

PLANNING INSPECTORATE APPEAL Ref: APP/H1840/W/22/3305934
PLANNING APPLICATION Ref: W/22/00201/OUT

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

PLANNING INSPECTORATE APPEAL Ref: APP/H1840/W/22/3305934
PLANNING APPLICATION Ref: W/22/00201/OUT

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

25 November 2022

Representation prepared by:

Mrs J Suffield

Doverdale Park Homes

Hampton Lovett

On behalf of residents and Doverdale Park Homes Residents' Association

We are against the Appeal Proposal and the following is our representation.
All previous submissions still stand.

Introduction

Consultants and experts speaking for and against the Appellant have described their professional qualifications and experience.

I do not possess those attributes but consider that, like other local residents, we have first hand consistent experience, interaction and understanding of conditions, situations and qualities of our living environment.

On a personal level, I received a good education, have spent many years researching various subjects, have life experience of many scenarios, plus access to knowledge of wildlife, agriculture, horticulture, large scale landscape management and maintenance. Regular driving and walking along the A442 in both directions, plus pedestrian access to local PRow's and surrounding countryside all provide an excellent and genuine knowledge of local conditions. Having lived at Doverdale Park for more than 8 years, the benefits of an uninterrupted aspect, both from indoors and out, across the field, enable real enjoyment of local wildlife, weather conditions, and the tranquil atmosphere. Living 14 years in another park home prior to moving to Doverdale Park, totalling 22 years of quiet peaceful surroundings has been extremely beneficial, promoting improved physical and mental wellbeing. A quality of life felt and aspired to by many park home residents, one which must be protected and preserved for retirement years and future security. This does not just apply to Doverdale Park but also to parks throughout the country where they may be experiencing similar planning proposals in their vicinity. As stated before, implications of setting a precedent to allow developments adjacent to such retirement settlements and the potential impact over time on over-burdened care and health systems, contravenes Government policy of considering needs of elderly citizens during planning processes.

One report submitted on behalf of the LPA did refer to our vulnerability, for which mention we are very grateful. We had hoped for more acknowledgement and consideration of our situation from other parties. To add to our difficulties, many of our issues appear to be ignored, dismissed without good explanation, or subjected to wrong assumptions. In addition, some official documents contain typos, errors and omissions, which do not

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

inspire confidence. One example is the A442 being quoted as A422 or other variations. There may be inadvertent errors in my report but, I am not a paid professional. I confirm my statements to be true to the best of my beliefs and knowledge. I present them as evidence on behalf of residents of Doverdale Park and its Residents' Association.

Statements of Common Ground

An essential part of the current proceedings, which were finally published online, only a week before the final date for submissions from interested parties.

It is unfortunate that the current Planning Application has resulted in an Appeal on the grounds of Non-Determination by the LPA. Why was a Planning Performance Agreement not initiated in earlier stages, in view of a previous Application and Appeal not being successful? It is a substantial development proposal with complex issues to evaluate.

The LPA was endeavouring to go through normal channels to resolve Highways recommendations, published 16 June 2022. Highways had recommended a deferral until the Applicant acknowledged their recommendations or provided further information. There was no apparent move to extend the allotted time limit, but there was equally no published response by the Applicant to Highways recommendations until 9 September 2022, the same day as the Appeal official start date. The Appeal had been submitted long before that date.

A Planning Performance Agreement could have encouraged joint working and communication on all sides. Likewise, Government planning guidance also recognises the:

“ideal opportunity for identifying the preferred approach to community engagement” and “identification of the communities to involve”

Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 20-016-20150326

Revision date: 26 03 2015

As stated in a previous representation, there has only been one occasion when the Applicant offered a public meeting, conducted by Hunter Page Planning, for the local community at Hampton Lovett Parish Room in 2017, around the time of the previous Planning Application. There has been no direct communication between the Applicant and the community since that time. That occasion demonstrated strong local opposition to the proposed development, and that opposition continues. There was also indignation in 2017 that site plans were not accurate, due to some park homes being omitted completely, especially one on the north east corner of Doverdale Park. That home would be affected most by the proposed development. This point has been made repeatedly but the main site plans, amended late August and early September 2022 to reflect measures complying with Highways recommendations, remain with these omissions. The most accurate plans, showing all homes, are those derived from aerial/satellite mapping sources.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Agreed Table of Adverse Impacts and Benefits

Adverse Impact

1. Conflict with SWDP 2 and Emerging SWDPR

Hampton Lovett has been classified for some time as a Category 4 village, due to its size, rural location and lack of amenities and infrastructure. It is located in “open countryside”, outside the development boundary and outside the boundary of Droitwich. New development plans are focussed in urban areas and villages of Category 1, 2 and 3, where new occupiers would have easier, more economical and sustainable access to a higher concentration of facilities. Facing the current cost of living crisis, likely to continue for some time, fuel/energy costs, further expected interest rate increases, decline of the economy, declining affordability factors among the general public and measures to mitigate climate change, there is no other option but to choose the most practical locations for planning new housing projects. While house-building is necessary, it should not be at all costs in any location regardless of impact, but must be plan-led, protect open countryside wherever possible, be sustainable and easily accessible.

