

25/01756/AOP: Land North of Glebe Close, Pitstone: outline application for demolition of No. 61 Albion Road and residential development of up to 100 dwellings, landscaping, drainage, open space, and associated works. All matters reserved except for access off Albion Road (details of internal roads and footpaths reserved) on land north of Glebe Close

The application was considered at a specially convened planning committee meeting on 10 July 2025, attended by over 100 (one hundred) residents, where it was **RESOLVED** to advise Buckinghamshire Council that the Parish Council was wholly and resolutely opposed to this application on numerous grounds. No members of the public in attendance supported the application; the parish council also received a number of written representations ahead of the meeting, all opposing the application.

The Parish Council had previously, on two separate occasions, invited Rectory Homes, the applicant's developers, to attend the meeting in order to present their proposals to councillors and to partake in a Q&A session with members of the public. Despite subsequent exchanges of correspondence Rectory Homes did not ever decline the Parish Council's invitation yet were not in attendance at the meeting.

The Parish Council requests that this application is called in for consideration by BC's planning committee, is willing to attend the meeting and speak on behalf of our parish, and notes that our two ward councillors have already also requested call in.

Please note that this is the first of two submissions from Pitstone Parish Council. This submission will cover our material planning considerations in objection to (i) the access arrangements and (ii) general matters (including some in relation to ecology and biodiversity). The second submission, drafted by Parish Councillor Dr David Frearson (an ecologist by education and profession, and a recognised expert on the subject of water hygiene) and approved by councillors who were present at the meeting, will specifically address our objections to the negative environmental impact on the Whistle Brook. The brook is a chalk stream, an extremely rare habitat, about which (more generally) the Chilterns Conservation Board's ["Chilterns Chalk Stream Planning Guidance"](#) is also highly relevant.

Countryside, conservation and coalescence:

- The site will extend development beyond the Pitstone settlement boundary and it would be an intrusion into the open countryside, in clear breach of Policy 1 of the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan and in a manner that is neither envisaged nor allocated by the Local Plan. This was previously arable land, now used as grazing land, causing a loss of vital local green infrastructure that contributes to the village environment. It is a clear case, in our opinion, of excessive overdevelopment.
- The development will reduce the sense of separation between the settlement of Pitstone and Ivinghoe. It would result in a clear sense of increased coalescence between the villages, contrary to policies in the Local Plan designed to preserve the individuality of settlements, and to avoid negative impact on their rural character and setting.
- The development abuts the designated conservation areas in Great Gap, Ford End and Ivinghoe. It will in particular reduce the amount of open land that contributes to the form and character of the Ivinghoe Conservation Area, and it would have a severe negative impact on the setting of that Conservation Area.
- The development would permanently and adversely impact on an area of land that is valued locally as an area of attractive landscape (and which forms part of a well-used network of footpaths around Pitstone and between it and other local villages) and would harm the setting of those historic villages. In particular, it would be in prominent view from both the AONB (the Chilterns National Landscape) and the Ivinghoe Conservation Area – and not, as the applicants suggest in their Landscape and Visual Assessment, virtually invisible – and would significantly disfigure the important and protected historical landscape, which should be preserved and protected.

- The reasons for dismissing an earlier application to develop this site (appeal decision ref APP/J0405/W/15/3002218) remain relevant, as the LPA already recognises.
- The development is likely to have little connection with the rest of the village as it is located away from the village centre (as identified in the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan) and most residents will need to drive from the estate to meet most of their needs, along a single and entirely unsuitable access road. By the applicants' own admission it will be a separate community that will be isolated from the remainder of Pitstone.
- We are a rural and historically agricultural community with many people associated with agricultural employment. As such, we are concerned that developments of this nature on such land diminish the rural and agricultural heritage of the village and may impact on local employment.
- The introduction of hard (asphalt-type) surfaces and lighting on footpaths within the development outside immediate areas of residential housing would detract from the character and semi-rural nature of the setting and would be detrimental to wildlife
- There are also significant, much wider concerns about the impact on local ecology, biodiversity and water management – see submission number two from the parish council.
- In conclusion, the parish council completely opposes the significant and irreparable harm that would be caused to the surrounding countryside by the proposed development.

Specific objections in relation to the proposed access from Albion Road:

