

Planning application comment was submitted on the **22 June 2023 08:12 AM**

The following is a comment on application **P231202/F** by **John Smart**

**Nature of feedback:** Objecting to the application

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**Comment:** See Attached

**Attachment:** sandbox-files://6493f3c7b7085672067945

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Their contact details are as follows:

**First name:** John

**Last name:** Smart

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Postcode:** HR9 7PE

**Address:** May House, Weston Under Penyard, HR9 7PE

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**Infrastructure from section 106 to consider:** Improvements to the very dangerous section of School Lane between the school and the village hall.

Cycleway link from Weston under Penyard to Ross on Wye

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Link ID: [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning\\_services/planning\\_application\\_search/details?id=231202](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=231202)

Form reference: FS-Case-525901319

## **Comment on Application P231202/F. Land North of A40 (Gloucester Road) and East of Hunsdon Manor Weston Under Penyard Herefordshire**

I object to the planning application P231202/F

### Reasons for Objection.

1. There is no need or requirement for a housing development of this size to be approved at this time in Weston under Penyard. Paragraph 2.7 of the applicant's Planning Statement recognises "..... *the need to ensure that sufficient land is available in the right places at the right time in order to deliver sustainable economic growth.*" However, the need for additional housing in Weston under Penyard is not evidenced by the applicant in the proposal. The Planning Statement notes in paragraph 5.5 that "*the key document relating to allocations with Herefordshire and Weston under Penyard is the Neighbourhood Plan.*" The Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is required to increase the number of dwellings by a minimum of 14%, or 65 dwellings, between 2011 and 2031, and has nearly achieved that already. At this time there is no requirement or proven need for the proposed development, which, if approved would increase the target by an additional 57%. In about 2 years it is possible that the housing numbers required under the WNP may be amended, but this depends on the emerging revised Local Plan which is in the early stages and carries no significant weight at present. Meanwhile the WNP continues to carry its full weight on all matters including housing numbers.
2. The proposal for 44 houses is excessive for this site and does not meet the expectations of Policy HS2 of the Weston under Penyard Neighbourhood Plan which supports a development of approximately 37 homes, as approved by Herefordshire Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in respect of application 143842. The total of approximately 37 homes was determined in a strong referendum turnout when 96% of the residents approved the NDP. Their clear requirements should now be respected. It is suggested that the number be maintained at 37 homes by amending the proposals as follows:
  - a. Removal of plot 44, as required by Herefordshire's Senior Landscape Officer, due to the close proximity to the hedgerow and the potential risk to the root zone of the oak tree which itself would be cut off from its open countryside setting.
  - b. The removal of the combined plots 1 and 2. The proposal makes many references to the values of setting back the frontal houses from the A40 road but plots 1 and 2 seem to have been crammed in on the end of the row 1 to 10 with the result that they are much closer to the road than any of the other proposed houses. This is a deviation from the approved 2015 planning application.
  - c. The removal of plots 25 and plot 33 to provide more space on the northwest section of access road.
  - d. The removal of plot 8 and repositioning of the combined plots 9 and 10 to break up the linear arrangement of houses and parking spaces in the southwest area of the development.

The above changes will greatly improve the site layout and still provide the 40% of affordable housing.

### Note:

The statement in paragraph 2.13 of the Planning Statement regarding housing density is [REDACTED] since it is based on the entire site, whereas the actual land area available for

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development is halved when the archaeological area, pond and other essential green areas that cannot be built on are removed. In practice the proposed area to be developed would have a density of double the figure quoted. Most residents are naturally concerned about how close the houses are to each other and how much open space they have on their plot to provide some privacy. Unfortunately, the [REDACTED] statement on density is used again four more times in the Planning.

3. The proposed housing designs and use of materials do not achieve the requirements of Policy HS2. The designers were fortunate in being given an excellent template to work from, comprising a good site layout from the previous application, an excellent location with green space, in a popular village in a beautiful part of South Herefordshire. The requirements of various existing plans and guidelines have been correctly identified which repeatedly advise that they must recognise this beauty and build and enhance it. One such example is policy SS2 quoted from the Core Strategy “In the wider rural areas new housing will be carefully controlled reflecting the need to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”.