2. Conflict with plan-making process and plan-led system

The emerging SWDPR was passed at a recent Council meeting to undergo public consultation from 1 November - 13 December 2022. The Review has taken a bold initiative to plan ahead for the next 20 years, where 3 local councils under the umbrella of South Worcestershire Councils, have formulated a plan-led project to provide sustainable housing, associated infrastructure and services. New towns are proposed, concentrating their locations near road and railway networks, both existing and planned/improved. Brownfield sites will be re-developed. New residents will have ready local access to added amenities, schools, health facilities, shops, employment, transport networks, thereby reducing travel need and reliance on private cars. There is a deliberate principle to avoid further development in rural areas and the smallest villages, in order to protect the countryside and reduce travel. Public meetings were arranged with local communities to discuss proposals. The Plan must be given the best chance to proceed, providing housing, amenities and employment in the most sustainable way.

Droitwich is indeed one of the 3 main towns in Wychavon, but Evesham has a slightly larger population. Statistics taken from ONS data of Census returns for 2001, 2011 and 2021, in built-up areas of the 3 towns show:

Published 7 November 2022 by www.citypopulation.de

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2021</u>
Droitwich	22,880	23,504	25,027
Evesham	22,420	23,576	27,831
Pershore	7,360	7,125	8,485

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Calculations show the annual population increase from 2011 to 2021 was 0.64% across the whole of Worcestershire. While this is an increase, it is relatively small, but it is the movement within those figures that is significant. As stated before, Droitwich has never achieved the population increase that was predicted in the 1970s, even though it was part of the Birmingham overspill at one time. Industrial development increased but house-building did not to the same degree. The largest demographic increase due in the future will be among those people reaching 65 years of age or more. Indications are that a greater number of people live in single or smaller households. Affordability for younger people and families also has to be considered. All housing developments should reflect and attempt to meet local needs more closely, rather than attract prospective buyers from further afield. However, it has to be achieved in a sustainable affordable way, that does not defeat the object of suitable, practical housing being offered to those who need it most.

WDC also plans to develop Droitwich, provide new urban settlements, better access to new and existing facilities, promoting its historical and tourist assets. Brownfield sites are included in projected housing developments. Again, this will be more sustainable.

While it has been stated that the proposed site is close to Droitwich town, it still remains outside the boundary. In Doverdale Park we identify with Hampton Lovett rather than Droitwich. The Significant Gap must be maintained as it has been designated in the SWDP and the current Review, to act as a buffer between urban Droitwich and the rural settlement of Doverdale Park Homes. They are totally different settlements. By introducing non-housing structures in that area, disturbing and reducing the Significant Gap there would be a drastic impact on its designation, introducing human activity, where none exists currently, and its inevitable, unwelcome consequences throughout and around the area.

3. Loss of BMV Agricultural Land/Conflict with SWDP13 H

Comments have been made that the loss of such a small parcel of land would not affect any farmer's business. However, the situation is more complicated. There are 3 main farms located to the north and east of the site - arable, mixed, and livestock. The majority of the nearest land is owned by one farming family, growing arable crops with a few pasture areas rented out to other farmers for sheep grazing. The sheep farmer who has a contract for the proposed site, used to rent some of those pastures as well as the proposed site. For more than a year he has not had a grazing contract with the arable farmer, nor access across his land to drive the sheep through the railway tunnel to reach the site. Sheep are now transported with their lambs in spring by vehicle along The Forest to the site. He grazes the rest of his flock with another farmer who has pastures about 2 miles away. If the sheep farmer loses the site's grazing land, he would have to reduce his flock, losing food output, and income. Google maps will show there is not much pasture land in the area, but huge areas of arable fields. Sheep are adding to the site's fertility, adding organic matter, which is lacking on many arable fields, where there is more reliance on chemical spraying. This is evidenced by the lack of bird life on the arable fields, except for huge flocks of wood pigeons at sowing times, feeding on stray seeds, and a few skylarks nesting among the growing grain crops in summer. This contrasts with higher bird numbers on pasture land, including the proposed site, and where the mixed farm has a stewardship field, growing a special seed selection to attract wildlife. These pastures are not sprayed with chemicals and therefore more beneficial for grazing and wildlife foraging.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

4. Impact on setting of Grade I and Grade II listed buildings/ Conflict with SWDP 6 and 21

As stated in SWDP 6, many villages and hamlets are “mostly of medieval or earlier origin”, where assets survive such as the parish church, moats, ponds and earthworks. Hampton Lovett is no different. The website www.british-history.ac.uk using facts about Hampton Lovett taken from “A History of Worcestershire: Volume 3 (London 1913), pp. 153-158. British History Online, describes the village as “small and very picturesque, consisting of only one group of houses, each of which stands in its own garden. The church is at the east end of the village and the rectory about a quarter of a mile north” “A parish room was erected in 1897 on a site given by Lord Hampton”.

Earliest mention of a place called “Hamtona” came in 716, and this name is believed to have evolved into Hampton Lovett.

There are entries in the Domesday Book from 1066-1086, in the hundred of Clent - 3 or 4 landowners, a very small population, a few ploughmen and a few salt houses.

Theories exist of origins from Anglo-Saxon times, or from the Normans. There was also a Lovett family, again possibly, Anglo-Saxon or Norman. From 13th century onwards the manor was held by the Lovett family. By 1280, part of the manor went to the Blount family and then became the manor of Hampton Lovett. The Lovett’s part of the manor was later called Over Hall or Over Court. Over Hall became Upper Hall and still survives as a farm. After the Lovett’s had no further male heirs, lands passed to heirs of Brian de Brompton, eventually being sold to Sir John Pakington in the 1520s. The remaining land, owned by the Blount family, was also later sold to Sir John Pakington in 1544. He then owned the whole manor of Hampton Lovett and built a house called Hampton Court. According to Worcestershire’s Littlebury Directory of 1873, the house was an “old farm seat near Hampton Lovett church, destroyed in the Civil Wars”.

