Appeal Reference: APP/C1435/W/21/3272380
Appeal By: Rydon Homes Ltd
Site Address: Land off South Street, BN8 6DS

Local Planning Authority: Wealden District Council

**1.** In the Appellant’s Statement of Case, August 16th, 2021, (the points 5.2 to 5.6 and this theme continues off and on throughout the 28 page document) are about the stables on the land, the frontage, the Heritage Assets, the Heritage Consultant, Park Lodge and the conflicts between these elements and the Applicants arguments are the main reason to give permission for this development. No mention is made of the character that the stables will make to the development - which plenty of objections from residents in the village of East Hoathly made in their comments. Thankfully, the stables are being kept but because bats roost in them.

The Appellant states that: “The issue in the current appeal therefore is limited to the view of the stable building and Park Lodge along South Street.”

What the Appellant does not mention here, is that many residents of East Hoathly also would like the view of the fabulous Circle of Oaks (which has a Tree Preservation Order on the group of these trees) to be retained while walking by / driving by and not to be obscured by new homes placed in front of it.

**2.** The Appellant’s point 5.9 states: “Wealden District Council are unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land.” …….. so therefore, the Applicant concludes: “The contribution from this development proposal towards meeting the need for housing should carry significant weight.”

This is untrue. They have well over a 5YHLS if they take into account the amount of planning permissions they have approved, but have not yet built. Recently, in fact, a group of Sussex MPs visited Westminster to present and argue this point as a way to ask for less housing numbers for their areas.

“Maria Caulfield and other MPs in making representation to government that the 7,500 homes in Wealden that have been given planning permission should be allowed to count towards the five-year housing supply numbers, as they don’t currently.” from the, Save Wealden from Over Development Team, Facebook posts

**3.** Affordable housing element. The Applicant states they will deliver 10 affordable homes. How can the community be guaranteed these 10? How can the community be guaranteed these will be affordable?

East Hoathly’s Community Land Trust identified the need for genuinely affordable housing for the community in the Housing Needs Survey it commissioned which is available to read (<https://www.facebook.com/EHHCLT>). 21 East Hoathly families are in need of genuine affordable homes – they could be accommodated on this site. Donation of land to the CLT would be a true benefit.

**4.** Natural environment and improving biodiversity. The Applicant states they will enhance the natural environment by improving the biodiversity, but in fact, the destruction of the green field will destroy the biodiversity that already exists. The Green Gap on South Street provides a corridor of access linking the wildlife of the Ancient Woodland to the West in Moat Wood to the open countryside to the East and South of the Village. If the land is developed it would close this corridor and isolate this wildlife. This is important because the wildlife in Moat Wood and its surrounding areas is enclosed to the East by the significant barrier of the A22. The Green Gap on South Street is the only connection that wildlife has to the open countryside to the East. It will take a number of years for the natural environment to return, if indeed it ever does.

**5.** In section 5.14, the Appellant mentions the increase in Council Tax contributions from these new homes contributing to Local Government services across Wealden District. With the debt that the District finds itself in, and the cutbacks it faces, this is a dream, is it not?

Wealden District Council itself admits that this development is only a “modest boost to the housing land supply”. From its own Officer’s Report, March 2nd, 2021.

**6.** On page 27, in the Social section of the Appellant’s argument for this development, they argue how positive it will be for East Hoathly, we would equally like to argue, that any new development in the Village of East Hoathly, will help to dilute this Village. The larger it becomes the unhealthier it will become and the less cohesive it will also become.

There is no mention of the Primary School being almost full to capacity. Most primary school children in any new development in East Hoathly will have to go to other schools out of the Village and be driven to other areas. The Officer’s Report for this Planning Application pointed this out numerous times. Here is one example: “Extra homes in Wealden will put pressure on local roads and schools.”

Wealden District Council in its Decision Notice of 2nd March 2021, says: “It is

considered that overall the identified harm outweighs the benefits and that the proposal would not represent sustainable development under the NPPF.”

**7.** Nothing is mentioned of the issue that East Hoathly will have with the Sewage if any new houses are built in the Village, including these 28, as the Sewage plant is running at capacity already.

The Village main sewer service pipe runs across the site. Relocating this pipe would have serious implications for the village and the disruption and proposed new route should be the matter of a detailed report. The Drainage ditch to the east of the site removes a significant amount of surface water from the surrounding fields into the stream flowing south towards the Sewage Plant. The urbanisation of the Juziers and Mews developments have added to the amount of run off into this watercourse. The use of attenuation ponds does nothing to limit the amount of water that the watercourse eventually has to carry. Further development in this area is likely to cause a flood risk for this watercourse. Flooding of the adjacent fields may not be a significant problem but flooding at the Sewage Plant is of considerable concern. Previous developers of the Mews and Juziers paid no attention to this risk and it appears that this Developer is also careless about the cumulative effect of such urban run off. A secondary issue with urban run off is that it is contaminated by fuel, road spillages, cleaning materials, household detritus and domestic garden products. All of this contaminates the watercourses and damages the environment. The effect of one development may be small but the cumulative effect is significant and does not support the NPPF requirements to protect the environment.

Surface Water will drain from adjacent houses and the recent Juziers Drive development across this site. This water and from 28 houses on this site will flow towards the sewage works along with water from the proposed site for 55 houses. There is a potential risk of flooding including flooding of the sewage works.

This is one of three developments threatening to ruin this Village.

**8.** The Appellant’s concluding paragraph – 5.20 – says they could repair the stables. However, if the stable building became an Asset for Community Value, the Village could halt its decline. If the landowner and developer together gave the land to the Village’s Community Land Trust, then the Village could have genuinely affordable homes for the Community.

**9.** Where is the guarantee of the new homes being “new energy-efficient buildings” as the Appellant has said on page 28?

With the current climate emergency, locally, nationally and internationally, we are very concerned that any new home built is a zero bills one. Merely having electric vehicle points for a car is not enough. New residents would be completely car dependent for employment, education, shopping and leisure.

**10.** Infrastructure. East Hoathly is a small village with an infrastructure that is gradually being eroded (reductions in Bus services, reduced GP Surgery access, loss of pub).  About fifteen years ago it had a disproportionately large development of 75 homes and cannot sustain more.

However, now 55 new homes have been given permission to build under Appeal. 205 new homes have been approved by the Planning Committee though that application is currently under Judicial Review. So the Village is currently threatened by well over 288 new homes if one includes these, in this Appeal, without any concrete plans for any new or renewed infrastructure, which is desperately needed.

**11.** Wealden’s Local Plan may have failed but that does not mean Landowners and Developers should be allowed to take advantage and ruin the environment, build low standard new homes without conforming to renewable energy, destroy villages ……… and ultimately people’s lives. There is no need for these new homes, only the 21 genuinely affordable homes that the very recent Housing Needs Survey uncovered.

The Appellant’s Statement of Case is very narrowly defined.

Ten previous applications on this site have been refused because it would destroy the green Gap, which is so important to the character of the village and the entrance to the village.

We ask you to reject this Appeal and refuse this Planning Application so the Village of East Hoathly has some respite from these unwarranted attacks.