

**WD/2022/1303/MAJ RIDGEWOOD HOUSE, LEWES ROAD,
RIDGEWOOD, TN22 5SN**

Phased development comprising 9 no. dwellings, access, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Response of Uckfield Town Council Plans Committee on 28 April 2023

At the meeting of Plans Committee on 24 April 2023, members were reassured that the developer had acted upon some of the previous concerns of the Town Council but a number of the documents referred to by the applicant were still waiting to be uploaded to the district authority's planning webpages.

Concerns previously recorded by Plans Committee in November 2022 related to:

- (i) Highways: the impact of the new access point and development on Lewes Road traffic calming proposals, poorly timed traffic surveys, cumulative impact of traffic from developments in the south of the town and lack of response from key consultees such as East Sussex Highways to form an opinion;
- (ii) Ecology: protection of green infrastructure belt around the site and close proximity of the development to the boundary of Millennium Green, as well as the impact on endangered species such as great crested newts and common eel. A buffer zone was also suggested to address the impact of the homes on the surrounding environment;
- (iii) Watercourses: impact of considering the site in isolation, for flood risk impact on Ridgewood Stream, and subsequent release into the River Uck;
- (iv) Scale: risk that this smaller application would be the start of a much larger staggered project;
- (v) Lack of affordable units: the monetary contribution was questioned as to whether it was of equal value to the lack of three affordable housing units, and;
- (vi) Light pollution

Members had welcomed the inclusion of bungalows in the design.

On reviewing the updated statutory consultee responses this week, members felt that a number of the original concerns still needed to be addressed, and **RESOLVED** not to support the application, for the following reasons:

(i) Highways -

Members noted that ES Highways no longer objected and engineers were now satisfied with the use of the main Ridgewood House entrance but the condition to ensure the gated entrances were kept open could be strengthened further to request removal of the gates, to ensure this condition was met;

Members acknowledged the six conditions outlined by ES Highways that would have to be met to satisfy highway safety but were still uncertain how the access point and highway proposals would fit into the proposed traffic calming measures for Lewes Road;

The cumulative impact of traffic movements from accepted and proposed developments in the south of the town, was still uncertain;

Uckfield Town Council was not party to the details being discussed for the statement of common ground with developers for traffic movements in and around Uckfield;

The Town Council would agree with ES Highways that the site was reasonably accessible

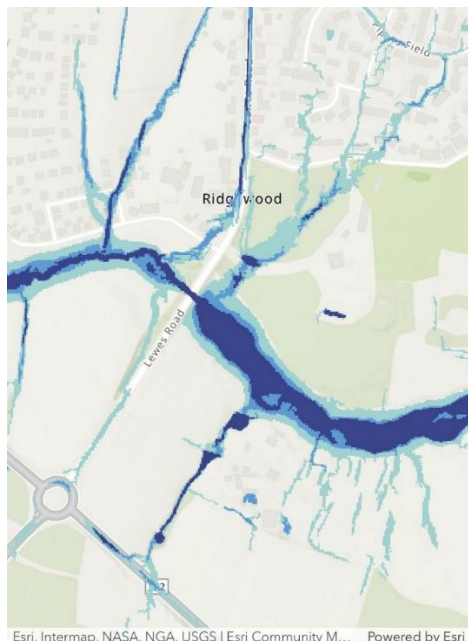
to some local amenities but the majority of journeys to work and school would require the use of a vehicle due to the site's distance from the town centre and education; There was no evidence of more recent traffic data being submitted, despite feedback that the area was in partial lockdown when the survey was last undertaken in April 2021; Site traffic movements also needed to be monitored during construction, to ensure highway safety on Lewes Road.

(ii) Ecology -

Concerns regarding the protection of the green infrastructure around the site and close proximity of some of the houses to the boundary of Millennium Green remained. The site formed an important green corridor between Ridgewood and Horsted Pond and the points in the letter submitted by the Millennium Green Trust had not been resolved; Information was absent on how the applicant would mitigate risk to endangered species such as the common eel and swan mussels; The internal driveways for the development were located within a red zone for Great Crested Newts; Members were keen for ancient/veteran trees to be issued with a TPO (if not already done so) and conditions added to ensure properties adjacent were not sited less than 15m minimum and preferably were sited 50m away;

(iii) Flood risk and watercourses

Concerns continued to be raised with regards to flood risk and drainage. Members questioned responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the watercourse and who would bear the legal responsibility for any flooding that occurred cross-boundary or downstream. Flood mitigation had still not been fully addressed. All the streams used for surface SUDS would feed into the River Uck and would cause flooding when all the attenuation tanks for all of the new sites in the south of Uckfield emptied at the same time during heavy rain and storm conditions.



Members reflected on a consultee response from a local resident which advised that it was planned for sewage to be pumped to a point on New Road. It was not possible to identify the location of this utility, further information would be required. Consideration was also needed if the pump were to fail and there was a risk of pollution to surface water and watercourses.

(iv) Scale

Members were still concerned how the site would fit in with other proposed sites for the area, and if this application was merely the early stages of a larger phased build.

(v) Lack of affordable units

No response had been received to clarify whether the monetary contribution being made by the developer to Wealden District Council would be of equal value to the loss of three affordable units.

(vi) Pollution

The impact of light pollution on the adjacent Millennium Green and Ridgewood Recreation Ground, plus members referenced the conditions set out in the pollution management consultee report from 27.03.23, for contaminated land and air quality. An emissions report was required.

(vii) Design

Members reflected on the contents of the report of the Wealden DC Conservation and Design Officer. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF stated that local planning authorities should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they could be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

This application was considered over development of a rural site and contrary to the NPPF; NPPF 2 - 8 abc, NPF 15, NPF 174 a, NPPF 174 d, NPPF 177 a, NPPF 180 a c, NPPF 185 b c, and the Wealden Local Plan 1998 4.6(2) 4.7, 6.7 (2)(5).

The conditions proposed by statutory consultees were supported and a further condition needed to be added to ensure that any property shown within the plans had a covenant that stated, that homeowners shall not be able to extend, increase height, or that other dwellings be included within this site. This would mean that proposed properties that were shown "not to block views from the existing grade 2 listed house" could not be modified to increase their height or footprint in the future.