[There appear to be long low mounds within the woodland, now called Hampton Pool. Accounts exist of a pool having been built there at one time and garden terraces going down to the stream from Hampton Court. The area is also recorded as HER Reference WSM01245, as a Monument of Earthwork type of unknown date, but visible on OS map 2003. Fields to the south called The Banks and Mill Ground visible on Tithe map].

Sir John Pakington, c.1477-21 Aug 1551, born in Worcestershire, a lawyer and favoured by Henry VIII, has been well documented. He held several important positions in Worcestershire and London, appearing many times in records of the Inner Temple. He also held positions in later years in Wales, but lived most of the time in Hampton Lovett. It is reported that he pulled down the old manor house and built Hampton Court. He was knighted in 1545 by Henry VIII, who gave who gave him Westwood, the site of an abbey, after the dissolution of monasteries, and many other estates. He died in 1551, a short time after moving to Westwood House and is buried at Hampton Lovett church, in the chapel of St Anne. No male heirs survived him, therefore he was succeeded by his nephew Thomas Pakington, eldest son of his brother Robert Pakington. Thomas Pakington, 1530-1571 of Hampton, Worcestershire, was knighted by Queen Mary on 2 Oct 1553 and became Sheriff of Worcester in 1561.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Thomas' son John Pakington 1548/9-1627, was named "Lusty" by Queen Elizabeth I, because of his athletic physique. He had mixed fortunes but built on and improved the estate in Worcestershire, especially Westwood House, a previous hunting lodge. It became the family home, between 1619-1624, for almost 300 years. Hampton Court was leased out for 100 years but did not survive that long.

His son John 1600-1624 was made the 1st Baronet of Hampton Lovett in 1620 but died in 1624, leaving his son and heir John 1620-1680, aged 4, to become a ward of Sir Thomas Coventry of Hanbury. John later married Dorothy, daughter of Sir Thomas. He became the 2nd Baronet and the family remained firm Royalists, loyal to Charles I and Charles II. Westwood House became a refuge for several Anglican Royalists, including Henry Hammond, who lived there for 10 years, writing several books. Even though the Pakington family were mostly Catholics, those religious Royalists along with Lady Dorothy played a key role in the development of Anglican tradition. Henry Hammond is buried in the family vault at Hampton Lovett church and there is a monument to him in the nave. Sir John fought at the Battle of Edgehill, on the side of Charles I. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London and Charles executed. His lands were sequestered 3 times, and he was imprisoned in the Tower more than once. He had legal and financial battles to retain the estates. The Pakington family and Hampton Lovett suffered for their loyalty. Sir John was summoned to Pitchcroft by Prince Charles, later Charles II. Charles was defeated at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and Sir John taken prisoner. Lands were only fully returned to Sir John after Charles was crowned Charles II in 1660. Oliver Cromwell had died by 1658 and growing anarchy caused Parliament to invite Charles to be King, as a unifying figure.

[Monarch's Way was established to trace Charles II's circuitous escape route from Worcester, now a 600+ mile long distance footpath. His journey took 42 days to reach the south coast, passing north from Worcester, by-passing Droitwich heading towards Hampton Lovett, and the Church, then northwards. From there his route may have been slightly different because the railway did not exist at the time].

John Pakington, son of Sir John and Lady Dorothy, became the 3rd Baronet and represented Worcestershire in Parliament 1685-1687. He was a friend to the clergy and retired to Westwood Park. His son John, 4th Baronet, was also an MP for Worcestershire from 1690, mostly till his death in 1727. He is buried at Hampton Lovett with his ancestors, where there was a large monument in the north side of the chancel. This effigy on a marble tomb was moved to the Pakington chapel when the church was restored 1858-1859.

5th Baronet was Herbert Perrott Pakington, a son from the previous John, also an MP for Worcestershire. His son John became 6th Baronet, but died in 1762. John's brother Herbert became 7th Baronet, and his son John 8th Baronet.

John died in 1830 and the title died out. However, Herbert's eldest daughter Elizabeth married William Russell and their son John Somerset Russell 1799-1880, resumed the family name of Pakington in 1831. He became 1st Baron of Hampton Lovett and was a co-heir-at-law with his maiden aunt (Dorothy) Ann Pakington, daughter of 7th Baronet, Herbert. He was a Tory MP for Droitwich from 1827-1874. In 1846, he was created Baronet

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

of UK, was involved in various Bills, including an Education Bill, became Colonial Secretary, and 1st Lord of the Admiralty. In 1858, he proposed the building of 2 iron-clad warships, the 'Warrrior' and the 'Black Prince', a significant innovation at the time. He was Secretary of War in Disraeli's time and raised to the Peerage by him. In 1875 he took his seat in the House of Lords as Baron Hampton of Hampton Lovett and Westwood in Worcestershire. He died in London in 1880 but was buried in the family mausoleum in Hampton Lovett Church. A stained glass window remains in his memory.

John Slaney Pakington became 2nd Baronet Hampton. His son Herbert Perrott Murray Pakington from a 2nd marriage became 3rd Baronet Hampton, after his half-brother died in 1893. Unable to retain Westwood House, as his father, John Somerset, had endeavoured to secure for the family, Herbert eventually sold the house to Edward Partington in 1902.

