



Grange Farm
Bowden Road
Henstridge
Templecombe
BA8 0PG
09/02/2023

Planning Reference 22/03560/OUT

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development at 22/03560/OUT Land OS 6975, Bowden Road. I have several serious concerns regarding this development that I would like to bring to your attention.

Firstly, the Environment Agency have confirmed that this land is contaminated. This is due to the fact that there is a mass-grave of foot and mouth infected carcasses buried on the site. This constitutes a serious risk to the environment and public health, as well as the potential to cripple the farming industry not just locally but nationally. The developers know of this and yet have chosen to omit this from their application, which is a cause for great concern. I have spoken personally with the Wessex office for the Environment Agency (ref 230206/ER32) who said that in the first instance the local authority would preside over such matters, although I am still awaiting their final recommendations on what restrictions they deem necessary on this land.

Secondly, the proposed development will cause significant harm to the local wildlife, including several protected species. This is unacceptable and the impact on these species must be taken into consideration.

Thirdly, the development will introduce a dangerous road junction that poses a risk to road users. This must be addressed and rectified before any development takes place.

Fourthly, Templecombe does not have the capacity to sustain another housing development. The village is already facing significant pressure from new houses being built, and this proposal will only exacerbate this problem.

Fifthly, Templecombe is already facing a disproportionate number of new houses being built in comparison to its size. This is not sustainable and further development should not be allowed to proceed without careful consideration of the impact on the village and its residents.

Lastly, you will find a full list of my objection points at the end of this letter.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider this application in light of the above concerns. I would be happy to discuss my objections further if required, and I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,

James Morgan-Yates
07816 668404

PTO.

Full list of objection points:

- 1) The village has already surpassed the local planning authority's housing supply quota with the Knights Meadow and West Street developments. As a small settlement, Templecombe lacks the necessary resources and services to effectively accommodate further residences. It is worth noting that the developer refers to Templecombe as a town instead of a village.
- 2) As previously noted, the land has been confirmed contaminated by the Environment Agency (reference number 230206/ER32) due to the presence of a mass-grave of foot and mouth infected carcasses dating back to 1967 that has remained undisturbed for 56 years. The developers were aware of this prior to submitting their application, as I have documented evidence to support this. Despite this knowledge, they chose to omit this crucial information from their application.
- 3) The land is home to a diverse range of wildlife protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including Great Crested Newts, Bats (with at least nine species present), Stag Beetles, Owls, Woodpeckers, and seven species of birds.
- 4) The land is also inhabited by Deer, Foxes, Badgers, Buzzards in their nesting period, Rabbits, and Hedgehogs.
- 5) According to the South Somerset Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017, there is "limited scope for development only," and Bowden Road is not considered suitable for a significant number of dwellings. The assessment suggests a maximum of 10 dwellings in close proximity to Bowden Road.
- 6) The proposed development will cause harm to the local wildlife, as well as negatively impact the rural character and scenic beauty of Templecombe.
- 7) The proposed development would:
 - a. Result in a detrimental impact on the local environment and wildlife.
 - b. Lead to a rise in traffic and noise pollution in the area.
 - c. Adversely affect the quality of life for those residing in the local community.
 - d. Be inconsistent with the planning policies set forth by the local council.
- 8) The developer's conduct has been questionable and raises concerns, including:
 - a. Holding consultations behind closed doors.
 - b. Utilizing a website to solicit objections prior to submitting their planning application.
 - c. Having a history of unsuccessful developments in Templecombe that were deemed inappropriate.
 - d. Omitting key pieces of information from the application as these would negatively affect a successful outcome for them.
 - e. They authorised a traffic survey:
 - i. which used video surveillance without permission from the Highways department (I asked this through a Freedom of Information request).
 - ii. I don't believe their contractor took suitable steps to warn local road users that they were being filmed in contravention to the Data Protection Act 2018. I have made a formal complaint to the ICO and I am waiting for the outcome. Should they deem that this survey did contravene the data protection act then the developer will have broken the law 1000s of times rendering a key piece of information in their application inadmissible due to information having been gained through illegal practices.
- 9) The application contains several inconsistencies in the information provided that leads me to question how far from their application the development would stray, should planning be granted. For instance:

- a. The main form does not specify the number of dwellings of each size, yet the supporting documentation provides this information.
 - b. The developer has included illustrations of their preferred design, yet is uncertain about the exact breakdown of 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom houses.
- 10) A junction on Bowden Road would pose a danger, as has been demonstrated by similar junctions in previous developments. This is particularly concerning given the high volume of agricultural traffic, including large tractors and lorries, that use Bowden Road.
 - 11) The local roads, particularly Bowden Road, are unable to accommodate the additional traffic due to their limited width.
 - 12) Residents of the development will have to walk on roads with heavy traffic, as there are no pavements, in order to access the centre of the village.
 - 13) According to the developer's application, the narrowest point on Bowden Road measures 5.5m, but the presence of parked cars during the evening reduces this width even further. I would suggest it is more like 3.5m, a squeeze for a tractor or a council refuse lorry.
 - 14) Bowden Road (immediately to the west of the junction for the proposed development) is prone to frequent flooding, and the proposed development would exacerbate this issue by increasing runoff and overwhelming ditches and drains. As a result, Bowden Road would become impassable for a significant number of days each year, causing significant disruption to local residents such as myself, increasing journey times and pollution levels.
 - 15) A historical windmill once stood on the field in question and its significance has been documented by the Somerset Heritage organization (<https://www.somersetheritage.org.uk/record/53470#>). However, this important information was omitted from the developer's application.
 - 16) Despite having a station, the transportation service in Templecombe is not adequate for commuters:
 - a. The single track between Templecombe and Gillingham frequently results in delays during every trip.
 - b. Regular speed limitations on this section of the track due to issues such as landslip have added further hardship for commuters.
 - c. The commute to London during peak hours takes a total of 2 hours and 22 minutes (provided it runs schedule, which it never does). This results in a daily commute time of over 4.5 hours for an 8-hour workday. I have had to switch to remote working spending only 1 or 2 days a month in London for work as the journey is not sustainable for a healthy work-life balance.
 - d. The line lacks the necessary capacity compared to other places, such as Castle Cary.
 - 17) According to the developers' own research presented in their application's Supporting Information document (edp7620_r001_Part1 Landscape and Visual.pdf), approximately 50% of the land has been identified as having high landscape sensitivity. We moved to Templecombe several years ago to live in the countryside approx. a mile outside of Templecombe not to live in a housing estate.
 - 18) The council's inability to maintain current infrastructure for residents raises concerns about their ability to accommodate 140 additional homes:
 - a. The collapse of the A357 High Street wall resulted in one-way traffic controls for over 9 months without any progress in repairs.
 - b. The A357 between Yenston and Cheriton has faced weekly roadworks for the past 12 months and continuing.
 - c. Despite council policies, the A357 is heavily utilized by large commercial vehicles, and the council has taken no measures to reduce this traffic. The only obstacle for the largest vehicles is the railway bridge.