

## Planning - Comment

**Call date:** 12/09/2021 22:13:18  
**User:** 5456378/2  
**Contact number:**  
**Document Number:** 5372399

### Comment on Planning Application

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#### About You

Please provide details about yourself

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Contact Number

Email

Comments

**Will and Karen**

**Gray**

**38 Millcrest Road**

Dear Sir or Madam,

**We are residents of a property backing onto an area of woodland that directly connects to the proposed development on the Fairmead site, reference 07/19/0200/F. We are writing in opposition to the development in a number of specific areas, each of which we feel provides a strong reason for the council not to approve the proposal.**

#### **1. Scale of development**

**The original proposal was for significantly fewer properties than the 58 now proposed. We are concerned that the increase in the number of dwellings compared to the indicative proposals in the Local Plan does not represent a scale of development that is appropriate or reasonable for the size of the site and its surroundings. There are already significant numbers of new houses proposed in the Local Plan, and while many of the locations for these make good sense as they are within areas that can handle additional properties, this particular site does not match those sustainable goals. The location on Cuffley Hill, particularly given the neighbouring development of 23 large homes at St Edwards Gate, creates a property density that is not in keeping with the nature of Goffs Oak village and will cause increased noise and urbanisation in an area that is currently an attractive and biodiverse rural habitat.**

#### **2. Traffic/Pollution**

**The increased volumes of traffic feeding into Cuffley Hill from this proposed development would add to the already problematic traffic at peak times. This will inevitably cause an increase in traffic and, most importantly, standing traffic during peak times, causing additional air pollution. Anyone who has walked in this area will note that heavy exhaust fumes sit within the valley between Goffs Oak and Cuffley and this can cause breathing and other**

health issues. As an asthmatic, I already require an inhaler when walking on this road, and the additional traffic, combined with the large volumes of traffic fed in by other schemes, will only make this worse for residents, particularly those with breathing difficulties. In a rural environment such as Goffs Oak, we feel the council should be aiming to reduce these issues, not exacerbate them.

### **3. Animal habitats**

The area around the site is rich in biodiversity and is a vital region of animal habitat, including providing habitat for protected species, something that is rare and valuable so close to the M25 and the London area. The site forms part of a larger habitat area that connects two private sections of woodland, the surrounding fields and the large forested area behind the houses on Cuffley Hill (via the protected strip of land behind St Edwards Gate). We have private access to part of this area and have recorded many animals on a night vision trigger camera, including badgers that are resident in at least one badger sett in the area and numerous muntjac deer. We have video evidence that these animals have formed natural pathways throughout the area, including within the land proposed for development, and that they use the bottom corner of the site as a thoroughfare. We are extremely concerned that the development will create not only a deterrent but a physical barrier for this natural roaming, therefore deterring the diversity of wildlife that lives here. In addition, we have personally seen Red Kites nesting in trees that will be pulled down by the development; we have noted an area of standing water within close proximity to the site, which is highly likely to be habitat for Great Crested Newts; and we regularly see a significant number of bats flying at night that are resident in the woodland in and around the site. We acknowledge that the plans include consideration for green amenity areas, but this does not compensate for the loss of some of the richest biodiversity in the area. A recent article in Hertfordshire Life noted that building on greenfield sites has resulted in a net reduction in grassland in the UK since 1990 of nearly 770,000 hectares. We feel that the scale of this development, coupled with its proximity to St Edwards Gate, represents a significant over-development of this natural wildlife habitat, at a time when the likes of BBC Springwatch and the many government backed nature support schemes (such as the biodiversity net gain proposals that are due to be introduced in the new Environment Bill) say protecting wildlife and increasing biodiversity should be a priority for any environmentally focused council.

### **4. Infrastructure**

The Local Plan already contains a significant number of developments for Goffs Oak, yet there is little or no consideration for schooling

in the area. We are parents of children at a local primary school, and one of us also works at a local primary school. We are concerned that adding 54 houses on this site of the housing styles and sizes proposed - significantly more than the original proposal - has the potential to bring in young families and result in an overload of our schooling capacity in the local area, both for junior and senior schools, which is already reaching breaking point. Aside from the socio economic issues this creates, this has the potential to result in longer distances for pupils to travel to school, adding significant road traffic in the region and exacerbating the aforementioned pollution issues, something that all councils will be increasingly pressured to reduce in coming years. We also note that the layout of the site, and the density of buildings within it, has created an extremely tight road routing and are concerned as to the feasibility of refuse access. As a result, we fear refuse from these houses could be disposed of in the local vicinity, littering the natural environment.

Due to all the aforementioned reasons, we oppose the plan to develop the Fairmead site at the proposed volume of 58 dwellings, and trust that the council will do the right thing for the area and decline this proposal and instead work with local residents to maintain the site as a vital region of biodiversity for the village.

We hope you understand our reasoning and would be happy to discuss and expand upon any of the points. We are also happy and able to provide evidence of the animal activity in the area if required.

Regards,

Will and Karen Gray  
Object to proposal

Overall View