Edward Partington revolutionised paper production by introducing wood pulp in the process instead of rags. This enabled paper production on a commercial scale, an innovation which led to mass production of newspapers. Involved in politics, his home was at Westwood House and his church Hampton Lovett. In 1916, Prime Minister Asquith made him Baron (Doverdale). Edward died in 1925, but his son Oswald became 2nd Baron Doverdale. He continued the family business, and took on roles in Worcestershire, including Lord Lieutenant and Chairman of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. He died in 1935. Oswald's son Edward, 3rd Baron Doverdale, was an industrialist and politician. He died in 1949, childless and the title died with him. After his wife's death in 1970, the family vault at Hampton Lovett was sealed. Memorial stones are visible next to the churchyard walls, its corner boundaries marked by stone griffin sculptures.

The church and churchyard contain many memorials and burial places of both Pakington and Partington families. The Pakington's married into several important families, some local - Lyttleton, Coventry, Blount, Corbett, Sandys, Scudamore, Kitson, Keyt etc. Pakington's go back to Henry I, and an association with Hampton Lovett for almost 400 years. Their involvement in local affairs, improving estates, bequeathing money to the parish poor, adding to the church structure, being part of parish life, as well as fulfilling important political roles in London and elsewhere, makes their history a very significant part of Hampton Lovett and surroundings. The Grade II listed Lych Gate is part of the church's setting, from a later date, but a valued element, an entrance to that sacred ground, providing scenic photo opportunities for religious celebrations, weddings etc.

As quoted by Historic England, Grade I listed buildings account for only 2.5% of listed buildings in the country. They must be maintained in their entirety, which includes setting. The Pakington family had a huge influence in the church, its fabric, alterations, additions as well as the local area. Not many small hamlets have such a long impressive history and a listed church of this age and quality. That adds to the whole ambience, sense of continuity and permanence. Any intrusion into that space and setting by modern housing would be very harmful to its tranquil setting, disruptive, disrespectful, and inhibiting views.

Parish Registers date from 1666. The church itself celebrates annual Heritage Days when information boards and displays are presented within the building. Usually a theme is chosen to portray part of the history or families connected to the church and parish. Very informative and enjoyable, connecting participants with an impressive history.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Another historical factor which has been mentioned before is that Doverdale Park was the original site of a WW2 prisoner of war camp. One map presented for the Appellant's case shows an aerial photo of the field in 1946. The camp is very visible with an extra area between it and the railway embankment. Thousands of extra German prisoners arrived in the UK after WW2 ended, some returning from camps abroad, for example from Canada. Further accommodation had to be found quickly, often within existing camps and often under canvas, even though that was not the preferred option for wintertime. A total, well in excess of 400,000 prisoners existed in the UK post war and all had to be placed. The photo may represent the additional prisoners included in the camp.

Historic England lists the site as Monument Number 1415517. The record describes the site as a 2nd WW camp that also accommodated an armoured car unit for white Americans in preparation for D-Day and a prisoner of war camp. Camp 54 was a purpose-built, Standard Camp. Typical facilities and buildings are listed and states it was closed circa 1948. It is listed as a mid 20th century monument, has documented military recording evidence with various reference sources. Updated evidence noted the site was occupied by residential caravans. Doverdale Park is one of only 2 such sites in the country. It has a Classification 4 which signifies:

“Removed. All structures removed from site; footprint may survive.”

An assessment in 2003 states that “Camp 54, (Longbridge Camp, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich) appears to be complete from modern aerial photographs, but in fact has been demolished and the hut bases used for caravan hardstandings.”

“The survival of a site is dependant on a number of factors - origin, location, reclamation of farmland, class of use/re-use, longevity of use, type of construction, urban expansion, abandonment and dereliction. The most important of these factors would appear to be a rural location and the longevity of continuous use. The survival of all types of camp is relatively poor, but from the point of view of this survey, it is the purpose-built ‘Standard’ type that survives best.”

“However, it is important to stress that all surviving sites will have a degree of significance, even where only plan form remains. These sites will be significant for historical and social reasons, and in view of their local impact and contribution to sense of place.”

“It must also be borne in mind that the footprint of a Class 4 site may still survive in earthwork form, or a series of hut bases and paths. The fact that the site has been demolished does not necessarily mean that there are no remains”.

Doverdale Park still retains a very similar footprint to the camp, including the main central roadway within the park. At the time of the above assessment, almost 70% of all known Standard Camps had been destroyed, due to agriculture, housing, parkland restoration etc. While no built form is visible, the only Standard Camp of Category 4 remaining in Worcestershire is the site of Camp 54. That integrity of site and location must be maintained and not be enveloped by modern housing, which would seriously detract from its significance.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Adverse Effect on Character and Appearance/Conflict with Policy SWDP25 and SWDP 2F

Character and appearance have both been described previously in supporting and opposing documents.

Hampton Lovett was on the edge of Feckenham Forest, which was subject to royal legal rights over game, wood and grazing within the forest. Special courts imposed harsh penalties if rights were violated. There were local courts, gaols and gallows, for example at Gallows Green near the Salt Way, just to the east of Droitwich. Royal forests were not exclusively woodland but included pastures. Boundaries varied, and Henry II increased them to include Droitwich and Wychbold. More areas were afforested. "Forest" was a medieval term for a "preserve" - land that was legally set aside for a specific purpose, such as royal hunting. Aristocracy could be invited to land that sustained game and vegetation. Royal forests were generally areas more difficult to farm, and not in well-formed prosperous areas. William the Conqueror had established the system of forest law to protect game and the forest habitat. Land could not be cleared for agriculture and other uses. Forest law was less enforced during the 16th century. In 1608, the Crown had surveyed all royal forests and decided to dis-afforest, including Feckenham Forest. 21 years later, it ceased to be royal and reverted to common land. Land enclosures led to riots over boundaries, to reclaim common rights, hedges and fences were destroyed, including in Feckenham forest, where areas were dis-afforested from 1622-31. The Crown sold manor land in 1632 to Lord Thomas Coventry, and people living in the forest were to be compensated for the loss of their rights enjoyed under previous common law.

