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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.

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

My husband and I wish to lodge an objection to the above appeal case. We have lived in this area of North Uckfield for over 35 years and have enjoyed walking in Downlands Farm and Lake Wood. The area has been very important and special to us and our family as an open space offering a beautiful landscape and countryside. We value the views of Ashdown Forest and the neighbouring conservation areas, all providing a tranquil place of peace and calm in an ever increasing busy and stressful world. The site is of historical importance being part of the Streatfield Estate, with a carriage drive dating from the 1790s from Lake Wood to Malling Budletts.

The proposed development would bring yet more traffic to an already unsafe road system. Snatts Road with its series of sharp turns and bends is a dangerous stretch of road. We have experienced several near misses on the road where speed and volume of traffic has played a significant part. Increasing traffic in this area would have a major impact on safety and would increase the volume of traffic in the town. It already, on occasions, can take 15-20 minutes to drive from the north of Uckfield to the south of the town. We also consider the cycle and pedestrian access to Snatts Road proposed by the developer to be exceptionally unsafe and therefore unacceptable. Equally, there is no clear indication of any public transport strategy for the scheme. The general over development in Uckfield is already impacting negatively on Uckfield and Maresfield due to increased traffic from new developments and an increasing population. The bypass regularly has long delays and this will increase if this development is approved. We are concerned that further access at any point along the bypass will give rise to further delays and accidents. The proposed new roundabout and access roads for 424 houses will also have an influence on the landscape.

There are serious questions as to whether the necessary infrastructure in Uckfield such as sewage and utilities are sufficiently robust to sustain another development in this part of the town. There are already examples of raw sewage coming up from the drains affecting houses close to the proposed scheme. Similarly, the sewage problems south of the town are well known.

There are no actions which could be taken by the developers if the proposal is approved which would protect and safeguard the biodiversity of this internationally important habitat. Protecting the wildlife and abundant endangered species in this area should be paramount in our priorities. Unless protected the harm to the wildlife corridor between Lake Wood and Views Wood via Downlands Farm to Budletts Common and Buxted would be immense and permanent. Allowing the building of 424 houses will harm and destroy existing ancient woodlands and the rare peat fed lake, resulting in the loss of irreplaceable habitats. The ancient ghyll woodland, rare wet woodland and Mesolithic outcrops would all be lost. There are over 100 species of of birds, including skylarks, hawfinch, woodpeckers and curlews, as well as 14 species of dragonfly and 150 different moths and butterflies. This precious habitat is home to endangered hazel door mice, bats, rare invertebrates, reptiles, grass snakes, lizards, adders, amphibians, frogs, newts and toads.

We feel this development, if approved, will result in the destruction forever of this very special woodland that is enjoyed and loved by so many. It would undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on the mental well being and quality of life of those adults and children who take so much pleasure from it. We believe North Uckfield should be a Local Nature Recovery Strategy area with internationally important habitats protecting our wildlife and abundant endangered species. We strongly urge that this appeal be turned down and the area protected in perpetuity.

The decision by our councils to refuse the developers application was arrived at following a proper and thorough democratic process, seeking the views of residents, interested and knowledgeable charitable organisations alongside Wealden District and Uckfield Town Councils. We feel the Council decision should be upheld.

It is disappointing that by lodging their appeal to the Secretary of State, the developers are demonstrating little regard for the intrinsic value of the environmental importance of this site. Downlands Farm site is worthy of SSSI status for its irreplaceable heritage landscape, ancient woodlands, priority habitats and endangered species.

We feel the site is unique and should be protected from such developments forever and would urge the appeal be turned down .