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From: Rita O'Brien [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 May 2024 15:14
To: Consultations
Subject: Objection to Planning Application CA/24/00788 relating to Brooklands Farm

Categories: Yellow category, Blue category

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I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed development on Brooklands Farm.

The scale of this development is unsustainable. The site lies on good quality agricultural land and will result in the unacceptable loss of open green space. It also threatens key infrastructure and biodiversity. It is Rural, not Urban, and should remain as such.

Flooding.

Brooklands Farm's green fields currently act as natural drainage, absorbing excess rainwater during heavy rainfall and reducing the likelihood of severe flooding. The replacement of these fields with impermeable surfaces such as buildings and roads would disrupt the natural drainage system and potentially exacerbate flooding issues, placing both existing and future residents at risk.

The fields are London clay which is highly susceptible to volumetric changes depending upon its moisture content. During exceptionally dry periods or where the moisture is extracted by tree root activity, the clay can shrink in volume, and conversely swell again when the moisture content is restored. This can lead to many problems near the ground surface, including structural movement and fracturing of buildings, fractured sewers and service pipes/ducts and uneven and damaged road surfaces and pavings. Such damage is recognised to be covered by the interpretation of subsidence in buildings insurance policies, and the periods of dry weather in 1976/77 and 1988/92, in particular, led to a host of insurance claims. As a result, many insurance companies have now increased the cost of premiums for buildings located in the most susceptible areas where damage occurred, where the clay is close to the surface.

Sewage.

Brooklands Farm is situated in an area that already faces challenges with flooding & sewage. The increased strain on the existing system due to the additional housing could lead to overflows, pollution of water sources (the Swalecliffe Brook also), and a decline in water quality. Southern Water is unable to cope with existing pressure; supplying an additional 1400 houses with one or two toilets will threaten its already overstretched capacity.

The Swalecliffe Brook flows through the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) before joining the north Kent coast to the east of Whitstable, a section of the coast which forms part of the Saxon Shore Way. It runs through Brooklands Farm. It has been classed as a Salmonid River (trout stream) due to having brown trout and eel, both of which are of conservation significance. There is also the possibility that three-spined sticklebacks will still be present, despite the 2013 sewage dump that polluted the brook at Long Rock.

Traffic

Roads in this area narrow and will be unable to cope with the amount of extra traffic created by potentially up to 3000 extra cars, not to mention the pollution and noise. The planned new junctions for the A299 would be dispensing traffic onto roads that are ill equipped to deal with it. The additional traffic then going through to Chestfield, South Street and Canterbury will create a significant impact on not only the roads and residents in the area, but going to Canterbury, the

road goes through ancient woodland, and pollution and noise will have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

It is essential to thoroughly evaluate and address these concerns to avoid any negative consequences for both residents and the environment.

Biodiversity

There would be a deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient hedgerows and the Swalecliffe Brook. The significant impact the development would have on the local wildlife and their natural habitats is of grave concern. Birds of prey, sparrow hawks & buzzards etc, use the hedgerows for hunting. Bats are seen regularly across the fields, as is the albino squirrel. An abundance of birds use the hedgerows for nesting. We have regular sightings of woodpeckers, greenfinches, wagtails, goldfinches, and all the usual wild birds. The destruction of this green space would result in the loss of biodiversity and disrupt the delicate ecosystem that currently thrives in the area. Preserving such natural habitats is essential for maintaining a sustainable environment and ensuring the wellbeing of future generations.

Food Security

I object to this proposal because it means the loss of valuable farmland. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has reported that over 14,000 hectares of our best agricultural land has been lost to housing development since 2010. Irreplaceable good quality agricultural land, like Brooklands, is a vital national asset. Its loss will have a growing impact on our food security in a world where food shortages are likely to increase as a result of climate change.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed housing development on Brooklands Farm. The preservation of this green field site, the mitigation of sewage issues, the protection of wildlife and their habitats, the protection of valuable farmland and the prevention of flooding should be of utmost importance. It is crucial to explore alternative options that prioritise sustainable development and do not compromise the well-being of our community and environment.

I hope this damaging proposal will be rejected.

Rita O'Brien