The Worcestershire clay plain is heavily wooded, especially near the Severn, but some dis-afforestation occurred to fuel salt pans for production of salt at Droitwich. Salt pans had been used since days of the Domesday Book and demand for salt increased as the population rose. Therefore, much of the forest had been cut and farmed by 1629 when royal forests were abolished. However, there was still benefit from fuel, timber, livestock and fruit-growing. There were riots where lands with common rights had been taken from cottagers. Small areas were divided up among them from 1631-32. However, the Crown did succeed in enclosing lands.

Very little of the original woodlands remain but biological surveys of Worcestershire show a higher density of ancient trees in former forest land. Those areas come under the classification of "ancient countryside with a mosaic of arable cultivation". Those with a lower density of trees do not always appear in the listings.

Natural England lists Ancient Woodlands, updated November 2022, including:

Hampton Farm Wood [Hampton Pool] - ancient and replanted
Rifle Range Wood - ancient and semi-natural
Farmbank Plantation - replanted
Wassage Coppice - replanted
Nunnery Wood - ancient and replanted

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Natural England's Priority Habitats list updated July 2022, includes areas coinciding with all of the above deciduous woodlands, plus Millgrove Plantation, trees along the western edge of the A442, and woodland along the western edge of the railway line.

Natural England's Habitat Network contains the proposed development site within an area of Habitat Networks - Wood Pasture and Parkland, classified as a Network Expansion Zone.

Tithe Apportionment maps from 1838-9 list all Pakington family lands in the manor, naming occupiers of the land, names and size of fields/properties, plan number, their use and value of tithe rent, payable to the Rectory. Tithe maps of that time show the proposed site as Plan 63, owned by [Dorothy] Ann Pakington, spinster, and her nephew, John Somerset Pakington, Esquire. The occupier was Richard Smith, who lived at Upper Hall Farm, confirmed by the 1841 census return. Several parcels of land were included in his occupancy. Plan 63 was "The Forest" [the proposed site] and described as pasture. Richard Smith appears to have been a church warden at Hampton Lovett, co-signing burial registers with the Rector Joseph Amphlett during the 1840s, including attesting Ann Pakington's burial in 1846.

Plan 65 was called Forest Meadow, on the northern bank of the brook, including half the brook, under the occupancy of John Cresswell who lived at Jackman's Hill Farm. The land was meadow. Plans 59 and 67 were both called Mill Grove, near the southern bank of the brook, under the occupancy of John Somerset Pakington and Anne Pakington. The land description was plantation and coppice wood. Plan 66, named Long Meadow, also on the southern side of the brook, under the occupancy of John Blick, included half the brook and was meadow.

1841- Census returns name local farms in the area, 2 households on Hampton Road [now the A442], the Rectory and Hampton Green which appears close to former crossroads and included a blacksmith. Presumably where the forge was recorded later.

1851- local farms and 3 households on Hampton Road, plus Hampton Green, the Rectory.

1861- local farms, 3 households on Hampton Road, 6 households on Forest Meadow [currently The Forest], the Rectory.

1871- local farms, 6 households on Hampton Road, 6 households at Hampton Forest [Forest Meadow, now The Forest], the Rectory.

1881- local farms, 10 households on Hampton Road, 6 households at Forest Meadow, Hampton Rectory.

1891- local farms, 4 households on Hampton Road, a blacksmith at Hampton Lovett, 7 households on Forest Meadow, Hampton Rectory.

1901- local farms, 4 households at Hampton, a blacksmith at Hampton, 8 households at Forest Meadow, a gamekeeper at Forest Meadow, Hampton Rectory

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

1911- local farms, Hampton Lovett land agent (estate office, private house), Hampton Lovett private house, 8 households at Forest Meadow, including one named Moat Cottage at Forest Meadow, parish room at Meadow Forest, Hampton Lovett 2 cottages, Rectory, plus other households at Hampton Lovett. Occupations include agricultural labourers, waggoners, gamekeepers, cattle workers, blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker, cordwainer, shepherd.

1921- local farms, 8 households at Forest Meadow, Hampton Lovett Rectory, plus other households at Hampton Lovett.

1939 - local farms, households at Hampton Lovett, Forest End, 8 households at The Forest, Moat Cottage, red Rectory.

Most of the above Census returns quote Westwood Park within the parish, with its various Lodges and Gate Houses and occupants who worked for the estate, many of them gamekeepers.

The proposed development site has always been a rural environment, with a continuous history and character of ancient woodland and pasture, linked to the manor of Hampton Lovett, Pakington family and the church. The Forest, Forest Meadow are recurring themes.

Comments have been made that built-form has already been changed. However, the oldest changes that still survive were carried out in the past when there was little control, planning, thoughts of wildlife or landscape impact involved.

