with sudden storm surges arriving from the South Downs. (Even more so since the water-meadows are the Tech. Park). It overflowed down its western side (as it does today), and reverts to its original course - a direct line to the rear of the mill, where once there was a mill pond, dam, weirs and a tidal water course. Now, cut off from the inlet it mounts and falls over the concrete pipe wall into Southmoor, draining via the sluice gate by the sea wall into the inlet to reach Langstone Harbour.

Hence the field behind Mill Cottage and the site of the lost mill carries two streams, two Lavanats during heavy rains.

The trees bordering the canal along the west side of Southmere Field were planted there for a number of reasons. They anchor the eastern bank of the canal, absorb water from the canal and provide a corridor for wildlife inhabiting Southmere & Southmoor. Most important of all, they sheltered the cattle, & continue

to shelter us and this area from the harsh environment of this north end of Longstone Harbour, especially in bad weather, because it is so exposed and at the mercy of the sea and gales. If you are thinking of removing them, think again. They withstood the 1987 Hurricane and saved us from serious damage, (as did the farm buildings). Other, larger more established trees were felled or torn asunder by the sheer force of the wind which rumbled like an incoming train for hours. Southampton University's report indicated that if the hurricane had coincided with a high tide, the results for the coast would have been devastating.

So often plans are submitted for planning beside the coast in the summer months, when high tides average 4.0 or less. This week, in early September they are 3.6-3.9. Next week we return to our usual 4.6, 4.7, and this increases month on month, with storm force winds lashing the coasts, tides reaching 5.1. Those are the months, 2022, when the new homeowners come to grips with their new reality. When they view the site of their utilities under water in Southmoor, aware that Budd's Farm has yet again released primary treated sewage into the harbour which is now floating in Southmoor, and watch their overhead electricity cables stretching in a 70 m.p.h. gale - a gale striking their unprotected homes, for there are no trees.

Don't let's overlook the rising water table. Southmere Field is no exception, and probably more susceptible now and in the future.

Which brings us back to the start of my letter - in the recent past the people of Longstone and Havant were no fools. All our fields are the catchment areas of local rainfall, predicted to be more intense in the near future. As well as local rainfall, our fields are (& some were) served as the flood plain for rainfall coming from the South Downs. That is why they are (& some, too many, were) so vital, now lost.

Where are the water meadows? Where are the fields? During the past 60 years, so much has been transformed into hard surfaces, tarmac, the Tech. Park sprawling ever southwards. Estate agents

encouraging house owners to build in their gardens purely for profit. The placing of the hotel and restaurant beside very busy main roads was a tacit acknowledgement of Lower Fresh Field's (Bosmere Field's) history of flooding in the past.

All fields drain into ditches or streams, but trees, soil, shrubs and grasses absorb rainfall. Tarmac and block paving do not. This excess of surface water has resulted in Budd's Farm releasing primary treated sewage into the harbour prior to heavy rainfall.

For years we have complained, but failed to grasp the reality that Budd's farm, a major sewage works, is unable to cope with the amount of surface water pouring off car parks, roads, roofs of buildings & houses and hard drives. Increasingly we see on our news (e.g. Ryde, Isle of Wight) incidents of street drain covers tossed aside by overflowing street drains, and surface water mixing with sewage flooding houses situated nowhere near a stream.

It's too late to put things right here, so much damage has been done, but we can and should fight for the survival of Southmere Field. Years ago, I would have said housing there would have served to rehouse Langstone Village. Now, with the collapse of Southmoor seawall and the knowledge that no plans exist to create a bund along the western boundary of the canal as a sea defence, I regard this as an unviable project. In effect, we would be putting future homeowners in harm's way. At a time of 'managed retreat', they would discover that they would be responsible for erecting their own sea defences and meeting the cost. Insurance companies may not offer compensation for flooding caused by coastal erosion, nor the erosion of river banks. These are very serious issues which we have a responsibility to address. I enclose newspaper cuttings which have a bearing on this, climate change and new requirements on building companies to modify their designs and materials. Some will press on, regardless.

Since the destruction of Southbrook's gardens, its trees, lawns and gravel drive, and total eco-system much valued by its neighbours, people in the Mallards have taken on the responsibility of the wild life which has been under intense pressure. The destruction of Southmere's farm buildings has robbed our wild life of yet another home in which to roost, bring up nesting birds or shelter from bitter winds and predators. Did the developer fulfil the requirements by H.B.C. to modify its houses?

The pheasant families, and for that matter, the mallards, wood pigeons, collared doves, magpies, garden birds and squirrels, not to forget our local hedgehog, all trust us and look upon us as their friends. We and they are a community ranging over the fields and the marsh where the foxes roam & rabbits hide. My visiting twilight fox I nicknamed 'Shadow'. I did not feed him, just admired him from my darkened kitchen, then he was gone.

