

30th December 2023

Re: Planning Application 2021/94280
65 Dwellings and works at Lady Ann Road | Soothill

Dear Planning Dept.

I am in receipt of your letter dated 15th December 2023 regarding the above planning application. I cannot understand why this application has not been rejected as on previous applications as nothing has really changed. There would still be issues with traffic congestion (even more so with other house building being done in the Soothill area), destruction of wildlife, flooding (see evidence of previous flooding on photos), privacy etc etc. I also note that objections are sought during busy times of the year especially on the run up to Christmas as residents in the area are very busy preparing for the holidays or going off to visit family etc. This application and previous ones have been going on for over 6 years now and it is very stressful each time it crops up again and again. Once again I submit my objection to the application below:

I would like to object strongly to the above planning application on the following grounds:-

1. Flooding

I have lived on Lady Ann Road for 36 years and have seen the road/field under water on a few occasions, most recently in 2021/2. The beck floods frequently as far west as the row of eight trees (which according to your KC website are protected by a TPO) I have studied the site, map in hand, and confirm from my personal knowledge that the new access road and numerous houses are in the flood zone. It is insane to consider building on land with a known risk of flooding. I have even received in November 2019 a communication from by your KC Flood Management team advising me of the flood risk. I have attached recent photographs showing floods on this land and on Lady Ann Road.

I have been refused house insurance because of the flood risk. Building on the land would increase the risk because there will be less ground to soak up the rain, so who is going to insure these properties?

2. Wildlife & Flora

The site is a haven for wildlife, including endangered species such as bats, Great Crested newts, water voles & Owls which would not survive the catastrophic destruction of their habitat caused by the building works. The proposed balancing pond would be totally inadequate protection for the wildlife. In addition, in times of flood, the upper slopes would no longer provide a refuge for the voles. We are currently being made aware by David Attenborough of the need for green spaces and to protect endangered species from extinction for our and future generations. This meadow area has been a Godsend during COVID for exercise, dog walking and appreciating nature and to lift our spirits.

Please also note that there is a natural spring that runs on through the site.

(TPO protected trees)

Any building works on this land would interfere with the root systems and the trees would die. Also, who would want to live in a house with such large trees next to them. Again, it would be impossible to get home & house insurance living near to these large protected trees.

It was recently reported in the Yorkshire Post that Kirklees has been awarded government funding to plant 121 hectares of new woodland and 3100 standard trees in urban areas. What a nonsense therefore to destroy established trees which are already helping counter climate change on a site where they are needed. The money would be better spent planting trees on THIS site so as to counter the EXISTING flood risk, rather than in some rural area where we would not directly benefit.

3. Loss of Amenity

This is a serious concern as some plots would have a view directly over our house resulting in a loss of privacy. I look out onto a green and pleasant area, giving us a sense of space which cannot be obtained to the rear of our house where there is a quarry face. It would be depressing to be facing houses so close by. I consider the development would detract from the neighbourhood, being ugly and out of character. I now have a feeling of living in a rural area close to the town centre. The green space is a precious asset which I feel should be preserved as there are so few of these in Batley. The area is well used by the local population so many people would suffer if this natural parkland was to disappear. The development would have an overbearing impact on the Lady Ann Road residents, exaggerated by two and three storey houses on a slope. It would cause significant harm, whilst adding nothing. The residents of Primrose Hill also look out onto a railway banking so building houses in front of them would rob them of any views and daylight.

4. Pedestrian Access

I sometimes use the long tunnel from the bottom of Primrose Hill to the Mill complex, but it is dirty, rubbish is dumped there and it is often inaccessible due to puddles after rain. It is certainly not safe for women and children due to a number of attacks on people. The lights have also been out of action for over 4 years.

5. Vehicular Access

This is very difficult especially between 8-9am and 3-6pm as traffic is often backed up a long way up Soothill Lane it can take up to half an hour to get to the town centre, and exiting via Broomsdale Road or Grace Leather Lane is just as bad and also dangerous because of the tight bends. There are always cars parked along Lady Ann Road (and Soothill Lane) and as there are few passing places it is often necessary to back up a long way in order to allow another vehicle to pass. I have often seen emergency vehicles blocking off the road as they have nowhere to park. Buses and lorries have great difficulty accessing the top of the road, and sometimes find it impossible. I consider it would blight the whole of Soothill if this development were to be allowed, rendering it an unpleasant place in which to live. Furthermore the damage would be irreversible. The transport assessment carried out is clearly not written and prepared by somebody who lives locally as it is almost impossible to pull out of Lady Ann Road onto Soothill Lane. The area is gridlocked and with all the other houses being built in the area it will just get worse and worse. Building these 65 houses would add to the chaos in the Soothill area.

6. Fly Tipping.

There is currently a lot of fly tipping in the area but especially in the beck and I fear that increasing the number of residents would greatly increase this and also make flooding more likely.

7. Pollution

I am frequently disturbed by traffic noise late at night and as the houses on lady Ann Road shake from the vibrations, hearing and deaf people are equally affected. Lorries often park up near the Mill and leave their engines running all night. As pollution seems to sit in the valley, those of us with breathing problems will suffer more due to the increased volume of traffic generated by this development.

Both noise and traffic fumes are serious health risks and this area is already one of the worst in the country for physical and mental health. It is simply not fair to reduce our life expectancy even further. We should be seeking ways to improve our health rather than destroy it.

These houses would look at of place in between 2 streets of Victorian terraced houses and are not in keeping with the area.

Please please please do not pass this planning application. Every year for the past 5 years we have had to object to this planning application the council should take this beautiful piece of land of the town plan as it is definitely not a suitable building space.

Yours faithfully

(Attachments showing flooding on Lady Ann Road in past years.)

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