A prime example is the railway, finally opened in 1852, after disputes and finance issues. During the 1840s, especially, there was a railway rush for land to build networks. Anyone could set up a railway company, sell shares in the company to raise funds and propose a Bill before Parliament, to begin the process. Transport via canal systems had become more expensive and too slow. There was no real co-ordinated plan or government regulations. Therefore, networks were not always efficient or linked together, had hubs in unsuitable locations and dominated areas to limit options for rivals. Competition was fierce to grab the best locations and recommendations for greater state control failed. Companies, such as the salt works in Droitwich and nearby Stoke Works wanted their product to be transported more economically. Glass and coal also needed a better distribution network between the Black Country and other areas around the country. There were public meetings to discuss which line, route and gauge would be best for Droitwich. Brunel was involved in designing routes that had the best line regarding gradients, distance and be the most economic, taking in Bilston, Dudley, Brierly Hill, Stourbridge, Wolverhampton, Kidderminster, Droitwich and Worcester, including tunnels. Droitwich was quite important at the time and needed coal. As more lines were constructed, networks began to evolve linking up more towns and cities, north and south, including Oxford, Birmingham, Manchester, Southampton etc. The industrial revolution progressed. There were social costs and social benefits, but those gains could have been better with more regulations and planned national interests.

Housing in Hampton Lovett has changed, since those times. Some semi-detached homes have been merged into one dwelling or re-configured. Local knowledge of existing houses,

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

in the immediate linear settlement, claims the earliest ones date from the 1860s. Without maps to show that era, it is not possible to discern the exact location and number of houses, except for Census returns quoted above. Maps from the 1890-1900s show very few properties, on either side of what became Hampton Road, (now the A442) and included a forge, as stated above. The settlement is believed to be a model village, built by the Pakington's. The Parish Room dates from 1897 after land was donated by the Pakington family. The remainder of current dwellings were built between 1904-1908. All properties along The Forest and bordering both sides of the A442 do not affect any other residences or the setting of the church, especially those closest to the church. Most homes fit within the rural character, and are set in mature gardens which add to their setting.

The WW2 camp was built when the land was requisitioned by the War Office as a suitable site from what had previously been farmland. No planning permission required and no intervention possible that would hinder the war effort. Post-war development evolved. Many camp sites were not returned to landowners or restored to their previous use. So while some comments have been made about the undesirable existence of a mobile home site, it is compact and contained almost within the original camp footprint. It has evolved from from the original layout but maintains the integrity of location and extent. Mobile home parks are usually sited in rural areas, so they are not uncommon in that type of environment. Various planning bodies have permitted industrial units to be built nearby since the 1960s, in spite of local opposition. They are fairly well screened by trees and maintain an enclosed environment for Doverdale Park, which retains its rural character.

It is obvious that the proposed site has always been undeveloped, part of an ancient forest/pasture character, with a small hamlet and picturesque church at its core. That scenario still exists, enhanced by the Significant Gap, bordered by ancient and mature trees. Within Doverdale Park we have that sense of enclosure, but natural open spaces surrounding 3 perimeters of the park provide a sense of countryside instead of feeling enclosed. The proposed modern housing estate would surround us on 2 sides, with associated noise, human activity, traffic flow close to perimeter gardens and a public footpath/cycleway that would be of no benefit to our residents, and introduce passers-by, litter, and a potential for unsocial behaviour. No mention has been made of what building materials would be likely, style of housing, type or maturity of screen planting. Our homes have their own style and character which would definitely not be compatible with urban housing of up to 3 storey elevation, and would not comprise an extension to the park. New occupants are not likely to want mobile homes close to their more standard-built homes.

Comparisons have been made between public and private views, the latter not being considered as valid reasons against a proposal. However, we have both private and public views. Our residents make varied use of the A442 on foot/by car, the PRoW/Monarch's Way, attend the Parish Room for social events, the church and churchyard, or even the PRoW's beyond. Therefore, we would be surrounded in our homes as well as lose the historic pastoral scene when out in the environment. We would be the most sensitive population affected both by private and public views. The field being enclosed by trees and vegetation would cause sound to be trapped and amplified within the area, affecting all, new and current residents. Loss of tranquility and public views are not acceptable, therefore significant harm would be caused. It is a valued landscape for all current users, whether at home or beyond.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

The proposal to retain a small pasture to the north of the site would not be practical for grazing. It would only support a small number of animals, reduced in number by providing public access as an open space provision. In addition, security and safety for the animals would be in question, and fencing might not be sufficient means to achieve that.

The proposal would not improve the character, quality and function of the area. It would not correspond with the linear layout of the original hamlet or the rectangular settlement of Doverdale Park. It would not maintain the rural character or green transition between urban and rural areas. Planning regulations are now different to those that were in force previously. LPA's have more control on methodology, location, style and materials. The emphasis has to be based on more sustainable projects. Development plans need to be well-considered, plan-led, practical and sustainable, in order to prevent permanent building which later proves detrimental to landscape, environment, and the community.

Benefits

5 Year Housing Land Supply

Wychavon District Council is no different to many LPA's in their shortfall of housing land supply. The duration of Covid restrictions caused delays in development plans being processed in the normal timeframe. Several planning applications in neighbouring districts have been permitted after many years of refusal. Another "land rush" situation. One building project at least has recently been halted, due to developers encroaching onto a PRow and a historic site. Another has removed an entire ancient hedgerow which had not been planned, while yet another has made a temporary access point for construction traffic without informing anyone before doing so. One site built more houses than planned to make the site viable. The site that caused most inconvenience for a few years, just to the south of Droitwich, was halted to improve road access and junctions, which should have been done before construction began. None of these projects inspire confidence in planning systems for existing residents and users of the areas.

