

Please find below my comments and objection to the current submission of Application 2020/62/93954/W 42 houses, Lingards Road .

As I look at the beautiful meadow that abuts my garden and the abundance of wildlife and wild flowers that are currently growing in it, I would like to ask why it is necessary or sensible to turn this space into a housing estate when there are 3 (that I know of) brownfield sites in Slaithwaite that have been waiting for housing developments for many years and nothing has happened with them?

It is not because I am a nimby, but because it seems that the only way to create an economically viable build on this site is to either go totally against the recommended amount of dwellings as outlined in the Local Plan (2015) as in the previous submission, or to go with this plan (still over numbers) and build an estate where the bulk of the houses are around the outer perimeter to create commercially advantageous views over our rooftops, without any consideration for the massive impact on current residents - who have we upset to deserve this we ask ourselves?

Creating Communities

I rarely agree with the words of Michel Gove (Minister for Housing and Communities) but recently he has stated that community resistance to new housing developments may be minimised by involving existing residents as partners - the first rule of change management. We were offered 1:1 meetings (first proposal) with the developer where questions were answered and we have heard nothing about this new plan, which is significantly different. Neither illustrates constructive consultation and adds to our feeling that we are being ignored, in order to create this estate. Surely the aim is to promote and develop a community by creating a cohesive fit with the exiting landscape, environment and properties, as stated in both The Local Plan and The Landscape Impact Assessment. This peripherally prioritised development offers some of the tallest houses I have ever seen, promotes views views views for new residents, whilst removing any rural amenity for existing residents via provision of visual barriers.

Why not 36?

This site still presents 10 dwellings over the local plan recommendation and this must seriously limit flexibility within this estate. We can only assume this is to achieve commercial viability. If the site had 36 dwellings, there would be room for effective green space, maybe a village green, a playground and other features . It would facilitate a safe design which could be embedded rather than elevated, and include local residents rather than seriously impinging on all aspects of their life.

This can be evidenced by the elevation of the houses adjacent to Lingards Road which will obliterate any sense of place, amenity and nature for residents living there and people admiring this rural amenity - many people walk and ride along both Lingards Road and the Colne Valley Way and any view will disappear especially of the listed buildings at Lower Wood Farm. People will have to dodge between the dwellings to get a view if they are lucky.

To suggest in the Design and Heritage plan that it is fine to elevate these houses because people who look from afar will now see this row of new houses instead of the houses on Lingards, does not seem to show any respect for the existing residents. I have yet to find

anyone who thinks this is a great or safe idea or an asset to the environment. Other residents have written length about this and the parking and safety problems that will ensue. We totally agree and do not feel the need to repeat this concern.

Hardcore

Whilst we value some use of green landscaping to reduce the amount of hardcore retaining walls, we do hope this will be adequate for such a steep heavy site as in the examples given, note is made of the use of ABG Webwall® to stabilise “weak or low cohesion soils”. Neither of the examples given are on heavy stone, windy, wet Pennine hillsides. To my untrained eye, the hardcore required to keep this excessive number of huge dwellings standing still appears immense - is building 3 storey houses on platforms in this rural setting the best that can be achieved for residents, the public and the environment and how will this impact on drainage and our risk of flooding.

The forgotten residents of Manchester Road

I still find it very hard to assess the true impact of the development on Manchester Road residents at the bottom of the hill. 3D aerial views have been provided but nothing shows how the estate will look from the bottom of the slope where we live. No one is ever going to see those aerial views unless you are flying back into Manchester Airport.

Little thought continues to be given to Manchester Road dwellings, although we feel we are at greatest risk. Whether to do with being overlooked, or drainage there is a continued theme that this development will not affect us either because we have steep gardens and do not look up or in the case of drainage and flooding that:

“The land to the North all slopes away from the site down to Manchester Road and then down through wooded slopes to the River Colne”

No mention of our houses or the Cemetery in between that will likely be affected by this excessive water flow.

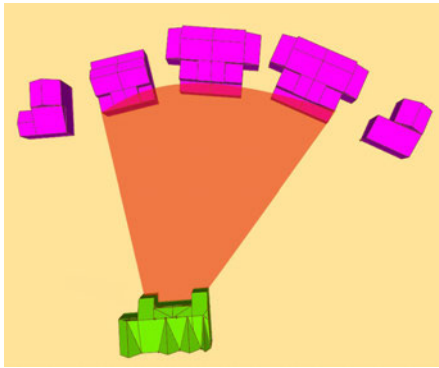
The dominating impact of the dwellings facing Manchester Road residents

Whilst we appreciate a slight design change in the houses above us, there is still little space between the semi detached blocks (4,5,6 and 7) once hard core retaining walls and garages are built. It was actually the height of the properties that was our major concern previously; we suggested 2 storey houses or bungalows but were told people don't want to buy bungalows. Yet this type of property might have provided much needed housing in the area for those with mobility issues who cannot manage 3 flights of stairs and might be willing to forgo a view.