The planning proposal correctly details the relevant sections of the WNP and quotes for example Policy HS2, which includes:

- a) *The opportunity must be taken in the housing design and the site design to significantly enhance the setting of the entrance to Weston village. This must be complemented by appropriate green spaces and by retaining and reinforcing hedgerows and increasing the number of trees on site;*
- b) *Housing design should comply with the policies of this Plan but should, where possible, be complementary with the design of the nearby development on site WNP33;*

At the Lagan Homes presentation to the community there was a noticeable absence of street scene illustrations [REDACTED]. These are now provided with the application and clearly demonstrate that the design is not suitable for this location, falling well short of the basic requirements of Policy HS2 (a) and (b). Most residents agree that the Ariconium Place development has succeeded to “..... *significantly enhance the setting of the entrance to Weston village.*” There seems no reason why a development across the road should not equal or build on this success (on page 10 of the Design and Access Statement the applicant quotes from the NPPF 2021 that “*Development that is not well designed should be refused, .....*”)

The main problem is the extensive use of red brick for cladding. There are many such other examples of this in the area and simply put they are generally ugly and boring and certainly do not meet the current requirements of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission set up by the UK Government. The designs in the current proposal for this site show brickwork cladding about 98% of the buildings, with just a hint of about 2% of rendering, and not a stone to be seen on the site.

In the street scenes and elevation drawings some of the ridgelines look excessively high and out of proportion with the mass of the houses and garages in some cases.

The layout of some areas of the site should also be improved as already mentioned in (1) above.

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**In summary the proposed development fails to comply with the central requirements of the WNP, namely Policy HS2 (a) and (b).**

4. The reason for the proposed 10m Bredon gravel buffer zone to the archaeological zone is not clear and may not be the most attractive or practical feature.
5. The footpaths to the north of plots 30 to 43 appear to serve little purpose, whilst reducing the privacy for residents of those plots, including a risk of anti-social behaviour.
6. No pedestrian and cycle access has been proposed at the southwest corner of the site. The attractive lychgate feature from the previous proposal has also been excluded at this location, as has the walkway leading to the lychgate from the northeast. This access is essential if walking/cycling from the western side of the development to other the facilities in the village is to be promoted and additional car journeys discouraged.
7. The proposal does not define the type and location of the pedestrian crossing to be located on the A40, although paragraph 5.47 of the Planning Statement confirms that the development would provide a new pedestrian crossing on the A40. It should be clarified that the crossing will be of the controlled type. With the necessary inclusion of the pedestrian access at the southwest corner of the site (item 4 above) it is suggested that the crossing should be at the same location, thereby encouraging the maximum numbers of residents from both ends of the village to use the crossing.
8. No details have been found to demonstrate the developer's commitment to address climate change and how to take Policy SE5 of the WNP into account, other than in a vague check list attached to the covering letter.

Paragraph 6.62 of the applicant's Design and Access document quotes policy ENV7 of the Core Strategy which requires developments to "incorporate generation of energy from renewable sources sufficient to offset at least 10% of the estimated residual energy demand of the development." There is mention in the proposal of solar panels in "most" homes but no evidence of how ENV7 would be complied with.

There seems to be conflicting information regarding the possible provision of heat recovery systems.

Minimal compliance with Building Regulations may not be sufficient to demonstrate the design and build quality of the homes.

The developer's commitment to provide sufficient and practical EV charging points is unclear.

Cycle parking is stated to be provided by garages, but many homes have no garages.

The developer's intentions for the lighting of public areas is unclear.

9. For the residents of such a development there is no evidence provided in the application to ensure that adequate facilities such as schools and healthcare will be available in the area

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following on from the 600 homes that will have been built nearby on the southeast side of Ross on Wye. There are indefinite remarks in the proposals highlighting these deficiencies and general comments about S106 funding, but Herefordshire Council should not approval this proposal unless they are sure that the existing facilities can be sufficiently enhanced in a timely manner.

10. The applicant should be asked to confirm that under no circumstances will a future request be made to reduce the number of affordable homes or to increase the number of market homes.

John Smart

22nd June 2023