Plans recently passed in the local area include:

52 dwellings at Newlands Lane, Droitwich, including 20 affordable, full planning application
9 extra units at Evesham (80 units already approved), full
127 dwellings at Impney Estate, full and with communication with the community
21 dwellings at Badsey, including affordable, full
2,204 dwellings and 14 ha. Employment land, hotel, OAP unit, retail, health, leisure, primary school, allotments at Norton by SWC, outline

Pending decision: 27 apartments and parking, Royal British Legion, full

One which was refused and dismissed at Appeal recently:

30 dwellings at Callow End, outline (Malvern Hills Council)
- contravenes SWDP2, significant harm to rural landscape character of Principle Timbered Farmlands, effect on users of PRow, even with shortfall of 5YHLS the site valued by locals

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

for scenic quality, undeveloped character of natural environment, ancient landscape and dispersed settlement, sense of impact on landscape even after 15 years, transport issues. The above application has similar features to the proposed site in question, but does not include any historic assets apart from the ancient landscape type.

While the proposed scheme, and its provision of 40% affordable housing, would provide homes and produce a social benefit, that has to be weighed against all outcomes. There are housing projects being approved or progressed within SWC. Those which are located closer to infrastructure have to take priority in order to reduce travel more effectively. That is never going to be a certainty in rural areas, or be more economical for providers or users. Extra financial provision is not necessarily the solution. The energy crisis has highlighted that concentrating facilities and services for larger communities in cities, towns and larger villages is going to be increasingly important. Therefore the benefit does not outweigh the harm.

New Planting

Planting has not been specified regarding species or maturity. Benefits would be minimal and used as screening. Without housing, there would be no requirement to screen. Maintenance and watering would be essential, especially in year 1 and 2. Drought conditions, as experienced this year, would make this difficult to sustain regularly or promote sufficient growth to establish any planting well. Trees and hedgerows take much time to mature and even 15 years is considered by some to be insufficient time to achieve a desirable level of growth. Therefore new planting is not a benefit of significant value.

Public Open Space

Public open space would be created to offset the development. Open space already exists for local users, even though they do not have physical access to it. It provides visual access to be enjoyed by all current users in an observational tranquil way.

Bio-diversity Net Gain

Everyone wishes to improve the environment and bio-diversity, and this is required by the Government. However, the method of achieving this alongside building developments is more difficult. A base measurement has to be assessed before any gain can be measured. Guidelines for planners quotes habitats likely to contain or sustain protected species, which type of wildlife to look for and when to take surveys.

Below are some of those features present on or near the proposed site:

Habitat - ancient/veteran trees, with decay, large gardens in rural areas, streams on or nearby, meadows, grassland, parkland and pasture on the land or linked to site by similar habitat, ditches, woodland, scrub and hedgerows.

The ancient undeveloped landscape is typical in character and has evolved naturally over centuries, enriched by neighbouring woodland for nesting, foraging, shelter etc.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Survey schedule:

Badgers	- any time of year, Feb-Apr or Oct-Nov
Bats	- roosting: any time of year, trees best surveyed without foliage - hibernation: Nov-mid Mar - summer roosts: May-Aug - foraging/commuting: Apr-Oct, for seasonal behaviour - swarming: Aug-Oct
Birds	- breeding: Mar-Aug - winter behaviour: Oct-Mar - migration: Mar-May, Aug-Nov
Dormice	- Apr-Nov
Great crested newts	- Mid Mar-mid Jun
Invertebrates	- Apr-Sep
Natterjack toads	- Apr-May, aquatic - Jul-Sep, terrestrial
Otters	- any time of year
Water voles	- Mid Apr-Sep
White-clawed crayfish	- Jul-Sep

“Absence of a record does not mean there are no wild birds. It could mean there is no survey data available for that location.”

Surveys should not be confined to assess the minimum existence of wildlife, but assess the greatest value possible, in order to assess the potential impact accurately for mitigation.

While some surveys were conducted at the site, they were not carried out at the most appropriate times according to species which would have provided a more accurate assessment. According to Government advice on Protected Species and Development, is that a survey should be requested if the site is likely to affect:

- breeding birds
- wintering birds
- barn owls and other birds listed in Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Sched 1
- birds in Section 41 of Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006
- red and amber list birds of conservation concern

Wintering birds are very evident in and around the site. Redwings (amber list) and Fieldfares (red list) are both on the Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. They are regular winter visitors, in large numbers, eating berries from the trees in autumn and foraging for insects and seeds on the field as the berries disappear. They are very sensitive to disturbance and any human activity on a regular basis would disperse them, possibly permanently.

The field, surrounding trees, shrubs all provide an excellent feeding ground, free of chemicals, shelter and a wildlife spectacle to be observed quietly.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Worcestershire Biological Records Centre was quoted as a means of establishing wildlife sightings. However, it holds data more for breeding birds and not wild birds in general. As stated before, the lack of public access to the site means that sightings of wildlife would not readily occur, unless a current resident/visitor was aware of doing so.

However, organisations such as the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) provide information and projects to assess wild birds and other wildlife, including the use of citizen science, especially important during the current outbreak of avian flu. I have joined the BTO in 2 projects - Bird Track and Garden Bird Watch. The last 3 weeks or so have provided an even better insight into the local wildlife than previously. I am reporting sightings regularly to the BTO website. The use of a spotting scope with an iPhone attached to the lens enables sightings and photographs of birds and wildlife along the far edge of the field as well as in surrounding trees. Fieldfares and redwings are definitely regular visitors. Other birds on the red list, sighted near or far from indoors, are house sparrows. Others on the amber list, mallard, wood pigeon, black headed gull, sparrow hawk, wren, dunnoek.