So often, I notice during haymaking in Southmere Field, the rush hour traffic slows to watch as it goes by. Perhaps it is because we feel a closeness with nature and a desire to understand the world around us better. There is something timeless and reassuring in this seasonal activity.

We have a responsibility as guardians of our locality for future generations. How will we be judged, long after the coastal plain has vanished under the sea - a memory seen from Portdown Hill, a case study in the schools of the future?

Yours faithfully
 J. Courtis

Persimmon's forward sales 9% ahead of 2019 figures

By Bradley Gerrard

Housebuilder Persimmon said it had overcome industry pressures surrounding labour shortages and raw material price inflation as official data showed house prices soared at their fastest rate in 17 years.

The UK's second-largest housebuilder said its forward sales were roughly 9 per cent ahead of the same point in 2019, with its cumulative private sales rate over 20 per cent above that of 2019 for the year to date.

It added that it had managed the cost inflation and labour shortages that are affecting the industry, "with our Brickworks, Tileworks and Space4 timber frame manufacturing facilities playing an important role in providing cost efficient security of supply".

The forward sales figures suggest

that partial changes to the stamp duty holiday in July, which took the zero rate back to £250,000 from the £500,000 level at the peak of the coronavirus crisis, have failed to dampen the enthusiasm of prospective buyers.

The stamp duty holiday is to cease entirely in October, with the tax reverting to pre-Covid levels.

Persimmon's results came as official figures showed that house prices had risen 13.2 per cent in the year to June - the high-

{i} Persimmon said its pre-tax profits had increased by 64 per cent in the first half of 2021 to £480.1m, with its average private sales rate 30 per cent higher than in 2020.

est level of growth since 2004. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a charity that conducts and funds research aimed at solving poverty in the UK, said the North West had a huge annual increase of 18.6 per cent, while the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the West Midlands all reported growth of at least 15 per cent.

In Wales, it said, house prices increased by 16.7 per cent, the highest of the four nations.

Rachelle Earwaker, economist at the charity, said the huge annual increase in house prices would leave many prospective first-time buyers "in despair as deposit requirements soar and the dream of buying their own home slips further away".

"Areas like the North West and North East, which have previously been more affordable options, are now experiencing extraordi-

Persimmon has enjoyed high sales even as the stamp duty holiday ends

nary annual house price rises," she said. "While this benefits existing homeowners, it flies in the face of the Government's aim to turn Generation Rent into Generation Buy."

Martijn van der Heijden, chief financial officer at mortgage broker Habito, said the annual growth figure was "astounding": "For prices to rise 4.5 per cent from May to June alone means that the average house had monthly price increase of £11,900."



ENVIRONMENT

British homes unable to cope with rising heat

Exclusive
By Madeleine Cuff
ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

British people stuck inside on hot summer days suffer more than their European counterparts, according to a study, which suggests UK homes gain heat much faster.

On a sunny day with outside temperatures hitting 30°C, within three hours the temperature inside a British home will jump an average of 5°C, according to a study of 60,000 homes in the UK and Ireland.

That is more than double the rate

of heat gain seen in homes across much of Western Europe, the study by the smart thermostat company Tado found. In Spain and Germany, for example, homes under the same conditions gained an average of 2.2°C over the same time period.

Scottish homes performed the worst of any in the UK, with temperatures rising by an 5.6°C over three hours on a 30°C day.

"Our study shows that UK in-

door home temperatures rise around twice as fast as the European average when faced with heatwaves and solar radiation," explained Tado's Paul Hughes. The data was taken during the course of this summer.

Last month, the Met Office issued its first ever extreme heat warning.

Most UK homes are old and draughty, leaking warmth in winter and gaining it during summer, said Mr Hughes.

"With the oldest housing stock in Europe, British homes are especially susceptible to gaining and losing heat due to external factors," he said. "This also results in more energy needed for air conditioning or heating in order to maintain a comfortable temperature."

New builds are not much better. The Climate Change Committee has repeatedly warned ministers that millions of new homes built across the country are at risk of overheating because they are often built with high levels of insulation, little ventilation and copious amounts of glazing. As

climate change advances, many new and existing homes could become "uninhabitable", the Committee warned earlier this year.

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{i} The Climate Change Committee is calling for tougher building standards and a nationwide programme of retrofits to help prepare homes for the impact of rising temperatures.

5°C

The amount by which a British home will heat up in three hours when the temperature outside is 30°C

How our homes should adapt to withstand climate change

From heatwaves to flash floods, the threat of extreme weather is already on our doorsteps. By **Vicky Spratt**

The scenes of flash floods in the UK and around the world in the past month have been shocking. It was images of water filling parts of London's transport network two weeks ago that attracted the most attention in Britain, while flooding also caused a major incident at Whipps Cross Hospital after the electrics in its basement were damaged. The London Fire Brigade took more than 1,000 emergency calls, and tenants in one council block were forced into emergency housing.

