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Brookcorner  
Castle Rd  
Richard's Castle  
Ludlow  
Shropshire  
SY8 4EW

11/09/15

Planning Application Ref: P152296/O  
Spout House Field, Richard's Castle

Dear Planning Department

We write to strongly object to the proposed outline planning development situated in Spout House Field, Castle Road, Richard's Castle. Our objections are unique and informed from painful first hand experience as we are the owners of the property which directly adjoins the proposed site. We refute the proposal in the Design and Access Statement paragraph 1.1 and we believe that that a residential development will have detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

We have outlined our objections below:

**Site notices and planning application inaccuracies.**

The site notices were attached to 2 posts along Castle Road a week later that stated on Herefordshire Planning Application website. The position of the site notices and was poorly chosen and many elderly residents were unable to clamber over the verges and the brook to read the notices. The sites notices were no placed where there is an accessible pavement for residents and wheel chair users. Many residents did not know of the planning application and have been unable to object. The position of just 2 site notices has not given equal access to all of the residents of Castle Road.

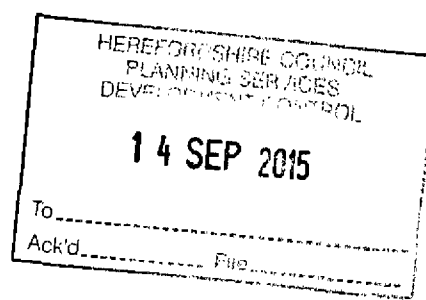
It also concerns us greatly that the outline planning application within section 12 states that *'the proposal is NOT within 20 metres of a watercourse (e.g. river, stream or beck)* and it also states that the proposal *'will NOT increase the flood risk elsewhere.'* This is inaccurate as we have outlined below.

These clear and blatant inaccuracies in the planning application do little to encourage any confidence in the integrity of the application and raise questions about what other future (or even current) inaccuracies are hidden within the proposed applications?

**Drainage/flooding**

We live adjacent to this site on its southern border and since moving here 12 years ago we have witnessed and been subjected to catastrophic flooding as a result of flash flooding along Castle Road, from Spout House Field which floods into our garden and property and also into the field to the east of the proposed site. The run-off from this field then also enters our garden and property. Please see attached photographs.

The flash flooding along Castle Road adjacent to the proposed entrance to the site and on the blind bend at the corner of the proposed site is frightening to witness and at its worst we are unable to drive out of our drive way through the flood waters as the height of the water it is over car wheels. We have to remove our cars to higher ground in order to be able to leave the village to get, for example to work.



The results of historical work to improve this situation in both the road and the field system have not been encouraging. The main outcome of supposed improvements to Castle Road has been generally to pass the problem on to our property and further down Castle Road. The maintenance work in the road which replaced existing pipe work (carried out by Herefordshire Council) stopped at Spout House as we were told that there was 'no more money' for further improvements to the brook and the road.

To the east of this proposed site the land owner has removed trees and dug out a culvert which stretches across the field behind our property. Both sets of actions in the road and the field have worsened the outcome by simply increasing the volume and speed at which water floods into Castle Road, our land and property, and into the field to the south east of the proposed development.

The ditches, drains and the brook alongside the proposed site and in the surrounding vicinity are not consistently maintained and are silted up causing narrow channels which over flow when there is heavy rain. When this flash flooding occurs the lane is strewn with debris from the brook causing cars to skid on the dangerous road surface. Residents of Castle Road have complained on many occasions to Herefordshire Council about this situation but our pleas for help have gone unanswered.

The proposed new access entrance to this housing development is one of the main places where the brook breaks out of the open gully and gushes across the road. Under new planning proposals the brook would be channelled and forced into a closed pipe under the new entrance only increasing the pressure to further around the lane where it will burst out of the open gully again, only this time nearer our property. Cars would be unable to turn across this tidal wave of water, stones and silt into the new development. Please note that the report 'Ecological Assessment of land at Richard's Castle prepared by Churton Ecology dated April 2015, paragraph 5.2.1 states that *'there could be a negative impact on the River Teme ... precautions must be taken with regards construction phase run-off and operational drainage.'* By replacing the open ditch with a pipe, we believe that the flooding would be worsened as the water will be forced further down Castle Road into our property.

We have spoken to Brett Evans (B M Evans Ground and Drainage) reference their 'Foul Proposals' report. They recommended that pumped discharge from the proposed treatment plants would be discharged into a stream that passes along the boundary of the site in question. This stream also floods Spout House field and the water washes across another field behind our property out onto the B4361. The extra amount of water generated by a housing development would only greatly increase the already out of hand flooding that we endure in our own property and the flooding that the residents of Castle Road endure.

Section 12 of the planning application goes on further to site that surface water will be disposed of via 'soakaway.' We hope we have made the point that clearly rain water by itself DOES NOT soak away. In conversation with Brett Evans, he stated to us that a package treatment unit would help our situation as surface water on each property would enter the 'soakaway' system via the treatment plant and then be pumped away. But that a connection to mains sewer would be cheaper.

However as the planning application had now been amended to mains sewer (is this because it is cheaper?) we will be in an even worse situation as all water being produced by the home owners, e.g. washing of cars, emptied paddling pools, residents watering their gardens PLUS rainwater will now soak away into the field and therefore our property. What will Herefordshire Council be able to do to help us?

