



CCC Consultations <consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

Objection to proposed development at Brooklands Farm at South Street, Whitstable

1 message

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Please acknowledge receipt as a matter of urgency and courtesy.

[REDACTED]
15 January 2023

Dear Policy Team

OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT BROOKLANDS FARM

I write to object to the proposed development of Brooklands Farm which would, in local opinion, cause further congestion on supporting and connecting roads and local village smaller roads, prompt more flooding and more than double the size of Chestfield and the surrounding South Street area. It would turn the area in to an urban jungle with very little open or green space.

This additional provision would increase already heavy traffic, increase noise pollution, increase air pollution, reduce our human right to good light and put further strain on an already fragile struggling infrastructure. Flooding in the area is frequent along the riverbank and in fields and woodland and increasing sewage in an area which already struggles to meet demand would destroy an area of natural beauty. The urbanisation would bring increased public disorder and increased crime as I am advised is the case at the former Canterbury Barracks development. In short, it would turn the area from one of village life and community with beautiful scenery to an urban concrete jungle with traffic congestion, and the destruction of the lifestyles those who currently live here enjoy. Of course, this proposed development would change the character of the area.

The proposed development, along with several others already blighting [Whitstable](#) at the open field previously known as Grasmere Pasture to the rear of Richmond Road and Whitstable Heights on Duncan Downs, will mean several years of building work

with risks to the health of existing residents whose properties border this proposed development and are within easy access. There will be significant air and noise pollution for years.

I live in one of the four properties on the fork of Blackberry Way, which are no more than a few feet from proposed development land, there are three houses where one or more of my neighbours have asthma and another where a 2-year-old child has autism. The dust and other air pollution associated with any development, let alone one of this size means it poses a considerable risk to their health, notwithstanding the fact the prevailing wind direction typically blows from Brooklands Farm towards our properties. We already have several days a year where the fields are ploughed and prepared for crops grown on Brooklands Farm which, when ploughed and harvested, cause huge air pollution and where we must close windows, ensure there is nothing on the washing line and then clean cars because of all of the crops and dust blown on to our properties. We face years of this should this development go ahead. Of course, it is not harmless crops which will be blown our way but rather, dangerous dust and other pollutants.

Farmland and other green spaces help to reduce flooding by absorbing excess water. The areas around South Street, Grasmere Road and Chestfield Road are already subject to regular flooding, and this is with the current farmland to protect it. Despite works on drainage under the new Thanet Way near Radfall Road, the road still floods and makes it dangerous to use if at all possible. This area will simply not cope with another huge development. Nor will this already over used route into Canterbury. Look at the huge increases and queues whenever another route is closed. No-one gets to school or work on time due to the huge increased volumes and you are going to add with all these developments, choking our countryside.

I would also like my objection noted as when I moved into my property in 2001, on completion of build, I applied for my rear fence to reflect what was advertised by Matthew Homes and to be placed several feet back in a straight line to newly planted hedging. I applied with full disclosure on areas of concern and paid the fees due. I had a visit from our then local councillor who viewed the area and talked with me about my proposal and my application which was subsequently turned down by Canterbury City Council on the basis that my crooked fencing with a straight hedge line in front of it to the KCC path behind / between my rear fence and Brooklands Farm field was "a natural barrier to the new Thanet Way" and permission was refused on this basis. Objections were made by residents of Blackberry Way at the Planning Meeting but were dismissed. You rejected permission to move my property boundary a few feet nearer the Thanet Way and now you want to build hundreds of yards nearer – hypocrisy!

Road access

The main access point to the proposed development is via South Street. Again, for the benefit of anyone reading this who is not familiar with the layout, South St is a narrow, country lane with many tight spots for passing vehicles and almost single file across the small humpback bridge over the river.

From Chestfield Road to the entrance to Brooklands Farm, it is narrow, undulating, and windy with high hedges on both sides. It is the sort of road you drive with your heart in your mouth every time you go round a bend in case something is coming the other way. Usually, people drive this road in the middle to avoid raised banks and hedging and sightlines are very poor. When the sun is low or going down you can be blinded at points and to consider making this road busier is a catastrophe. Whilst the road at this end would undoubtedly be widened should the proposed development proceed, access to and from Chestfield Road would not be able to cope with the massive increase in traffic turning in and out of South Street and long tailbacks would become inevitable.

Before even reaching the point of South Street have you ever tried getting into Canterbury via Radfall Road to Hackington Road in Tyler Hill. So many accidents in poor conditions, another winding road with muddy banks and woodland. One straight length of road that people precariously risk an overtake on. Turnings to the right for Clowes Wood and an occasionally missed junction from the left from Greenhill, Herne Bay. A few more winds in the road ahead of Frog Hall and the caravan parking site access road before the loop the loop corner coming into Tyler Hill. Another opportunity for some foolish drivers, should congestion allow, to overtake a slower or larger vehicle. Winding down out of Tyler Hill you meet Calais Hill and approach the University of Kent, on a very uneven lumpy road. If you've managed to get here within 20 minutes at peak times you feel like a real winner! The volume of traffic heading into Giles Lane usually means you join a slow queue of traffic from Clowes Woods.

