

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

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Appeal Reference: APP/H1840/W/24/3347643

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference

Appeal By

Site Address

SENDER DETAILS

Name

Address

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I'm currently serving in the RAF and plan to buy and settle in and around Pershore at the end of my 22yrs in the forces in 2025. This is because Pershore is my hometown and I believe a fantastic town to raise my family. Although I'm looking for housing I wouldn't dream of locating so close to Tiddelsley Wood as the environmental impact is not morally just in my opinion. I also do not see why the authorities have not placed a temporary ban on this and similar development proposals considering the plans to build an entire new town near Norton. Surely any developments in local towns such as Pershore should be on hold as the new town itself may be sufficient to fulfil local housing needs. I believe that the development and uplift of existing infrastructure and resources (medical/schools/leisure) should be where money is spent in Pershore for the near future.

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Appeal Reference: APP/H1840/W/24/3347643

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/H1840/W/24/3347643

Appeal By FORMULA LAND LTD

Site Address
Orchard Farm
Defford Road
Persore
Worcestershire
WR10 3BX
Grid Ref Easting: 393418
Grid Ref Northing: 245331

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR CHRISTOPHER STOCK

Address
4 Crown Court Crown Lane
Defford
WORCESTER
WR8 9BE

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

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- Agent
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YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I am writing to appeal the planning application APP/H1840/W/24/3347643. I believe that the approval of this application poses significant concerns related to traffic, environmental impact, and wildlife preservation.

1. Substantial Increase in Traffic:

The proposed development is likely to result in a substantial increase in traffic within the area. The existing road network is already congested at peak times both into Pershore and the main road into Defford, and additional vehicles would exacerbate the situation. We in Defford already suffer speeding motorists and related road safety is inadequate. Defford should be a 30 mph village on the main throughfare. I request a thorough assessment of the impact on local traffic flow and safety.

2. Traffic Noise and Congestion:

The increased traffic volume will inevitably lead to higher noise levels, affecting the quality of life for residents and wildlife in and around Pershore / Defford. Furthermore, congestion during peak hours could cause delays and inconvenience for commuters into Pershore and exiting to join the M5. Given the substantial housing developments already completed in Pershore relative to its existing infrastructure and amenities, especially in terms of schools, healthcare facilities, and emergency services, I strongly recommend that the planning authority prioritize noise reduction measures and effective traffic management strategies.

3. Environmental Concerns:

a. Proximity to Woodland: The proposed development's proximity to a woodland area raises significant concerns regarding its impact on local wildlife habitats. I urgently request an ecological assessment to evaluate potential harm to flora and fauna. Currently, we observe a high number of deceased badgers, hedgehogs, and deer on the main road. Unfortunately, the increase in motor vehicles resulting from this new proposal will exacerbate these fatalities and fail to address driver safety concerns.

b. Drainage Basin Issues: The development site's drainage system must be carefully designed to prevent flooding and protect the local environment. I recommend a comprehensive study of drainage patterns and flood risk.

Considering the above, I kindly request that the planning authority reconsider the decision and address these critical issues. I believe that a more thorough evaluation is necessary to ensure the sustainable development of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to a fair and informed reconsideration.

Olaf Twiehaus
29 Dowling Drive
Persore
WR10 3EF
Mobile 07570999110
olaftwiehaus@yahoo.co.uk

Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elisabeth drive
Persore, Worcs.
WR10 1PT

Persore, 29.08.2024

Application Number: W/23/02112/OUT

Site: Orchard Farm Defford Road Persore WR10 3BX

Planning application for the demolition of existing farmhouse, agricultural buildings and structures, the erection of a phased development of up to 300 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and associated public open space, drainage, infrastructure and engineering works with all matters reserved except access.

Dear Sirs,

In response to the notification of a planning appeal made by "Formula Land Ltd.", I would like to respond with the following: **This site is not fit for development**, not of this scale and not at all in this location. The **appeal is made up of constructed and misleading arguments**, brought forward by paid consultants, PR experts and lobbyists, who all just have the **financial interest of the developers** (and their own) in mind. They have **ignored the consultation with the public** and the protests against the development, as well as the advice of governing bodies and organisations like natural England, but instead just seek to make maximum commercial profit from exploiting this unique and irretrievable part of our countryside and heritage. Building on this site, right next to the Tiddesly Wood SSSI would be an **irrevocable mistake**, not only for the biodiversity of Persore and surroundings, but also for the whole of Worcestershire. The meadows around the woodland that are planned to be built on are **habitat for many endangered species, like the noble chafer beetle, great crested newts, wild bees and many bats** to name but a few.

