

Cllr. Dean Barrow, Cllr. Tony McCollum
East Devon District Council Offices
Blackdown House
Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
Honiton
EX14 1EJ

Thursday 12th January 2023

Dear Councillor,

Objection to the proposed development at Middle Northcote Farm, Honiton

I am writing to you as I am not able to access the Commonplace Consultation website to comment on the following land development as part of the EDDC Local Plan;

Settlement: Honiton

Site reference number: GH/ED/39 Site

Address: Land South of Northcote Hill, Honiton

We are residents of The Orchard, Otter Valley Park whose property directly adjoins the boundary of Middle Northcote Farm. As a couple in our late 60's we relocated from Feniton 3.5 years ago, drawn to the exclusivity of an over 50's site by the security and peace of mind that it offers. We believe that the council's support of zoning the adjoining land for residential development undermines the investment of the Otter Valley Park residents and puts at risk a vulnerable demographic.

It is our understanding that the plans for residential development on this land are advanced, with Taylor Wimpey already advertising the proposed development of circa 115 new homes on their website. The sincerity of a consultation with residents at such an advanced stage is therefore questionable.

We are concerned that the proposed development within 5m of our property would result in the loss of privacy and reduced security. We are a single-story building at a ground level of 125m ASL, with the adjoining land on Middle Northcote Farm of the same land height. Development plans show two storey plus homes adjacent to ours which would directly look down onto our property. Such proposals would restrict line of sight and reduce light into our property due to the varying levels of property height.

Currently the two pieces of land are separated by a scarce low hedge line resulting in direct views onto the adjoining fields and into our garden area. As the land is currently used for farming and Tunnel Lane is set back from the boundary, security is currently of an acceptable level. Development of the adjoining land with no secure separation between the two properties (fences or walls) jeopardises the security of our home and the wider site itself. Residents are restricted by Oak Tree Park as to additional security we can implement around our properties e.g the use of fences or walls is not allowed, preventing us from reducing the increased security risk.

The site itself has an open access, it is not secured by gates or barriers raising concerns that anyone would be able to pass through the site. As we are currently isolated this is not an issue as there is limited traffic passing by the site.

We acknowledge that the developers advertise the inclusion of 'mature planting along the site boundary here to protect the amenity' however there's currently insufficient detail or evidence to confirm the security of the site and our property. As a minimum planting would need to include oversized trees and bushes to give immediate results. On its own we do not believe this to be sufficient in securing the site and question what else can be done.

Agricultural land provides a natural soak away for adverse weather conditions. The development of such land will see the use of concrete and tarmac impacting the effectiveness of this natural soak away. We have concerns that such water will need to find a new source of drainage and flow into the site causing excessive surface water and potential flooding. As a single-story property this could severely damage or destroy our home.

Fire is one of the biggest risks for the total loss of a park home and can threaten the life of residents. As homeowners of such property, we are aware of the fire related risks and clear on the associated responsibilities that we have for our community. Open fires (fire pits and barbeques) provide a severe risk to loss of life. Grass and other vegetation are to be cut at frequent intervals to prevent them from becoming a fire hazard. Although a positive for privacy and security, the proposal for mature planting along the site boundary contradicts guidelines and would increase the risk of fire to the site. We are concerned that homeowners of the new development will not be aware of such risks which could endanger the lives of residents. What will be done to ensure the safety standards of our site and our homes are maintained?

The proposal for circa 115 new homes could easily add 230 people to the local area, if not more. As a vulnerable demographic access to utilities like the emergency services (doctors, hospitals and ambulances) is important. With the high risk of fire to our homes ensuring there is adequate access to the fire service is imperative. We are concerned that the increase in local population could overstretch these local utilities if there is no new investment by the council. We are not aware of any proposals to invest in such utilities and propose that this is taken into consideration as part of the local plan should the development progress.

We have concerns surrounding the volume of cars needing to utilise the existing road infrastructure and whether it can accommodate such demand. Current data shows that households in the South West had the highest rate of car ownership, with an average of 1.45 cars per household. Based on circa 115 new homes this would provide an additional 167.9 cars to the local area. Access to both Otter Valley Park and the new development would be via Northcote Hill and Tunnel Lane. Currently both roads are narrow, single file roads with minimal passing points for oncoming traffic. These roads also double up as pedestrian walkways (snip below for reference). There are no streetlights present along these roads resulting in reduced visibility and an increased risk of serious injury/accident.



The main route from Northcote Hill leading to the High Street and the A35 is via Monkton Road. The junction as indicated on the map below is a very busy junction and difficult to navigate especially at peak times with traffic exiting the A35 and traffic coming from the High Street and Kings Road. We have concerns regarding the accessibility of the main route into the site with the increase in cars as a result of the development.



There are currently no parking restrictions on Monkton Road which means that cars park along here reducing a two way road to a single use road. The increase in traffic volume is going to contribute further to the accessibility issues of the access road to the site. As mentioned earlier in my letter, the risk of fire to our homes is high and there is a requirement to ensure that emergency vehicles can access the site. This could prove problematic with the increased volume of traffic through this area.



We strongly believe that the planned development of the adjacent land is over-bearing and out of character in terms of it's appearance compared with existing infrastructure in the vicinity. The negative effect on the character of the neighbourhood, possible noise and disturbance due to the increased population of the local community are important considerations when finalising the local plan.

We thank you for considering the points detailed in this letter.

Yours Sincerely

Jan and Graham Sanders

