



# *North Cray Residents Association*

[www.northcrayresidents.org.uk](http://www.northcrayresidents.org.uk)

TO: The Planning Inspector

DATE: 30 July 2018

**DCLG Appeal ref: APP/D5120/W/18/3196449      Application ref: 17/02176/FUL**

## **Demolition of existing buildings, removal of mobile home and erection of three bungalows with associated parking and amenity space**

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the comments made in the applicant's "Grounds of Appeal Statement", some of which are erroneous, and others misleading. The following are our comments on the paragraphs in question.

### Para

4.8 A key point here is that the Council, through its Planning Committee, recognised that the proposed development would fail to preserve the character of the location in which the site is located. Here, we would respectively remind you that the previous Inspector in dismissing an earlier Appeal (Appeal ref APP/D5120/W/15/3033665) made this same point in her para 14 that the development "*would result in a more suburban character and appearance of the site, which would not...relate to the existing semi-rural character and appearance of the surrounding area*".

Other issues considered by the Planning Committee in coming to its decision on 14 December 2017 to refuse the application did include traffic implications and the impact on neighbouring occupiers' amenities. These factors had been presented to the Planning Committee in the form of our letter of 22 October 2017, the letter from Mr N J Carter dated 24 October 2017 and that from Mr Farrugia dated 3 November 2017. They were reinforced at the meeting by my address to the Committee (see attached), and recorded in its minutes.

5.4 Here, the Statement points to the need to take account of the different roles and character of different areas ...and to manage growth to make the fullest possible use of factors such as walking. For the former, please see our comments above. For the latter, we ask you to please note that the area of Parsonage Lane in which the application site is situated is an unmade road with no pavements, It is one largely used by local residents walking their dogs, ramblers and horse riders as it soon becomes a bridlepath leading to Chalk and Joydens Woods.

5.17 Here, the Statement cites in its support the London Plan Policy 2.7, one that aims to help people to live closer to their place of work. What the Statement fails to say is that there is no public transport close to the application site. The nearest bus stop (and

that for a service that runs only half-hourly) is about a half hour's walk downhill along a narrow Lane with no pavements. It takes even longer returning up the steep hill.

5.37 Here, the Statement refers to UDP Policy ENV22, one that is designed to protect the character of heritage land. It also cites the importance of opportunities for outdoor recreation, both for local residents and visitors. This is one of the reasons why our Association objected to the proposed development, one that would generate more cars (and oil tankers as there is no gas locally) to the detriment of local residents and visitors walking or riding to the Woods past the application site.

6.15:-

The large area of agricultural land once forming Orchard View Farm did include the maggot farm, but this has long since closed and its site is not part of the application site. The workshops on the application site were originally built to support Orchard View Farm's agricultural activities.

The proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the locality., which is a rural one, and create 'suburbanisation'.

You would need to view the webcast of the Planning Committee's meeting on 14 December 2017 to hear how appalled its members were at the design of the proposed dwellings on the application site; but we point instead to the wording of para 2 of their Decision to refuse the application.

As stated in our comments on para 4.8 above, the development would result in more vehicular traffic - at least six residents/visitors cars leaving or returning to the site at all times, seven days a week. Added to this would be delivery vehicles (including oil tankers). Much more than if the workshops were to be brought back into use. Car use by the residents would certainly be necessary as the nearest bus stop is a long walk away, down a narrow lane with no pavements. Note: The Statement's forecast of a reduction in traffic is in fact a comparison of the potential traffic that could take place if the site were to return to its full current use, against the very conservative projected traffic that could result following the proposed development. This is misleading as the actual traffic currently generated at the site is nowhere near the potential and in reality is virtually nil.,

The former kennels (which closed down several years ago) and existing cattery do not create a noise or disturbance to neighbours.

The proposal would add three dwellings to Bexley's supply of housing – but not in a place where there is a need (and it would certainly not meet an identified housing need as allowed in para 145 (g) of the 2018 edition of the NPPF). The cottage adjoining the application site (No. 61) has been on the market for several months and remains unsold. The house next door to this (No.59) was on the market for approximately three years before its purchase by its current owners. A house nearby (*Silverdene*, at the junction of Parsonage Lane/Cocksure Lane) has also been on the market for months

and remains unsold. A house at the bottom of Parsonage Lane has only just been sold after several months on the market, despite this being close to a bus stop – which is not the case in upper Parsonage Lane.

6.16 This argues, quite wrongly, that the neighbouring dwelling at No. 65 Parsonage Lane is a precedent for allowing new-builds at No. 63. *However, No 65 replaced an existing building that already enjoyed residential status.* Moreover, the new dwellings proposed for the application site (No. 63) are not in the same use as its existing buildings and so are contrary to one of the exceptions set out in para 89 of the NPPF (2012). In the 2018 edition this is repeated in para 145 (d).

In conclusion, we summarise our comments as follows:-

- We fully support the Planning Committee's reason No. 1 for its refusal of the proposed development. The reasons given also reflect the clear view of the previous Inspector\* that a housing development on the site “*would have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt*” and that it would conflict with “*the semi-rural character and appearance of the surrounding area*”. The minutes of the meeting record that the Committee did consider the suitability of the access arrangements for additional vehicle movements and factors such as associated lighting etc. and the impact of these on 'openness'.

\* see Appeal ref APP/D5120/W/15/3033665, paras 7, 8-9 and 14

- We also fully support the Committee's reason No. 2.
- We consider (as pointed out above) that much of the applicant's “Grounds of Appeal Statement” is erroneous and misleading.
- We not consider that the applicant's Appeal Statement provides a convincing argument as to why the Committee's decision should be set aside

For all these reasons, we ask you to please dismiss the Appeal.

Yours sincerely

Jean Gammons  
Secretary

/ADDRESS

## ADDRESS TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE : 14 DECEMBER 2017

I'm Jean Gammons, Secretary of the North Cray Residents Association. I'm also representing the Bexley Civic Society.

First, we do not see tidying up a semi-derelict site as sufficient reason to breach Green Belt protection.

The Recommendation is not supported by para 89 of the NPPF - the replacement buildings would not be in the same use as the existing buildings, so are excluded from the list of appropriate exceptions.

Also ignored is the NPPF's definition of "Previously developed land". This excludes land that is, or has been, occupied by agricultural buildings – which several of the existing buildings are.

The Recommendation is contrary to the government's wish to protect the Green Belt from housing development – and at odds with Bexley's policies and its Growth Strategy. Here, we were promised no new housing in North Cray's Green Belt!

This is a sensitive site - beside an unmade track leading to Joydens Wood. A popular bridleway used seven days a week by residents and visitors for walking and riding. And leisure opportunities are recognised as important in Bexley's policies and Growth Strategy.

The Inspector recognised that new houses in this semi-rural location would have a negative impact. It is its character and tranquillity that we are trying to preserve.

Highways are clearly unhappy about any increase in the number of vehicles along this narrow track and Parsonage Lane itself - but in the absence of nearby public transport, the occupants would have to use cars.

Yet it is argued that there would be less traffic from the new houses than is generated by the site's existing uses! We say that the extra traffic - six cars coming and going at all times seven days a week - plus service vehicles - would be a significant increase over the number of journeys made by people just working in any of the existing buildings.

There would also be the additional demand on already stretched services such as low water pressure and inadequate mains drainage.

Giving a green light to a breach of what exists to protect our Green Belt would certainly encourage further encroaches in North Cray.

For all these reasons, we ask you to please refuse this application.