In addition, the effects **of the road traffic, water and sewage demands**, as well as **light, noise and water pollution** are not considered in a satisfactory way, causing danger and a loss in quality of life for the people of Persore and Wychavon.

The proposals to build on this precious site have been a long-time coming and, unfortunately, have not been a shock to those of us in Persore. The drive to build on this land has been proposed by numerous landowners and even politicians. But that does not make the idea well informed or even manageable. It is evident from the extensive material from the planning process that this proposal was heading for a recommendation of refusal.

The development plan evaluation of the sites submitted to be considered for housing even demonstrated the **untold damage that would be done to our ancient woodland**. This is one of the many reasons it was **removed from the developing South Worcestershire Development Plan Review in 2019**. Natural England and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust have submitted independent views that **this site is not fit for development** and the untold damage to woodland would be too great. I note with some confusion the letter from Sylvan

Consulting dated 1st May which responds to the concerns of Natural England. The case studies are at best weak and at worst misleading, with all scientific evidence showing that developing this close to such a sensitive site will have such an immeasurable impact on the site that it should never be considered in the first place.

It is clear from the documents submitted to Wychavon District Council that the planner leading this case has worked extensively with the developer. There have been clear challenges with the site that the planning team have sought to address. But what is also clear is the developer has sought to circumnavigate local scrutiny when it was becoming clear that the issues on the site were becoming too challenging to overcome. The planner, very rightly, sought to send the updated documents from the developer back out to consultation. As there were responses from the developer to the Landscape Officer, Natural England, Natural Heritage Officer, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the WCC PROW team it seems only fair that they should have a right of response. The fact the developer has jumped this stage to move straight to appeal suggests that they knew that further information from these groups would not provide evidence that would be in their favour. In fact a review of all the documents submitted to Wychavon shows this plan is not fit for purpose, has too many issues to overcome and the term 'jumping the gun' springs to mind.

One such example comes from the Highways consultation document from April 2024 where it, "recommends DEFERRAL on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposals would not result in a severe congestion or unacceptable highway safety impact on the surrounding local highway network, contrary to NPPF paragraph 115 or that the proposals would be served by safe and suitable access for all users, contrary to NPPF paragraph 114." At the same time a study of the objections from residents backs up this statement with issues of accidents on this road well-known and well-documented. What is clear is the developer has not taken into account local concerns or technical fears when submitting this proposal.

While it is not necessarily the scope of the inspectorate to determine the viability of a development, the likelihood that this site will quickly become financially unviable is a risk to the landscape, both natural and historic. The advice given by Aidan Smyth on 17th May shows the extensive archaeological conditions that will need to be put on any approval of this development. Any attempt to mitigate against the damage to Tiddesley Wood as a result of the development will create huge financial pressures. Additionally the drainage and highways requirements of this site will require extensive works and finances. As a result this site is high risk. High risk to the wildlife. High risk to the archaeology and historic environment. And high risk due to the potential failure of the site due to the works required. So not only is an SSSI at risk because the site could be completed. It could also end up at greater risk because we end up with a white elephant of a development on the borders of a sensitive woodland. The risk of damage to this site is just too great.

Finally I would like to refer to the NPPF, Chapter 15 conserving and enhancing natural environment. The proposed development is not in line with any of the following sections of chapter 15 of the NPPF:

Paragraph 174

(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)

(b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

As stressed by Natural England the potential development will forever devalue the biodiversity in the area, especially in the SSSI of Tiddesley Wood.

There is also a challenge to natural capital and our local ecosystems. The damage is currently unquantifiable because the research required would take years to produce. But the untold damage would be too great to the local area. The impacts are not minimised in the proposed mitigations.

There is an argument they would worsen the issues we currently face.

Paragraph 179.

