Planning Inspector 8.07.2023

I have lived in Uckfield for 43 years and I first started walking my dog in Downlands in 1984. The houses in Downland Copse had not been built and it was a quick walk across the field to get into the top field at Downlands. I walked there for quite a while until I discovered a gap in the hedge urging me to have a peep through. I can still remember my awe all these years later when I emerged from the hedge on a beautiful summers day and found myself in what I thought was fairyland. The sky was blue and cloudless, I had stepped into a large field full of waist high meadow grass with butterflies and the hum of bees, the birds were singing and the field was surrounded by the most magnificent trees. I cautiously looked around for signs of horses, cows or sheep but it seemed there were none so I decided to walk around the perimeter and if anyone should come out and shout at me for trespassing I would apologise and beat a hasty retreat. Nobody did and I continued to investigate several other fields which were adjoining and these became one of my most favourite walks, simply because, in those days, I met no-one else and in all the years I have walked there I have never met anyone who has told me I may not walk there. It is an absolute haven for the wildlife, birds, insects, vertebrates, foxes, badgers, hedgehogs and deer who have lived here forever & a refuge for others who are being driven from other habitats by the increase in housebuilding. From here one can access Lake Wood owned by The Woodland Trust, another jewel in Uckfield's crown, also walk to the Maresfield Conservation Area and onward to Park Wood, another wonderful piece of woodland in our area. All this would be lost if the proposed development went ahead but besides the ecological value of this site Uckfield does not have the infrastructure for so many more people and cars. The town has been inundated with new housing in the last couple of years and is still being targeted for many more. Planning permission has already been granted for 1000 houses at Ridgewood Place, at the southern end of the town. Only a small number of these houses have been built and already the residents are unable to access doctors, NHS dentistry is unavailable in the town, and one primary school has closed. Water and sewage are becoming a huge problem. The water companies are in crisis and have been criminally negligent in their lack of foresight to provide us with the amount of water required. The sewage system is overloaded shown by the amount of effluent discharged into rivers and the sea. On top of all this there seems to be no existing plans for new reservoirs or desalination plants which is surely imperative due to climate change. Climate change has been known about for a good number of years and steps should have been taken years ago to address these issues which we know are coming. We just can't go on pretending that all the problems will go away – they need to be addressed before anymore housing plans are approved.

Furthermore, we have a high street that does not suit the needs of an expanding population. We do not need so many cafes, restaurants and fast food outlets & charity shops, what we do need is shops that sell clothes and the household items that are needed. It is difficult to envisage any extension here which will be constrained by the location of the river and secondly the railway line thus limiting any further expansion of the town.

Also more houses mean more cars, probably double the number of houses. There is nowhere near enough parking now in Uckfield. The roads are frequently grid-locked especially at school dropping off and collecting times. Every possible space in adjoining roads is taken up by parked cars making driving difficult and parking impossible should you wish to. People travelling to London for work by train leave their cars in any of the surrounding roads as there is not enough parking for them at the station. The two supermarkets do not have enough parking spaces, especially on Bank holidays and Christmas when queuing to get in or out is the only way and there is no room for expansion for either of these. Our High Street is not wide and with not much rear access to the shops, large delivery vehicles stop outside the shops all the way along the street causing traffic blockages. The Bellbrook Trading Estate is a traffic hazard every day with cars parked both sides along the length and barely any room for clients to park. Every residential road is a parking nightmare so to introduce another 800

odd cars all seeking parking spaces whilst they pick up their shopping or have their hair cut would be madness. We, as residents, are dreading the completion of the next phases of Ridgewood farm knowing that will just bring more parking and associated problems.

Traffic on Uckfield by-pass is constant throughout the day and will be heavier when the new roundabout at Ridgewood is open so to allow another roundabout at the other end of the by-pass would be hazardous, not to mention the extra miles residents would have to travel to get to the town where there is no room to park when they get there.

Referring to the developer's plans I see there is a proposed car park, the entrance to which is in Snatts Road. I was under the impression that no further access to Snatts Road would be approved as it is already an extremely dangerous road. It has now become a short cut for drivers wishing to go to Buxted & Heathfield from the Haywards Heath area and for others wishing to access Piltdown & Haywards Heath from Crowborough, also residents of Church Coombe & Rocks Park areas of Uckfield. Although there is a speed limit on part of the road,

this is rarely adhered to and for pedestrians it can be downright dangerous since there is no footpath along the more rural part. A further danger is the parked cars especially on the corner at Ringles Cross, but there are literally cars parked all along the length of Snatts Road everyday. It was, when I first came here, a lovely leafy pleasant country lane but now it is just a rat race. To have more cars turning in and out of a car park in this road would be foolhardy to say the least.

Furthermore I see there is a suggestion of a footpath and cycle track which leaves the site and has an access into Rocks Road/Snatts Road right on the part which is narrow, a corner and most dangerous. This is another risky road and cyclists would have to take their life in their hands to enter the road here and for pedestrians there is no footpath up Snatts Road or along Rocks Road unless they can cross this very hazardous road.

Lastly, from an ecological point of view, this area has remained fallow for all the time I have lived here and maybe for years previously so is home to an exceedingly wide variety of plants and animals that have evolved over the years. I am sure others more highly qualified have written in great detail about the damage that would be done to this beautiful place if this proposal were to go ahead. The plants and eco system would be destroyed and animals would have to move elsewhere to an ever decreasing slice of our countryside. Deer in particular, causing accidents on the roads and badgers, foxes and hedgehogs being killed as they try to access somewhere safe.

In addition to the 1,000 houses at Ridgewood, another 208 elsewhere have already been approved with another 370 applied for and potential for many more so please, please, do not allow this development to go ahead as our town just does not have the facilities for so many more people and cars at the present time and this particular proposal cannot in any way be classed as an asset to the community.

Yours faithfully,

**For official use only (date received): 11/07/2023 15:12:06**

# The Planning Inspectorate

## COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

## Appeal Reference: APP/C1435/W/23/3321978

### DETAILS OF THE CASE

| | |
|---|---|
| Appeal Reference | APP/C1435/W/23/3321978 |
| Appeal By | GLEESON LAND AND JOHN ALISON LAND AND RESEARCH LTD |
| Site Address | Land at Downlands Farm<br>Uckfield<br>TN22 3PU<br>Grid Ref Easting: 546619<br>Grid Ref Northing: 122026 |

### SENDER DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| Name | [redacted] |
| Address | [redacted] |

### ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☑ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☑ Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- ☐ Other

## COMMENT DOCUMENTS

**The documents listed below were uploaded with this form:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Relates to Section:** | REPRESENTATION |
| **Document Description:** | Your comments on the appeal. |
| **File name:** | Appeal.Planning Inspector08.07.2023.docx |

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