Without the congestion some drivers take the country road too quickly and inevitably crash closing a main route out of Canterbury to this area. This road simply cannot take much further traffic with its limited bus service at one an hour. A brave driver of a double decker bus at most times twisting through overhanging branches and narrow winding roads, icy and precarious in winter, well done them for trying on an unsuitable route.

Going the other way from the entrance to Brooklands Farm towards Millstrood Road (near Tesco), there are houses on both sides so, no widening of the road would be possible. Many of the houses do not have off street parking so, there are always cars parked on the road. The road is narrow enough so that, when a car is parked you cannot fit cars travelling both ways at the same time. Therefore, cars must pull in to gaps in order to allow cars travelling the other way to pass. This currently works because there is not a large flow of traffic on the road. However, if this development were to proceed, there would be thousands of cars travelling on South Street every day and it simply could not cope.

There would also be additional cars looking for parking for the new housing as existing new development provision is very limited and not many family houses have just one vehicle these days. Spaces somewhere would be required for at least one more vehicle, maybe two or three. This is heightened by the impact of high price housing in the area meaning our kids are having to stay with us for longer. Again, we need to consider the flood risk of no longer having farmland to absorb some of the excess water which, even with this, does not prevent Brooklands Farm fields and South Street from currently having flood water whenever there is any significant level of rainfall.

With the benefit of both old and new Thanet Way either side of Whitstable we already have busy roads, queues at roundabouts that cannot cope with influxes of traffic to local services and businesses. Both roads regularly flood with even a small amount of rain which causes accidents and closures. Your intended proposals for further developments all the way through from almost Faversham to Thanet will only make these conditions worse. We cannot tolerate further developments and increased capacities. We chose not to live in a busy capital city for a reason.

Sewage

As you are more than aware the beaches at Whitstable remain under constant threat of "leaks" from the sheer volume already straining the local systems. There are several campaigns and groups gunning for Southern Water whose systems simply cannot cope with the already increased volumes.

Since I moved to Whitstable as a young adult it has trebled in size. Maybe, if the housing already provided in the town and surrounding roads and Tankerton, Swalecliffe and Chestfield hadn't been purchased by people moving to the area for weekends at the seaside, we could have remained the great small seaside town our families grew up in. The prices for affordable housing provision aren't affordable with a 3 bedroom house in the new Whitstable Heights being over £500,000. These developments are ripping the heart out of communities and most parents fear our children who have been born here, raised, and schooled here will have to move out of the local area on the grounds of affordability, having been outpriced. More housing and development in Whitstable is not going to help this problem, the developers just want the money and have no local interest and you are selling Whitstable and its surrounding areas to the highest bidders without any thought or compassion to the local communities who support Canterbury City Council.

Local press reported on more than one occasion, just this summer, "as the summer arrived, the situation was repeated elsewhere. In neighbouring Tankerton a **leak from a sewage treatment works** prompted warnings for swimmers, while **nine beaches** along out north coast and south east coast urged swimmers not to enter

the water after sewage was released following storms. It stretched from Leysdown and Sheerness on Sheppey to Herne Bay, Whitstable to Folkestone, Hythe and Dymchurch. One month later, in September, a similar warning was **in place in Thanet**.

It did the county's tourism reputation no favours and prompted an angry backlash against the **water companies responsible** from local residents. Do you not consider it more of a priority to find a solution to this continuing blight rather than just to ramp it up with further development? When do these water companies have to take their responsibilities seriously and make adequate provision to meet your existing demands not alone anything for the future? Seems they get a bad press write up, say sorry it was extreme weather, and move on. The poor workers at ground level take the flack from irate and rude people who do not want to tolerate this abuse of our coastlines. Gardens in areas local to Brooklands Farm already flood with rainwater in these new extreme weather conditions. Extreme weather seems to be the world's way forward now so maybe additional development in supporting services to sustain this ought to become more paramount?

Future water provision

With all the additional housing in Whitstable now, aside from any new developments you consider, can I ask where the higher demand for clean water provision will come from? The reservoir recently reignited in Tyler Hill has been discussed since my uncle and aunt living in Calais Hill retired some 35 years ago. They moved at that time because it was always going to happen, they'd turn in their graves now knowing it's only just been bought back to the table and who knows whether it will or can ever happen. Southern Water and yourselves made them live anxiously for over 10 years at their prized bungalow in Calais Hill. So much so eventually they moved away, driving by on occasion wondering what all the fuss had been about. They could have stayed from their first day newly married until their deaths had it not been hanging over them. It saddens me greatly.

New homes should run on less water is what the developers say but do we / can we believe that? If this is the case, why can investment not be made in existing housing to help everyone? The type of houses and facilities they will build will just drain already short supplies and we'll all be living in the misery of reduced supplies and uncertainty.

Supporting Services

We are lucky with the schools available in Whitstable, but they cannot be expected to increase numbers within their existing facilities for the "family home" influx. This is stretched for what is already being built, not alone for further future developments.