Far from being a one-off freak event, London had experienced similar flooding earlier in July – and other places have suffered much, much worse.

In Germany and Belgium, more than 220 people are dead after record rainfall in western Europe last month. More than 300 people died after disastrous flooding in the central Chinese province of Henan in July, including 14 who were trapped in a subway.

Alok Sharma, the president of the global climate-change conference in Glasgow, said that heavy rainfall and flooding “on our own doorstep” was a “sober reminder” of the problems we face.

Extreme weather, from flooding to unseasonably high temperatures, is the reality of climate change, and experts warn that our homes are fatally unfit for purpose.

According to the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the Government's official advisers, one in five UK homes already overheats. Last year, summer heatwaves caused 2,556 deaths in England alone.

In 2015, ministers rejected the CCC's advice to implement new heat-proofing regulations for buildings. In 2017, the committee warned that the number of people dying from heat could triple by 2040 if nothing is done to climate-proof housing. In June 2021, it condemned the Government's inaction as “absolutely illogical”.

Gemma Holmes, a senior analyst at the CCC, tells *i* that around 4.5 million existing homes overheat, even in cool summers, and 1.8 million people live in areas at significant risk of flooding.

Efforts to adapt the UK's housing stock “are lagging far behind what is needed to keep us safe and comfortable, even as these climate change risks grow,” she says.

For years, successive governments have kicked both the housing crisis and the climate emergency into the long grass. Yet the measures that need to be taken would also improve the standards of our homes.

The simplest measures include installing thick blinds, curtains,



Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire was badly hit by flooding last year
OLI SCARFF/AFP/GETTY

double glazing and insulation. More complex changes would cut to the heart of how we build homes in the first place: thoughtful design which maximises shade, airflow and proper ventilation, and incorporating sustainable drainage systems and water harvesting.

Flooding has hit communities in places such as Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire and Looe in Cornwall particularly hard. Friends of the Earth says it is costing the UK billions of pounds each year.

In years to come, the north of England and southern Scotland are predicted to see an 11 per cent increase in river flood levels per decade, while coastal areas can expect an increase in “compound flooding”, brought on by simultaneous storm surges in sea levels and heavy rainfall.

There has been a systemic failure to connect what is happening to our shared ecosystem and poor conditions in people's homes. That neglect could yet prove deadly.

“Climate change is going to claim a lot of lives because people are living in unsuitable homes in the wrong place,” says Dr Hugh Ellis, director of policy at the Town and Country Planning Association. “We're facing heatwaves as well as river flooding, sea level rises and surface water flooding because water is pouring out of the sky faster than it ever has before.”

Ellis can't hide his frustration. “For 30 years we've warned about this outcome. We produced data and forecast these events. Now the Government is behaving as though

“There is a failure to connect what is happening to our ecosystem and poor conditions in homes

this is a surprise when it was entirely predictable.

“Everyone – not just those next to rivers – needs to worry about this now,” he says. “It's a game of Russian roulette in terms of who is going to bear the brunt of this extreme weather.”

Ellis is particularly concerned about offices which have been converted into flats through permitted development rights. As an *i* investigation revealed in 2019, these homes are often too small and poorly ventilated.

More than 64,000 flats have been built in former offices in the past five years. This practice is set to rise with the latest government data showing a 28 per cent rise in applications for such conversions during the pandemic, while offices have been closed and homeworking has been normalised.

“Governments have deregulated planning, allowed the building of low-quality homes and the conversion of old offices which are totally unfit for purpose,” says Ellis. “These are slum dwellings, built in the wrong places without proper safeguards on overheating and without the green space vital to cool our towns and cities.”

The climate emergency is already showing the potential for its disastrous consequences. So why is so little being done to protect and adapt our homes?

In 2020, the Government responded to a CCC report which discussed what needs to be done in order to prepare for climate change by saying it would change building regulations for new homes across the UK, so that builders would be compelled to address risks of overheating.

This is yet to be made official policy, however – and there are no policies to retrofit existing homes. Added to that, when it comes to homes in areas at risk of flooding, the current rate of uptake for installing property level flood resilience measures is low, which could leave many homes vulnerable.

Experts like Holmes and Ellis warn that we have already run out of time to completely prevent disasters and must now improve resilience whilst also reducing carbon emissions. “Those of us working in this sector just can't believe that Government won't act,” says Ellis.

“The technology and knowledge to create high quality, low-carbon and resilient homes exists but current policies and standards are failing to drive either the scale or the pace of change needed,” adds Holmes. “This must change urgently.”

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