- Albion Road is entirely unsuitable for conversion from a residential cul-de-sac to a through road for a new estate. It cannot realistically be widened (as the LPA appear to be asking the applicant to do) and yet in its current form it is too narrow to be anywhere near 'fit for purpose' as the sole access route to a significant development.
- It was designed and built for its current configuration and at 4.8m wide is insufficient in width for two large vehicles to pass – let alone deal with the construction traffic for any kind of substantial development. According to BC's own parking policy, the carriageway is only just wide enough for two parked cars, and is therefore unsuitable for any volume of general two way traffic. This application does not properly address this issue, nor the concerns already raised by the LPA in this respect.
- This road already has a high volume of on street parking, which would further compound the above.
- Access onto Marsworth Road from Albion Road is currently difficult, with parked cars for the Marsworth Road terraced properties (that have no drives/parking provision) on either side of the junction prohibiting visibility, forcing cars to edge out into the carriageway to try and see what might be coming. This application does not contain suitable alternative junction improvements to mitigate any increased risk to road safety.
- Access from Marsworth Road into Albion Road is also currently difficult, as the cars parked on the street in Albion Road can mean that vehicles entering the road need to stop & wait for a gap, leaving the rear end of the vehicle still on Marsworth Road. The submitted junction puts no measures into place to improve safety at this junction, given the volume of additional vehicle movements.
- The vehicle movements report is severely flawed and significantly under-estimates the volume of additional movements that this development will generate. In relation to another application (24/01969/APP), the Highways Officer at Buckinghamshire Council recently stated that a one bed home could be expected to produce 4-6 two-way trips per day. This application includes a mix of property sizes, which would increase the level of vehicle ownership and thus movements, but would clearly generate in excess of 600 vehicle movements per day based upon the BC calculation (if not considerably more), not just the c.90 peak hour movements that the applicants' traffic report focuses on.

- These additional vehicle movements would exacerbate an existing situation that is itself to be exacerbated, separately, by additional vehicle movements soon to be caused by (i) the completion of the three new warehouses on Westfield Road (being marketed under the strapline of “A41 Connect”), and (ii) the new works in relation to Pitstone Quarry (planning application CM/0020/24) – and need to be measured against these increased traffic movements, not those which currently pertain.
- There are currently approximately 110 vehicles resident in Albion Road for 74 houses, so a further 100 houses is likely to see at least 150 vehicles owned, if not considerably more given the requirement for new residences to have at least two parking spaces and the high incidence of live-at-home adults amongst certain sectors of society.
- The current vehicle movements report was measured from the far end of Albion Road, past Grange Road, where traffic movements are clearly much less than at the entrance to the cul-de-sac.
- As a rural community, we experience a high rate of deliveries to homes, both supermarket shopping and parcel deliveries, which generate significant levels of vehicle movements.
- Any increase in traffic movements would be exacerbated yet further if more than 100 new homes were to be built on the application site. At its highest acceptable level of density the site could potentially take many more dwellings than this, and there are concerns that the spacious new estate laid out in calming pictograms relating to the application will be replaced with a much higher level of housing stock as part of the move from outline to full planning permission,
- As a long straight section of road, there is a concern that vehicles exiting any such new development onto the far end of the current cul-de-sac would then be tempted to speed down the existing carriageway towards the junction – especially as only one means of access into and out of the estate is being proposed, which would mean that those properties at the far end would already have wound their way through the estate to reach this point. The application does not include any suitable mitigation measures to control speed within Albion Road.
- By locating an access at this point, the application would create a crossroads with the hammerhead of Albion Road. No mitigating measures have been proposed to ensure road safety at this location.
- By proposing only one vehicle access point for a whole new estate, this application does not take into consideration how any of these homes will access their properties in the event that Albion Road is blocked eg by a road traffic accident, resurfacing, utility works etc.
- The application access proposals would generate a completely unacceptable level of negative impact on the current residents of Albion Road, who purchased properties in a quiet cul-de-sac, where their children could safely play outside.
- The access would particularly severely impact the properties to either side of the proposed access and at the far end of Albion Road, who purchased homes in a row of residential properties at the quiet end of a cul-de-sac, and would then become located next to a carriageway serving as the sole means of access for a new estate with all the vehicle movements that entails.
- Albion Road is linked to Queen Street via a private road (Grange Road) and a BOAT (byway open to all traffic). At present, the residents of Grange Road have put a concrete block on their land to prevent vehicle movements through the BOAT and onto their road. However, this could clearly be removed by them, or by the Highways Authority, at any point. Thus this development application could also have a severe impact on both the private cul-de-sac of Grange Road and on Queen Street (as well as on the BOAT itself), none of which are again suitable for the high volumes of additional traffic that the development would likely generate.
- Albion Road is used as the walking route for children to access Brookmead Primary School and Windmill PreSchool from Yardley Avenue/Chequers Lane etc, as they walk through the

connecting alley by the GP surgery, along Grange Road and up Albion Road. There are also a number of elderly residents along this route. This application would generate significant increased road safety issues for all those pedestrians/children, especially given the quiet nature of modern electric vehicles (being promoted by this developer) as these are often not heard approaching. Other children, en route to school (not all accompanied by a parent), also cross Albion Road up near the junction with Marsworth Road on foot/scooter/bicycle, so there are concerns about increased traffic volume and road safety hazards here as no junction improvements have been proposed.

- In conclusion, the parish council completely opposes the use of Albion Road as the access point for any new estate.