Muntjac deer are regularly crossing the field to and from woodland by the railway to mixed woodland on the southern boundary of Doverdale Park. Hedgehogs are sighted at times by residents, especially if food is provided for them. Pheasants and rabbits are regularly present on the field. This is typical wildlife which would have been present in the ancient forest and woodland. Other deer are present on nearby arable fields and woodlands.

The development would constitute substantial harm to the wildlife currently enjoyed as a leisure activity, which benefits the well-being of all residents. The introduction of play, recreation and community areas, and the proposed public open space would deter much wildlife which has so far endured no physical human interference. The proposal would drastically reduce the feeding ground of the site and destroy the connectivity along the field length and woodland edge. Any mitigation measures to improve wildlife can not be measured practically without a more accurate baseline to start from. The measures envisaged would not necessarily enhance the wildlife. Those measures would be concentrated in the lower end of the site, most of which would not be visible to the majority of our residents, thereby depriving them of the current wildlife sightings, replacing that with housing. The scheme would interfere with the ecological system that has evolved. Any gain of bio-diversity is therefore minimised by a severe reduction in wildlife during construction, and likewise through subsequent human activity and daily life. Therefore, it would not really benefit anyone or the wildlife.

The land has not been improved in terms of wildlife provision in many years, but now it is proposed, only to offset any loss through house-building. The only way that wildlife enhancement could be a significant gain on the proposed site, would be without the addition of housing and nearby human activity.

Reduce Flood Risk

Another contentious issue which is still of concern. As said before, without the housing, no need for flood risk measures. The land should be left to absorb as much rainwater as possible, without any extra burden of surface water run-off. Even after a dry winter last year and a summer of drought, recent heavy rainfall has resulted in the usual flooded area

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

to the north of Doverdale Park and along the inside of the hedgerow. It was sufficient for 4 mallards to be swimming on the water! The area recently affected would be very close to or at the new proposed access point.

Public Access to retained pasture

The same applies here that public access would not be a benefit and would only be for new residents. Therefore, without the scheme, physical public access is not necessary, Visual access and amenity already exist, enhanced by the church setting.

Enhanced Pedestrian Connectivity for existing residents

Difficult to envisage the practicality. Maybe for residents of The Forest, if so inclined to walk/cycle in that direction. Certainly of no benefit to residents of Doverdale Park. Would allow more connectivity to and from the Westlands estate to the site, but could facilitate opportunist ingress into the site and our park, which is not desirable. Therefore, it does not really enhance connectivity in a positive, practical way.

Accessible Location

Public surveys taken prior to publishing the current version of the Review, show that people in general do not want to walk more than 10-15 minutes to reach an amenity. Even those wishing to cycle are not ambitious in their preferred time or distance. There is an understandable difference here in how far people would walk/cycle to arrive at a local shop, health service, recreational space, school or work as opposed to a distance/time for exercise/leisure where no other scheduled timetable is implicated. Weather plays a huge part in willingness to walk/cycle on a daily basis. This year has seen extreme heat, drought, strong winds and recent, heavy rain. The route between the proposed site to bus stops, schools, employment, shops or Droitwich itself is exposed to all elements, speeding HGVs and other vehicles. Walking or cycling in some of those extremes would be hazardous and unpleasant. Air displacement from HGVs, in any weather, wet clothes, carrying shopping bags, walking with children, crossing busy roads, poor visibility in bad weather, vehicle noise, regular exposure to vehicle emissions are not desirable. Human nature indicates that people will not maintain their willingness to walk/cycle over time. If financial means do not permit other means of travel, could impact on health and well-being.

Bus services are not adequate, as stated before, and contributions will not be sufficient to provide a practical solution. Car travel would dominate. We still have concerns regarding traffic volumes, speeding etc and do not think that recommended measures will alleviate the problems significantly.

Therefore accessibility to Droitwich is not as practical as has been argued. Yes, it is a main town but other developments closer to the town would have fewer problems and less travel time/means to access its amenities. Not a suitable development in this location, when others provide better.

Land at (OS 8894 6544) Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett

Conclusion

Both sides of this Appeal are expressing strong opinions and rationale for their stance, each competing to carry more weight in the argument. This is a daunting challenge for neighbours like ourselves and other interested parties to state their case and be afforded some credibility alongside the professional bodies.

However, in our opinion, adverse impacts definitely outweigh the benefits of the proposal, especially in terms of affecting landscape character, settlement pattern and size, important historic assets, sense of place and continuity, public views, wildlife and quality of life for existing residents. Hampton Lovett has a long history for such a small place, of which we are proud. It adds to the ambience for all. Enhanced views of the church would only benefit new residents who would not have experience of the current view. Reduction in the size of the plan does not make it more acceptable. The issues raised would not be mitigated sufficiently by suggested measures.

Therefore, we are still strongly opposed to the proposal in order to protect our peaceful way of life, the setting of our historic church, the landscape character and our peace of mind. We plead for the consideration of our community at Doverdale Park who will be the most affected by the proposed development. We want, above all, to be allowed to live out our remaining time in peace.

Note:

Photographic proof of wildlife, recent flooding, landscape can be supplied if necessary.