Heights of houses 1 2 and 3 have been reduced slightly but 4, 5, 6 and 7 are actually higher now and these are directly behind us. They are higher than the SB Homes Fire Station flats in Marsden and they are also on a hill above us, not on a piece of flat land. We will see nothing but these huge buildings towering high into the sky, in fact we won't even see the sky .

Detail is shown in the planning as to how each layer of houses will overlook the next to achieve great views. With no mention that it will be at the expense of existing residents having their view, light and amenity taken away. How is this acceptable.- it just is not fair.

Because we live on Manchester Road, which is very noisy, dirty and dangerous, we live at the back of our properties. My kitchen, everyday living room, bathroom and bedroom all face this piece of land .



The final icing on the cake is that these huge houses stand in a lovely curve (see picture) so that the balconies and sliding doors face directly onto our properties (2 green houses) . I have been asked if we are planning to put on theatre performances for the circle seats from their balconies and large bifold windows . This is no joke, these houses will all be so high that they will look over our rooftops and I do not think we can assume people will not look down. It cannot be said that our privacy will not be affected.

It is the north facing side of these houses that will offer living space and will rely on natural light from this direction. The sun does not reach the front of our house until 4 in the afternoon on a good day . The thought of living spaces requiring indoor lighting, as well as glaring security lights, solar garden lights and street lights will seriously affect our living space and amenity . Nothing can screen us from these houses- police recommendations are that trees should be less than 2 metres tall and bushes 1.5m. Even the police recommended of 6 foot high solid fences won't help and will look hideous. Without installing a 20 metre high screen at the top of our garden onto which we can project films for our new neighbours we are at a loss as to how we can shield ourselves and maintain some degree of privacy. I am sorry if this seems flippant but have you any other suggestions?

The Grade 11 listed building at the Farm

I am concerned that the aerial photographs make it look like there are clear distant views of the Grade 11 listed homestead from the western edge of the development . This "Pleasantville" style picture does not show fences, walls, garden furniture, sheds, allotments, greenhouses, sunrooms, garden offices, or people, which will take away any through viewing within and from the outskirts of the development. I do not think these pictures can give any idea of what the development will really look like or the impact it will have on the listed buildings.

Acid grass and carbon offset

It has been suggested that the protected acid grass situated on the western side of the development can just be relocated to the sump area near the large oak tree (the area that will be the public open space). We have lived here for over 30 years, we are keen gardeners and even in our garden the change in soil and conditions across the garden is great. Plants grow happily on one side and die when moved. If acid grass was going to grow in the area around the sump it would be there now. You can't just dig it up and expect it to grow somewhere else, especially when it has been somewhere unaffected by people for over 50 years. This protected area should not be built on.

This public open space is likely to be boggy and midge ridden - a common inhabitant of this area that as yet does not seem to have been mentioned and if it is to be the home of the acid grass, can it still be public open space?

To plant some more trees in Marsden to counteract the loss of environmental damage that will be done in Slaithwaite seems ridiculous- when we are so close to Manchester Road and all the pollution it bring we need every bit of natural habitat to help purify the air and encourage wildlife and maintain our health, both mental and physical. Sadly I do not think a few bat boxes, hedgehog homes and sparrow terraces will make much difference or compensate for the loss.

Drainage

Living at the bottom of this development, we still have grave concerns about the drainage and risk of flooding on this site when it is being build and when it is completed. We know how little it takes for water to come pouring down the hillside and that is without 44 huge dwellings , a new road and copious amounts of hardcore above us .

Managing Risk and protecting our future

We know that this developer has built some great houses in the area and is an asset to our community but our major concern is still that by going against the original numbers of dwellings for this site, there is significant risk that things will go wrong, otherwise this number would not have been agreed . What happens when we suffer as a consequence - who do we turn to to rectify the issues because this risk has been agreed by Kirklees who will be going against their own recommendations ? I still have not had an answer. This is a source of great anxiety for us and our neighbours and as such we feel we must object to this development in its current form.

Yours faithfully