

APP/21/01071

This “outline” planning application is opportunistic, clearly taking advantage of the current temporary hiatus in housing delivery numbers. Bargate hopes it will be passed by Planning Committee even though this parcel of land is not in the current Local Plan 2026 or the now redundant Draft Local Plan 2037. Proposals to build on this land south of Lower Road were rejected in 2014 by an Independent Inspector on the grounds of harm would outweigh any public good. Similarly, HBC’s DMC rejected 2 applications (APP/19/00427 and APP/20/01031) in 2020/21 for the same reasons. Bargate Homes’ appeal was upheld in July 2021 an Independent Inspector who did not use harm versus good in his final analysis but merely cited the Government’s priority to adhere to the 5-year Housing Supply figures as the overriding consideration.

Successive fora have been warned throughout this tortuous saga that on allowing the development of “phase 1” (APP/19/00427) it would be quickly followed by an application to develop the remaining parts of the field. So, it has come to pass. All should be cognizant of the fact there are 2 further parcels of land remaining if this application is agreed. These 2 parcels of high-grade agricultural land will not be commercially viable for farming and will thus be prey to further planning applications eventually administering the final coup de gras to Old Bedhampton Conservation Area. All the result of ad hoc development with no overall master plan. It is no wonder there is lack of trust in local government and democracy.

NPPF guidance is clear regarding opportunistic, speculative, piecemeal developments taking no account of accumulative impacts of such developments on local infrastructure, heritage, ecology and quality of life. This is regarded as very poor planning resulting with no recognition of secondary consequences to surrounding locations to the site.

Over the past six years there have been or there are proposed developments of some 1,500 dwellings within or in the immediacy of Bedhampton. Much has been written over this period about the impact of these developments on ecology and all facets of infrastructure. APP/21/01071 is another straw on an already over loaded Bedhampton camel’s back.

The proposed site is adjacent to the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area. The road network that serves the site is made up of narrow historic lanes, which are shared surfaces for walkers, cyclists and motorists. There is a unique ambiance of tranquillity and relative safety enhanced by the numerous heritage assets. Unfortunately, Bargate’s development of 50 houses immediately to the east of the proposed site has already eroded that tranquillity and safety.

Since phase 1 development commenced, large construction trucks have forced resident motorists off the road resulting in at least one broken wing mirror and numerous pedestrians having to take urgent evasive action. iTransport continue to describe this is a road having an “impeccable safety record” and they have advised that such events would only occur “once in a lifetime”. This has been refuted by expert statistical analysis which has been shared with HBC. They have also been informed of other accidents in previous representations which are still not recognised

in any evidence reported by HBC officers. The construction of both sites will more than double the number of dwellings served by Lower Road. The traffic surveys do not consider the type and size of vehicles especially those visiting the light industrial complex at the west end of Lower Road which is continuing to develop contrary to planning conditions (Accolaid Case 21/00174/CMP). The transport report recognises the disproportionately large contribution that cyclists and pedestrians make to the road use mix but make no comment of the lack of refuges throughout the wider shared road network in Old Bedhampton on these shared surfaces. It is generally recognised that traffic forecasts notoriously underestimate growth numbers. In this case there is no recognition of extra pedestrian and cycle traffic emanating from 40 Acres which will also add to the numbers.

The site lies outside the urban settlement and is at increasing distances from local facilities making it even more unsustainable. The layout does not appear to provide sufficient parking facilities for residents and visitors. It is impossible to make any worthwhile comment on design/layout in this outline application as there is no detail.

Government's policy is currently changing rapidly with now a greater emphasis to build first on brownfield sites rather than high grade agricultural land. The Secretary of State is on record to reassess current local allocations to ensure that they are appropriate for need. This will in part be based on data from the recent National Census which has yet to report. To determine in favour of this outline application will be premature as it will not consider this crucial evidence and change in policy. It will cause further irreversible harm to heritage merely to address a short-term glitch in the housing numbers. It will contribute less than 0.5% to the current proposed allocation.

Do not let Old Bedhampton become a casualty again because of this current short-lived hiatus in the 5-year housing supply. Reject the application APP/21/01071 on the grounds:

1. It lies outside of the urban settlement.
- 2, It is not in any Local Plan.
3. The harm caused by this proposed application is not outweighed by any public benefit.
4. It is contrary to developing Government Guidance and NPPF guidance.
5. There are real and significant highway and traffic concerns.
6. There will be significant harm to Conservation, Heritage, Ecology and quality of life.
7. There is a lack of adequate infrastructure affecting roads, schools, medical facilities and sewerage.
8. It is an unsustainable site for social housing.
9. The outlined plan is of a poor design and layout.