



Shaw Residents' Association

For the Residents of Peatmoor, Sparcells, Nine Elms, Middleleaze, Shaw,
Ramleaze, the Prinnels, Eastleaze and Westlea (West)

9 October 2017

Victoria Griffin
Northern Planning
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 1ER

Developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk

Dear Ms Griffin

Re: 17/08188/OUT - Outline application for a residential development of up to 81 dwellings and associated infrastructure at Purton road Swindon

The Shaw Residents' Association wishes to register its objection to the building of this housing estate for the reasons outlined below:

It will forever destroy an opportunity to expand a Heritage railway and provide a more sustainable journey between Swindon's town centre and its western developments.

Politicians, council officers and the communities they serve have, for many years, discussed the possibility of building a railway station in the same location of this proposed housing development. The station would serve several purposes, including providing a southern terminus for the Swindon and Cricklade railway, which is Wiltshire's only standard-gauge heritage railway, and offering a more sustainable commute between the West and Swindon's town centre.

It will contribute to an already over-capacity road infrastructure

Whilst we accept that the percentage increase, in terms of cars on the road, from 81 houses would be low, Swindon's western approaches are already over capacity with no current plans to provide any relief in the shape of significantly new road infrastructure. It is precisely because developers are able to argue that their individual proposals, taken in isolation, would have a low impact on traffic numbers that our roads have become so congested. If all the proposals were to be viewed in a more holistic way, perhaps Swindon would have a more sustainable transport system.

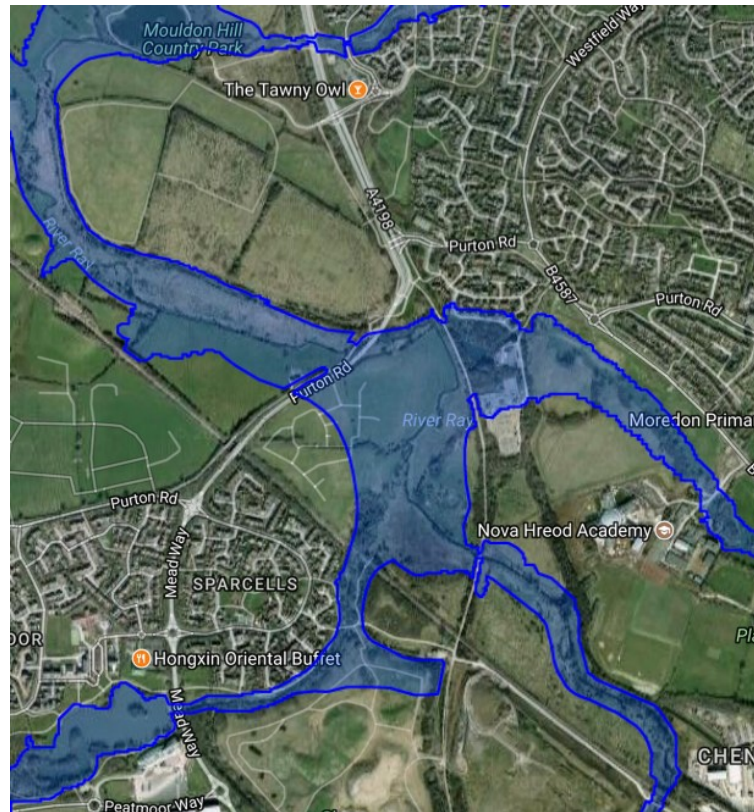
The road onto which this development would be accessed is exceptionally busy. The development to the south of Purton Road, known as Moulden View, has created a T-junction that will, in time, result in collisions. It is also proving very difficult for residents of the estate to exit their community. Adding an additional junction on the north of Purton road and just after the dip from the railway bridge will not only cause significantly more congestion, it will also increase the probability of serious collisions.

It is clear to us that a railway station on the proposed site would also require a junction onto Purton Road which could also add to the probabilities of collisions. However, whilst a housing development can only have a negative impact on road congestions, air pollution, and be seen as an unsustainable influence on journey times, a railway station can only reduce road congestion in the surrounding road network, reduce air pollution and provide a sustainable transport solution.

Furthermore, we believe the design of a T-junction, supporting a railway station, as opposed to a densely packed housing estate, would have much more flexibility, and therefore be able to overcome many of the dangers we foresee with the current housing proposal.

Much of the land is prone to flooding

We note the applicant has suggested the development is outside the flood plain. The flood level map shown in this document is provided by this website: www.riverlevels.uk. You will note about 30% of the Moulden View development to the south of Purton road has been built on the flood plain. We are aware the developer of that site has taken steps to hold the water back. However, it must go somewhere, and if it cannot flood 30% of Moulden view, it can only move downstream, probably affecting the proposed development.



It will cause significant harm to a public right of way together with associated trees and hedges

Currently there is a wide public footpath that was the original Purton road running along the northern edge of the new Purton Road. This path provides pedestrians and cyclists with a traffic free journey from West Swindon to Moulden Hill Country Park. Creating a new busy junction across this much valued and well used right of way will not only harm the experience, but also create dangers in crossing what will be a busy and seriously congested junction.

The proposed design is poorly conceived and a danger to children

Whilst we wish this proposal to be rejected, we feel a need to comment on what we see as some very obvious design flaws in the layout. We count about 18 dwellings placed within just a few meters of the railway line. We consider such proximity to be detrimental to the quality of life (in terms of noise pollution) to those unfortunate enough to buy one of these homes (or be assigned it through the social housing system). Furthermore, we note the proposal to place a children's play area right on the junction into the new estate and within easy reach of the over congested Purton road. Both these design aspects indicate to us that the developer is keen on maximising their profits by proposing significantly more houses than the space can safely provide.

Additionally, should this development go ahead, its proximity to Moulden View means both would be viewed as one housing estate with a significantly busy main road running between them. We believe the severance caused by this road, which has no pedestrian crossings, will result in fatalities.

It should be rejected based on planning policy

The proposal is outside of both Swindon and Wiltshire's local plans and does not form part of the Purton Parish neighbourhood plan. However, even though the site is outside of the Swindon planning authority area, the developer's only argument in support of the proposal is based on their view that Swindon (not Wiltshire) is not meeting its five year housing supply requirements.



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Aside from the cynical manipulation of planning authority borders to suit their needs, it is a well known fact that the number of sites with planning approval in Swindon provides for many more than five years of housing stock. It is the developers themselves keeping the number artificially low. Indeed Prime Minister Teresa May's said in her October 2017 Conservative Conference speech that the Government would be giving councils "*new powers to ensure that developers actually build homes once they're given planning permission to do so*".

Furthermore, we note that in a meeting of full Council, Swindon Borough Council agreed the leader, David Renard, should write to the secretary of state formally calling for a change in the five year housing stock rules, thus enabling all sites with planning permission to be counted. We applaud this initiative as it would discourage land banking, which only benefits the bank balance of the developer, and encourages house building on previously approved sites.

Based on the above observations, we ask this application be rejected.

Yours Sincerely

(Sent by email)

Kevin Fisher

Shaw Residents' Association Chair

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