Specific objections in relation to the so-called 'SANG':

- The development sits within the Ashridge 'zone of influence' and would negatively impact the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, for which there is no current approved mitigation measures in place within Buckinghamshire Council's domain, yet it offers no mitigation measures itself that satisfy the Natural England SANG guidance nor the specific requirements which relate to Chiltern Beechwoods.
- More particularly, the proposed 'SANG' is not actually a SANG at all
- There is no such thing as a "temporary" SANG and there are concerns relating to what the land might subsequently be utilized for
- A SANG should be available for the public benefit in perpetuity.
- The SANG management plan provides for minimal improvement to the current landscape (it could be seen as essentially nothing more than a field), and has limited public access
- A SANG should be accessible by all 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and these proposals don't even provide for any parking etc at the site so where are all the visitors to this area going to park and how are they supposed to access it? There are lots of blind spots on the busy road up through Great Gap. There is also no visitor facilities proposed to encourage access and use as a SANG.
- The submission retains ownership and management of the SANG by the current owner and developer, rather than it being gifted to the community or a local preservation society (eg National Trust) and is therefore at risk of removal from public access in the future
- The biodiversity net gain figures are based on the inclusion of the 'SANG' (which, as above, seems to just be open space) so there are concerns that once this is removed that the application site will not be meeting any of its BNG requirements either
- Ultimately it is not considered that this mitigation proposal works because the temporary SANG is too minimal to meet permanent requirements, and the proposals for permanent requirements are dependent on future decisions (such as the status of and timeframe for Pitstone Quarry) which are outside the applicant's control
- In conclusion, the parish council completely opposes any 'temporary SANG' or one that is conditional or contingent in any other way. Any SANG within the county should be both fit-for-purpose and in perpetuity.

Other objections:

- Pitstone does not have the capacity to accommodate further growth and significant weight should be given to this including in relation to the effects of growth on traffic, transport, education and health provision, and infrastructure.
- Concerns are raised in relation to impact on all tiers of education. Windmill Pre School is already oversubscribed for much of each academic year. Brookmead Primary School has limited remaining capacity this academic year but this can fluctuate and within the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan provision was made for additional education development as the school was at capacity. Most children within Pitstone fail to get into Tring senior school, despite

being our nearest senior school, as there is insufficient capacity. Tring itself is already proposed to take significant additional residential development, further impacting on the ability of our residents to access their nearest secondary school. Our community does not wish to create a scenario where local school children can't access their local village school network.

- Concerns have been raised regarding the ability of the current GP surgeries to take this volume of additional residents, given the long wait times for some appointments currently.
- Concerns have been raised by Anglian Water as the proposed layout places homes on top of existing infrastructure. A number of homes are also proposed to be placed in areas of medium or high flood risk, and there are concerns that the proposed attenuation ponds won't alleviate the issues (given the increased risk and surface water volumes arising from the development).
- On a related note we also harbour concerns about the impact on the Ford End watermill, from an ecological perspective, of the increase in water volume – particularly that at surface level. Many fragile species are known to overwinter in the vicinity of the mill yet the impact on them has not been properly assessed. It needs, amongst other things, to be conducted by reference to the larger (more north-westerly) pond, rather than the smaller south-easterly one which was the focus of the applicant's survey.
- Concerns are expressed about the existing infrastructure re sewage, electricity, broadband etc as our sewage network already sees a higher than average rate of failures. Concerns around electricity and broadband have already been well-made by those local residents who have shared their submissions with us. The parish council however does not consider, in particular, that Anglian's assessment of the water-related impact goes far enough – it makes valid points around supply, but it does not consider the extent to which the existing (very aged) infrastructure could likely cope with the anticipated uptick in volume occasioned by the proposed development.
- The assumptions in the applicant's transport study are in many cases misplaced: for example public transport, including schools transport, is poor, and local retail facilities are very limited. Pitstone (even if assessed in combination with Ivinghoe) has the infrastructure and services of a medium-sized village yet this application is threatening to turn us into a small town, with significantly sub-standard infrastructure as a consequence.
- The application encourages the use of public transport however given the rural nature of our village, this is not replicated in practice (resulting in a far higher incidence of car usage than the applicants' transport reports suggest). We are a car-based community and any attempt to suggest otherwise is misplaced – we are not a London suburb where buses run every ten minutes, 24 hours a day. Residents need a vehicle to access anything from the supermarket to the local high street. As a general rule, the only residents who rely on the bus service are those who don't have a vehicle. The bus service to Aylesbury or to Tring Station is not viable for anyone wishing to return later in the evening as it doesn't run then. There is no viable bus service to Leighton Buzzard. The car park at Tring station is full early in the day, which will cause issues for anyone wishing to park at the station.
- There are concerns that the application will result in the creation of an isolated estate, on the edge of the village, away from the areas upon which the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan focused development, which will prevent integration with our existing village community and generate increased isolation. Car usage will similarly be commensurately higher than the levels which might otherwise be expected.

As a parish we are immensely proud of our village and our local environment and 'sense of place', which has many areas of significant environmental importance. Our community does not wish to be expanded into a small town, or coalesced with its neighbouring villages, and wishes to retain its important and unique current identity. We are therefore completely opposed to this application.