

Deputation re. APP/20/1031
50 dwellings on Land south of Lower Road, Bedhampton
on behalf of Havant Friends of the Earth and Havant Climate Alliance

We object to this application on the following grounds:

1. Environmental and ecological impacts.
2. Heritage and landscape impacts.
3. The decision should remain subject to Public Examination.

Environmental and Ecological Impacts

Although there has recently been low use of this Secondary Support Site by Brent Geese and Waders, this could change. We are seeing the incremental loss of SPA supporting sites around Langstone Harbour which in future could make this site more important. We do not think that a contribution to the Solent Recreational Mitigation Strategy will adequately mitigate. The mere presence of houses close to foraging sites will be a deterrent for many birds.

The site is on the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, which is scarce in the UK and which Natural England recommends should be preserved for food production, especially important post Brexit.

However if the development goes ahead

it is important that environmental and ecological recommendations made by the Consultees are followed to create biodiversity net gain.

Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained as far as possible with infill planting where necessary, using mainly native species. Any trees or hedgerows removed must be replaced and numbers exceeded where possible to support carbon reduction. Larger native species of deciduous trees and shrubs should be planted along the eastern boundary near to the existing TPO conifers, with these only being gradually removed as younger trees become established.

Existing grassland and vegetation should be retained wherever possible with additional planting of e.g. wildflower meadows. Planting needs to maintain and enhance ecological networks. There needs to be a long term management plan to maintain trees, hedges and vegetation on the site.

A variety of bird and bat boxes are needed in trees and on houses, and reptile refuges established.

There should be an ecological survey of the site before work starts and an Environmental Management Plan for Construction put in place.

In line with the National Low Carbon Agenda, house construction should maximise insulation (E12) and gas should not be used. Homes should be constructed with Solar PV on roofs or heat pumps which can be more cheaply installed during construction rather than expensively retrofitted later. Secure bike stores are needed for each home, with space for several bikes, and attention paid to making cycling and walking routes safer around the area. EV Charging Points need to be available next to all parking spaces.

Heritage and Landscape

We do not agree that there will be “less than substantial harm” to the setting of the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area, or that any harm is justified. (E13). There are less sensitive sites elsewhere. The case has been made by experts that the development will permanently erode the character of this historic landscape through the loss of its rural setting and “village” feel. Many people from more built up parts of Bedhampton, enjoy walking along Lower Road and through the Conservation Area because of this rural atmosphere. Covid has highlighted the importance of having such green spaces available.

We ask for this application to be refused, or set aside pending Public Examination which is due next month.

Pat Brooks. 11.01.2021