When my son was at Swalecliffe School recently they had to build a further classroom and do four form entry to support the growing numbers. Furthermore, The Whitstable School for local children and local learning has been at full capacity with a waiting list over the last few years and has had to make difficult decisions on annual intakes. The facilities at both can only be stretched so far to maintain the high standards we have experienced in the past and expect for our children in the smaller areas we decided to live in.

I'd question whether we really need to sacrifice land for a school that we all know will never be built. The majority of developments have all got the go ahead and then the building goes ahead and facilities and promises, which are subject to the planning being granted, are not fulfilled as it's cheaper for the builders to just pay a fine and whack up more houses rather than service any community they walk all over. It is despicable but they are not held accountable.

Whilst I appreciate, we are lucky to have such a great service at Estuary View Medical Centre with supporting branches at Chestfield Medical Centre and Harbour Street, but have you tried getting a doctor's appointment recently? There are far too many people chasing far too few appointments. Are these new developments only going to be sold to people who don't need a doctor or can go out of area?

Likewise, have you tried to get an NHS dentist in this area recently? Don't bother, there is no capacity or space. Appointments at the local dentists are months in advance or you pay an emergency fee to be seen quickly when things have gone passed the point of acceptable and you'll do whatever you need to for treatment. Are these new developments only going to be sold to people who don't use a dentist or can go out of area?

Prospect Retail Park which houses Home Bargains, M & S, Aldi, Pets at Home and Halfords is packed with people throughout the day with parking a premium at times and queues of traffic at the lights. With all these people and, all of those queuing down Borstal Hill for entry to Whitstable are we not already overcome and overwhelmed? The car parks in the town are regularly packed with queuing each weekend and throughout the summer. Whitstable High Street cannot even cope with these streams of constant traffic tearing the soul out of our beautiful town. This doesn't even take in to account the hoards that arrive by train! Whitstable is not a place for local people at times as we are brushed aside by the people saying, "oh look how quaint, how lovely, must eat here or there". Have you ever tried Whitstable High Street and Harbour Street with a pushchair or wheelchair? It's a nightmare, Whitstable is already overly crammed and struggling. Bus drivers must dread the ride down into Whitstable and through the busy roads, late buses, obstructions from people stopping vehicles quickly etc to "nip in".

We've had a few new supermarkets in the area over the last couple of years so shouldn't grumble, but queues form to access these car parks and facilities. Do we really want them profiting from further huge developments? Locally their messages seem to be to encourage local communities and support us, clearly profit has a bearing too, but, at the moment, it all seems doable. You see regular faces and have a sense that you are a good customer in both local and national shops and services in Whitstable, let's not flood the markets and lose that special feeling. Whitstable town's shops need help from locals using them, the individual butchers, bakers, greengrocers and other shops, let's not turn Whitstable into an out-of-town shopping mall, like so many other places which lose their identity.

From a recent experience with a friend, mental health services and provision are stretched to the optimum and whilst they are doing a great job where they can, where they have capacity all of these issues (pollutions, additional traffic and noise, limited open space, inaccessible beaches, overcrowding) around new developments will only increase their workloads. Can we stretch services and provisions like this any further developments?

Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay are losing their identities to become one great concrete blot on the landscape. All our open and green spaces, woodlands, parks and coastal spaces are becoming victims of their own success and seem to be sold to the highest bidders, usually nationwide developers with no soul. Please keep our district as it was intended when I first moved across in 1977 and thought Canterbury Cathedral from my bedroom window was a fairy princess castle!

In conclusion, it seems Canterbury City Council have not met their quota on housing for the future and are deemed to be in special measures they have haphazardly now grabbed any open space and determined too many houses will be put there. No forward planning or thinking, despite the Local Plan which by the time it's made it to hard copy for us to have an opinion on is sadly already the given. At times like this it's hard to believe the Council works for the people it serves. You've lost your power to complain and object at any higher levels therefore letting us all down.

Canterbury City Council needs to remember it serves the local communities within its district and should work with them. We are just left with a feeling of betrayal as the highest bidder will get the deal and we'll just have to learn to live with unacceptable new developments. Sadly, the pound is stronger than the word of Canterbury City Council's people. When approached Council Leader and Councillor Ben Fitter-Harding said tough luck. Thanks.

In summary and noted in full above, my objections to this development and others in the Whitstable, Chestfield, Swalecliffe areas are:

- Loss of yet more agricultural farmland, no more local crops or cattle.
- Loss of our green landscape forever – we're becoming a concrete and brick jungle, what future does that offer future generations?
- Years of building work, noise and air pollution, traffic and heavy goods vehicles driving down unsuitable roads.
- Increased traffic pollution during the build. Ongoing pollution for every house built with insufficient parking provision in the future. South Street will be impassable. Access to Canterbury thwarted.
- Further local flooding risks
- Lack of proper sewage provision
- Future water provision
- Access to sites and then housing and businesses on an already fragile infrastructure.
- Impact on supporting services
- Empty promises from our Council and future developers.

I will follow progress and hope that this objection will be heard fairly and that I will be kept informed along the way.

Regards

Carolyn Dobbie