Item 3.2 of the Parish Plan hi-lighted residents' concerns about the need for more frequent maintenance of drains and ditches, *'especially at Springfield and Castle Road.'* The paragraph goes on further to say that *'this is the responsibility of the relevant landowners.'* The landowners are not maintaining the drains and ditches so how will a new housing development help the frequent flooding?

### **Highway safety and inadequate access**

The road (Castle Road) used to access the proposed site already poses significant risks to safety. These risks include poor visibility, poor road surface, narrow and tight blind bends and blind spots, flooding, pedestrians in road due to lack of pavement, horses, speeding cars and HGV/farm traffic. The addition of the traffic for this development (both when completed and during its construction) will exacerbate the already hazardous layouts.

The proposed entrance to the site for the development will add to this danger, with the additional hazard of stationary traffic waiting to turn across the road into the site in a blind spot is frightening. The Design and Access statement paragraph 3.1 states that only a *'reasonable measure of visibility on either side'* would be provided for the new access. The additional hazard caused by the proposed site for construction workers and HGVs is unthinkable. Please see attached photographs showing how little road users will be able to see as they come around the lane past our property and number 2 Springfield. As our Parish Plan states (item 3.1) *'residents already have concerns about the HGV and heavy agricultural traffic causing safety and road wear problems.'* The surface of Castle Road is very poor with pot holes and eroded tarmac due to the flooding.

Castle Road does not have any street lighting and item 3.2 of the Parish Plan has already outlined that *'funding cuts will effectively prevent new street lighting being installed in Springfield or Castle Road.'* Any new housing development here would place all residents new and existing in further danger by increased traffic in a dark lane. However, new street lighting would compromise the bio-diversity of the area with light pollution.

As there is not a full pedestrian access via a footpath, there are worries about pedestrian use of the lane especially as new residents will be unable to use a footpath to access the bus stop on the B4361. Castle Road narrows considerably outside the property the 'Playhouse' near to the public house and there is not a footpath. All new residents will need a car to access local facilities in nearby Orleton and Ludlow. There is not a shop or school in the village, new residents will need a car to leave the village thus increasing road use, pollution and traffic on a very narrow lane.

### **Boundaries and privacy**

The current hedgerow between our property and Spout House field is a very low boundary and belongs to the land owner. As we do not own this boundary we are unable to allow it to grow tall enough to afford us some privacy. However, who will maintain any of the hedgerows around this field once the land has been sold and a housing development has been built? The landowner currently maintains the hedgerows in the usual manner with a tractor, how will this happen in the future? Three sides of the proposed site are bordered with beautiful hedgerows. Who will own them and how will these be maintained?

A further objection is our loss of privacy. The new properties would directly overlook our bungalow. Our living room, dining room and bedroom are situated at the front of our property. Indeed our garden would be directly overlooked at all times. Our bungalow is situated at the back of our land and thus our garden is wrapped around the bungalow from the east to the west.

### **Principles of development**

We acknowledge, as in the Parish Plan that there is need for new housing in the county. We understand that Richard's Castle has a settlement status within UDP and that the council must assess the proposals in relation to the core principles of sustainable development as outlined by the NPPF. The Design and Access Statement, paragraph 6.6 quotes Policy RA2 and states that housing proposals will be permitted where certain criteria are met:

1. *The design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area.* Spout House field **does not** lie within the main built up area of the village.

*In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.21 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement; and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned. We are very concerned how the houses will change the rural character of the village. The Parish Plan (item 1.1) 'requires that all associated building and conversion works are designed and implemented in ways which harmonise with the rural character of the area and specifically in terms of their scale, quality and appearance.'* This part of Castle Road contains properties ranging from our 1960s bungalow to post war semis, period cottages, timber framed houses and farms. So what will the new houses look like to *'harmonise with the rural character'*? How will a new housing development be in keeping with this? How will new properties be able to encompass the rural character of the village with properties with large gardens? We are also wondering how a new development will be in keeping with the current layout and look of the properties in Castle Road? Looking to the west, there is currently our bungalow and then Spout House field then Spout House which is a cottage. This is followed by another field and then a cottage. This pattern of field – property – field – property continues along Castle Road. Fields and spaces between properties help to *'harmonise with the rural character.'*

The Design and Access Statement paragraph 2.5 states that *'such development is likely to read as part of the settlement and should not detract from the generally open character or scenic quality of the surrounding countryside.'* However a new housing development in this field will detract from the open character and scenic quality of the countryside as a previously open field will now contain houses that will block the scenic views of the historic churches, forest and skyline.

2. Policy RA2 states *'proposals should result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlement, reflecting local demand.'* 60% of respondents to the Parish Plan voted for family and starter homes. However, how will small starter homes *'harmonise with the rural character'* located in Spout House Field? Also homes for local families in a village without even a play area or even safe access to pavements would not be suitable.

In conclusion our arguments can be summarised by the need to preserve the rural nature of the village and our own personal needs regarding flooding and erosion of privacy.

Yours sincerely

Andrew and Rachel Massey

Flooding in Castle Road at the bottom of our drive.



Flooding in Castle Road in front of our garden



Flooding in Castle Road along the boundary of the proposed site.





Flooding as a result of run off rain water in our garage



Over spill of water from the proposed site – Spout House Field



This run off was after a few days of heavy rain. The wall to the right is our garage which is flooded by the rain water.