The Planning Inspector
Appeal Reference APP/C1435/W/23/3321978

11 July 2023

Dear Inspector

The evidence I submitted for the original application still stands but having undertaken more research, I would wish to put forward a number of additional concerns. These relate to the unsustainability of the site covering the proposed SANG and impact from additional traffic and the impact of the likely choice of car over walking and cycling.. In the second part I cover concerns relating to harm to ancient woodland and impact on the landscape.

The SANG
The proposed SANG and Woodland Car Park entrance and exit is shown as being inappropriately located in Snatts Road. The provision of a car park to access the SANG will encourage unsustainable use of the car and further footfall to the Woodland Trust's Lake Wood. Currently, access to Downlands Farm and Lake Wood is largely by walking from the local community due to the limited parking on the surrounding road infrastructure. Additionally, I have concerns around access through Snatts Road.

Snatts Road can be divided into 2 sections: Rocks Road T junction to Snatts house (on the right) and from Snatts to the London Road T-junction. The first section is a narrow and winding rural lane heavily wooded with rock outcrops lining the sides as you drive away from the Rocks Road T-junction. The road encourages people to drive - often at speed as the speed limit is 60 - towards the centre of the road thus making it hazardous for oncoming traffic.

The next section is from Snatts to the London Road T junction. The character of the road changes at this point and you find numerous parked cars (for approximately 1/4 mile) essentially rendering the road single track in places, which makes progress along the road hazardous and often stop-start due to waiting to give way to queuing cars. Driving From London Road end the section of parked cars in the left hand side restricts visibility of the oncoming traffic as it is also on a left hand bend.

The T junctions at either end of Snatts Road both have very restricted visibility. It is noted that no traffic movements and their impact on the road junctions at either end of Snatts Road have been included. The Ringles Cross junction with London Road is an accident black spot due to poor visibility from both the road bend and the on street parking serving the row of cottages next to the Ringles Cross pub. It is also a known high risk flood area. The junction at the Rocks Road end has limited visibility in both directions..

The proposed sustainable transport link that would be created by demolishing Chicory Cottage and taking a pathway through ancient woodland, drops to the junction of Snatts Road and Rocks Road. Aside from the inevitable damage to the ancient woodland, even with the amount of earth and rock (including the historic sandstone rock outcrops) that the applicant suggests removing, the visibility when crossing the road will be very poor. The pavement on the opposite side (towards the gated Lake Wood entrance) quickly diminishes to nothing at all.

Once the car park is full, this will encourage on street parking both on Snatts Road and Rocks Road. There is limited parking on Rocks Road used to access Lake Wood. Unfortunately, the road at this point is straight which encourages speeding. As there is no footway along the side of the road (see Figure 1, below), increased traffic and pedestrians - some with dogs - along this section is of great concern.

Residents on Snatts and Rocks Road as well as those in Shortbridge and Piltdown will be affected by increased volume and traffic noise by those who will be encouraged to travel to and from the SANG carpark. (The Little Horsted SANG car park has increased traffic volume along the Horsted Lane reportedly by 7000 car movements a month in total: - 3,500 in and 3,500 out).



Fig 1 Looking from the Lake Wood entrance along Rocks Road towards Uckfield.

I read with interest about encouraging cycling and walking - the provision of a car park encourages exactly the opposite. The SUSTRANS report **East Sussex Cycling and Walking Strategy Uckfield LCWIP June 2018** outlines the challenges in

encouraging walking and cycling largely hindered as a result of the unsuitable road network - overhanging trees, narrow foot ways - all which make our rural community unique - as well as the requirement for roads in 30 mph zones with over 5,000 traffic movements per day to have cycle tracks at a minimum of 3m width. Uckfield is located on a hill and the surrounding landscape is hilly.. Only the fittest individuals and families will attempt accessing the town by bicycle during the dryer and lighter summer months - provided there is provision for cycle parking - reverting to car use for the rest of the year. This will consequently make the proposed development - which will house a minimum of 1000 more people and possibly up to 800 cars - unsustainable and car dependent.

An additional concern relates to the proposed access through the woodland from the site to the A22 Uckfield bypass. The emergency exit close to the Copwood Roundabout end may encourage site residents to attempt to cross the bypass in order to access the MacDonalds and convenience store at the services instead of taking the inconvenient drive along.

Transport links
The site would not be served by any useful public transport - the nearest train is Uckfield 1.5 miles and Buxted 2.5 miles. With parking at both stations limited and trains just one per hour it is likely that occupants will drive to Haywards Heath thus adding more congestion to the already crowded roads.

Increasingly, Uckfield town centre is becoming congested for longer periods at peak hours with London Road and the bypass stacking up towards the roundabouts.

Particularly difficult is exiting to the London Road from the nearby A272 (Budletts Lane) which, not just at peak times, stacks up to three quarters of the distance of the lane. The proximity of the proposed Downlands Farm development will increase the traffic exiting from the Budletts Roundabout up through London Road thus making exiting the junction even more difficult and dangerous.

Further, I have concerns relating to harm to ancient woodland and the heritage landscape
The planning documents show that the proposed new roundabout and emergency access road will cut through 3 sections of ancient woodland. The ancient woodland has qualifying ground flora along the whole length of the proposed site, and local map evidence showing that the area has been continually wooded since the 1600s. Both determinants of which afford protection according to NPPF 180c

View from Ashdown Forest
Unfortunately, being high on a ridge the site will be visible from both Maresfield Conservation Area and The Ashdown Forest AONB thus spoiling the scenic landscape and scenic beauty of the area which is against the NPPF.

Finally, I am concerned that developments such as the proposed Downlands Farm are gradually eroding the rural feel of the location. Replacing the wonderful places that people explore and wander through that are so good for our mental health, in favour of housing developments that contain SANGS full of carpentered paths, that go round in large uninspiring circles.

Thank you for considering my objection.
Kind regards

[redacted]

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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.

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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

COMMENT DOCUMENTS

The documents listed below were uploaded with this form:

Relates to Section: REPRESENTATION
Document Description: Your comments on the appeal.
File name: Objection.docx.pdf

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