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

(a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity 61; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas

identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or

creation 62; and

(b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

This site has already been highlighted as wildlife-rich and central to our local ability to conserve, restore and enhance priority habitats. This is a priority habitat and needs protecting. Any attempt to build close to this site contravenes this paragraph.

Paragraph 180.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

(a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

The forestry commission has confirmed all harm to the ancient woodland would be irreversible. We know the woodland is already under strain from existing use. There is no suitable mitigation to build this close to an ancient woodland. This proposal contravenes this paragraph of the NPPF.

(b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the

location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

There is no evidence that this development will outweigh the impact. In fact, all the evidence suggests this development will have an adverse impact on the quality of life of local residents (traffic, lack of available jobs) as well as the SSSI.

(c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

There is no exceptional reason to have this impact on an SSSI and an irreplaceable habitats. The SWDPR process has eliminated this site for a reason and therefore the NPPF backs up our proposed refusal on this site.

Please consider that Pershore has met current local need in our current plan, plus we have had a number of exception sites that have more than met the SWDP. The concept of the tilted balance has also been raised several times by the developer as an argument to allow this proposal to go through. But the NPPF clearly states that when the tilted balance is engaged:

"where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

1. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole or
2. specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted"

And footnote 7 of the NPPF defines protected areas as habitat sites, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), Green Belt, Local Green Space, National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), National Parks, Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitats, designated heritage assets, and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

It is therefore clear from the NPPF alone that this site is inappropriate, the tilted balance does not apply and the adverse impacts outweigh any benefits. With a new town proposed a few miles away, hundreds of houses being built in the area already and jobs being created through this activity, these 300 houses will not benefit the economy, nor contribute to our local housing need, more than preserving an ancient woodland from damage and potential destruction. We are meant to be stewards of this land. That means sometimes preservation comes first.

I urge you to reject this proposal.

Many thanks

Olaf Twiehaus

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Site Address
Orchard Farm
Defford Road
Persnore
Worcestershire
WR10 3BX
Grid Ref Easting: 393418
Grid Ref Northing: 245331

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR JONATHAN ATTER

Address
Brooklyn Upton Road
Defford
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WR8 9BD

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
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YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

The greedy developers can't go ahead with this. I fully support Worc wildlife trusts defence of the woodland! Tiddesley Wood is an ancient woodland of such high value for wildlife that it is designated as a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is also one of the Trust's most cherished nature reserves. We are, therefore, extremely worried that there is yet another proposal to build on the adjacent land.

The applicants have tried to demonstrate that their proposals will safeguard the wood and that any harm caused by 300 new houses, can be avoided or effectively mitigated. I simply do not believe them.

There are several technical shortcomings in the documents presented by the applicants. We believe that they underplay the harm likely to be caused by the proposed development while overestimating the effectiveness of their mitigation.

We do not accept that the proposed mitigation will offset the harm caused by increased recreational pressure in Tiddesley Wood SSSI. While we welcome visitors to our nature reserve, we are already seeing the adverse impacts of excessive recreational pressure. Paths are widened by trampling, new and unauthorised paths are destroying valuable habitat, dog fouling and dogs off leads are impacting wildlife and the nature reserve also suffers from anti-social behaviour. Essentially, we believe that the reserve is now at capacity for the number of visitors it can absorb.

We do not agree that their proposed 'buffer' planting alongside the woodland will be a meaningful addition to Tiddesley Wood SSSI. It will take many years to mature and will always be affected by noise, light and domestic pets.

It is likely that the additional harm will be incremental and continuous whereas any mitigation put forward by the applicants will essentially be set-in-stone when Wychavon District Council make their decision. If, as is very likely, the SSSI habitats do decline following development, despite the applicant's proposed mitigation, our capacity to undo that harm will be severely limited and the wildlife in the SSSI will diminish accordingly.

As we have made clear many times before, we do not believe that the harmful effects of building so close to the wood could ever be effectively mitigated in line with legal and planning policy requirements. With that in mind we are once again restating our very strong objection to proposed development of this site.

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Grid Ref Easting: 393418
Grid Ref Northing: 245331

SENDER DETAILS

Name CLLR DAN BOATRIGHT-GREENE

Address
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Pinvin
PERSHORE
WR10 2LD

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The proposals to build on this site have been a long-time coming and, unfortunately, have not been a shock to those of us in Pershore. The drive to build on this land has been proposed by numerous landowners and even politicians. But that does not make the idea well informed or even manageable. It is evident from the extensive material from the planning process that this proposal was heading for a recommendation of refusal.

