For official use only (date received): 11/07/2023 21:13:41

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 Uckfield TN22 3PU Grid Ref Easting: 546619 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

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

Before now, I had not taken an interest in local planning meetings. Yet attending my first one in April of this year to show my support against the building of these 424 houses on Downlands Farm was a revelation. The number of local people who attended to voice their disbelief that this plan had been proposed was staggering. The strength of feeling and eloquence in their arguments against the proposal showed a strong sense of community. I felt there was, and still is, the strong feeling that this proposal would be against the interests of the local communities of Uckfield and Maresfield.
First, our green spaces in the South East are being eroded with new housing developments. Uckfield alone has Harlands Park and Ridegwood Place currently being built with potentially Horsted Pond development as well. These total hundreds of home being or are yet to be built already. Not enough brown sites are being utilised to build new homes, the easy answer for developers to buy farmland and pave over it. Downlands Farm and Lake Wood, owned by the Woodlands Trust, next door are areas of special outstanding natural beauty and are examples of internationally important geodiversity. These areas are needed by the existing communities as green spaces to walk, appreciate the local wildlife and preserve the character of our semi-rural town. It was a haven during Lockdown and provides a space which continues to support hundreds of people's well being by having access to nature and open space. Also, building these housing estates in every space available will devastate the local wildlife and destroy connecting nature corridors. The ancient woodland which surrounds the Downlands Farm area would be blighted by building work, dust of materials blowing into the woods and damage will be caused by the wear and tear of a building site and machinery - even if there are good intentions to protect it with a proposed SANG's area. Not only this but the location of this site is close to the Maresfield Conservation Area and close to the Ashdown Forest. If we allow this proposal to go ahead, please consider the irreparable damage that will be caused not by building the homes alone but all the extra roundabouts and roadworks needed to make this space accessible around the outside of the proposed site - for example, on the A22 Uckfield bypass.
Secondly, we must think about the local amenities. Sadly, a local Primary School is closing this Summer. With one less Primary school there will be more pressure for school places for the new residents at both Primary and Secondary level. The local college is increasingly popular but does not have endless capacity. This would encourage these families to educate their children elsewhere and cause this estate to be fractured away from the Uckfield community as they go elsewhere for education and jobs. This point was bought up at the Council meeting and was considered very important.
Currently, we have only two large supermarkets and Uckfield High Street has appalling traffic. The congestion is terrible in the morning and afternoons at peak commuting time. Another housing estate will only add cars and further problems for the commuters and local residence in the High Street and on the A22 By Pass. All our dentists have turned private in the area. There are two doctors surgeries under immense strain. By adding further numbers to these services - with the new housing estates previously mentioned being built and the proposed Downlands Farm - it will continue to add significant strain to our local services making it even more difficult to book appointments and look after our young families and aging population within the town. Uckfield needs a significant boost to these public services before we add even more families and people who will struggle with the rest of us to get medical help.
Water, plumbing, electricity supply - all essential services for the new estate. Has there been consideration or extra planning taken place by the companies that supply these to help meet the needs of both the building company and the new residents?
Finally, the area of the Downland Farm and Lake Wood hold a significant place for our family as we have been residents since 1992, with extended family and friends who live locally who also enjoy the area for its beauty and special nature. I have fond memories of running through the rhododendron trees and over the rocks when I was younger - remnants of when Lake Wood was part of the Streatfield Estate which has parts of it dating back to 1750. The woods remain a part of our local history. We must act as responsible caretakers of the nature around us too. We must look to pass on the natural environment we have been so fortunate to grow up in and have enjoyed to the next generation, allowing it to be accessible and protected in years to come. Please listen to all those who have given their opinion and have shown that they care deeply that we preserve and say 'No' to the development of Downlands Farm.