

4 Sharmans Cross Road

Solihull

B91 1RG

14th March 2019

Dear Sir /Madam,

Ref: Local Development Plan Site 245 – Sharmans Cross Road Old Rugby Club / Tennis Club Site

I am writing as a long-standing resident of the borough of Solihull to strongly object to the planning application for housing development on Site 245 - Sharmans Cross Road Old Rugby Club / Tennis Club Site. I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development of any future housing in this location.

Having been very strongly opposed to the previous application for development back in 2010, I am disappointed to note that a repeat application has been made to SMBC for conversion of the old Rugby sports ground into a housing scheme. I wish to state that my objection to this proposed scheme is as strong as ever.

The grounds have benefitted from use as sporting facilities over many years and any development in this area would constitute a great loss for any sports enthusiast currently using the grounds. This has been a natural green habitat for over one hundred years and any development would ruin a natural and unspoilt area.

This planning application seeks to shoehorn between 67 to 100 new houses in the very mature suburb of St. Alphege on a relatively small area of land. The development would be totally out of keeping with the neighbouring period properties and destroy the natural character of the area which is one of the many reasons I chose to become a resident of this neighbourhood many years ago.

I have listed a number of items below related to the proposed development that should be considered:

- These grounds have historically been extensively used for sports activities. Not only for this, it is also utilised by families to bring their children and for those with animals. SMBC has a statutory requirement to ensure loss of pitches are replaced with facilities of equivalent quality and accessibility. Sport England has found that Solihull is in the 3rd quartile nationally for over-16 participation in sport three times per week and continues to fall in the national league tables. If this land is replaced by a housing development, resulting in loss of the sports ground, then this statistic would surely decline rapidly over the years. Not a good advertisement for promoting sporting activity in the Solihull borough;
- The 2013 all party policy on the Rugby Club maintaining the 'sports only ground' covenant and NOT selling the freehold would be maintained at any cost. This policy should be re-affirmed that has strictly said that any such development is NOT appropriate for inclusion in the local development plan (LDP) and the ground should be removed from the LDP for new houses;

- Big increase in traffic density on Sharmans Cross and surrounding roads, which is already severely congested in peak commuter and school times; this additional concentration of traffic and roadside parking will cause traffic problems and create a safety hazard for other motorists and especially children attending Sharmans Cross Junior School. Additional traffic will also cause more noise, pollution and dust at all times of the day and night;
- Additional development will affect the privacy of the surrounding dwellings – reduction of privacy and natural light levels especially where new houses overlook existing gardens, creating visual intrusion. The proposal suggests approximately 67 - 100 new dwellings. It provides for a mix of family sized town house and terraced dwellings, plus dwellings for smaller household units, including serviced apartments and potential underground car parking on the site. This type of mixed, large-scale development in a residential setting will change the very nature of this area. Solihull and especially the St. Alphege ward has some of the most beautiful, prestigious and sought-after property in the whole of the West Midlands that will never again be replicated, and this unique character should be maintained. Opportunities for crime and the general cleanliness of the surroundings will also be compromised;
- The site is flat, its boundaries contain mature vegetation and trees, much of it protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) along the western and southern site edges and Pow Grove LWS. A further line of protected trees runs north-south in the inner part of the site acting as separation between the Solihull Arden/ Lawn Tennis club and the disused rugby club pitches. Removal of mature and protected trees will contribute to local and global climate change. Removal of very mature tree roots will also affect ground conditions, i.e. increased risk of flooding;
- Sharmans Cross Road has a history of flooding and any development entailing changes to the existing utilities provision and highways amendments will only increase the problem of poor surface water drainage;
- Destruction of natural habitat for any local wildlife dwellings, including endangered and protected species of wildlife such as bats and badgers;
- The site will not be within walking distance to Solihull town centre or Solihull train station which breaches policy set by the National Planning & Policy Framework of having local amenities within an 800m distance;
- Schools and medical facilities are already over-subscribed, and it is near impossible to get children into their first preference of school or be able to obtain a GP appointment in the local area. Further development will lead to a degradation of service for the current residents or diminish completely;
- Development will do nothing to protect and enhance the amenities of existing residents and are contrary to policies P14 and P15 of the Solihull Local Plan that are supposed to

protect Solihull and its existing residents from inappropriate development which clearly this is;

- Potential devaluation of neighbouring properties;

The Rugby ground is in my opinion a place of very significant historical importance that is part of Solihull's rich heritage and should therefore be returned to use as a sports ground that both present and future generations can enjoy, instead of becoming a concrete jungle. If there is sports where will future generations be able to play rugby locally, within walking distance?

There is no other dedicated rugby or sports playing facilities other than West Warwickshire Sports Club located on Grange Road or Silhillians RUFC in Knowle, both requiring transport for local people to get to.

Whilst I understand the need for the provision of housing to an ever-increasing population, I believe there are other green-belt sites on the outskirts of the Solihull borough that would be better suited to providing the basis for a mixed housing development

Consideration should be given first and foremost to the current residents who have worked hard to create a mature environment to live in and not to developers interested in solely in their own financial gains. This will irreversibly affect the character of the area as well as diminish the surrounding environment

I trust that the above objections will be taken fully into account in determining the outcome of this application. Therefore, I ask that Solihull Metropolitan Council wholly refuse this planning application.

Yours faithfully,



Mr. Sunil Jassal