The development plan evaluation of the sites submitted to be considered for housing even demonstrated the untold damage that would be done to our ancient woodland. This is one of the many reasons it was removed from the developing South Worcestershire Development Plan Review in 2019. Natural England and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust have submitted independent views that this site is not fit for development and the untold damage to woodland would be too great. I note with some confusion the letter from Sylvan Consulting dated 1st May which responds to the concerns of Natural England. The case studies are at best weak and at worst misleading, with all scientific evidence showing that developing this close to such a sensitive site will have such an immeasurable impact on the site that it should never be considered in the first place.

It is clear from the documents submitted to Wychavon District Council that the planner leading this case has worked extensively with the developer. There have been clear challenges with the site that the planning team have sought to address. But what is also clear is the developer has sought to circumnavigate local scrutiny when it was becoming clear that the issues on the site were becoming too challenging to overcome. The planner, very rightly, sought to send the updated documents from the developer back out to consultation. As there were responses from the developer to the Landscape Officer, Natural England, Natural Heritage Officer, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the WCC PROW team it seems only fair that they should have a right of response. The fact the developer has jumped this stage to move straight to appeal suggests that they knew that further information from these groups would not provide evidence that would be in their favour. In fact a review of all the documents submitted to Wychavon shows this plan is not fit for purpose, has too many issues to overcome and the term 'jumping the gun' springs to mind.

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As stressed by Natural England the potential development will forever devalue the biodiversity in the area, especially in the SSSI of Tiddesley Wood.

There is also a challenge to natural capital and our local ecosystems. The damage is currently unquantifiable because the research required would take years to produce. But the untold damage would be too great to the local area. The impacts are not minimised in the proposed mitigations.

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Please consider that Pershore has met current local need in our current plan, plus we have had a number of exception sites that have more than met the SWDP. The concept of the tilted balance has also been raised several times by the developer as an argument to allow this proposal to go through.

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SENDER DETAILS

Name MRS MAIREEN BOGAARD

Address
No 1 Bredon View
Wick Road
Little comberton
Worcestershire
WR20 3EH

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

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Interested Party/Person Correspondence

Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

Why do we need 300 houses right next to an ancient scientifically important wood. In fact the only one of its kind in and around Pershore. Can we please have this left in peace, for any wildlife left in this area. Wychavon is already taking on 80% of new building in South Worcestershire. We are going to be very very short on natural wilderness, such as it is in 2024, which isn't much.

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YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

As a local resident to the area I firmly object to the development of new houses on the site proposed. I would like to raise two points to support my objections

1) Infrastructure in the local area will not support new homes. There has already been significant development in Pershore/ Evesham which has already put a significant strain on infrastructure. Myself and Daughter have had to wait over 2 years on a waiting list for a dentist in the area due to lack of places. My daughter is going to a high school 7 miles outside the catchment area as there are no places available at Pershore High meaning children are going to schools outside their local zone. The infrastructure of Pershore not only has to sustain Pershore residents but surrounding villages such as Combertons, Drakes, Wyre Piddle. With over 300 new homes proposed even if 50% had children that is 150+ children that will need to be allocated school places, doctors, dentists in an already over stretched area. Public transport in the area is also very poor - you have to drive to everything even the Parkway train station if you want a train to major cities (as Pershore is limited) this will put more cars on the roads in the area creating more pollution.

2) The protected wildlife in the area

the site proposed is too close to a protected area of woodland - home to species of animals such as badgers (protected), deer, birds, bats and small animals. Any infrastructure so close to the woodland will have a significant detrimental impact to the wildlife. Road infrastructure will likely create more animal deaths, the build will scare wildlife from the woods and the habitat will be damaged. Whilst my comments about infrastructure still stand if they were addressed there are many other more suitable brown belt sites that should be used instead

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YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

The Town Council with to reiterate their previous concerns regarding this development and stand by their decision to fully object to it being approved. In addition, the Town Council share the concerns logged by Highways, the environmental charities and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. This development should not be approved.