

62 Grassholme
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31st January 2019.

18/02687/OUTM | Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except for means of access) for up to 516 residential units (Class C3) with local centre (Use Classes A1-A4, B1a, C3, D1) public open space with pavilion and associated infrastructure and full application for demolition of existing buildings and structures and creation of ecological protection and enhancement zone. | OS Fields 5475 7267 And 8384 Moor Lane Acomb York MOOR LANE DEVELOPMENT.

Dear Alison,

Please find below the objection from the 3 Ward Councillors for the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe Ward.

This land has been threatened for a number of the years and we have consistently objected to its development. This application does nothing to change our minds. We object on a number of grounds:-

- 1. The site is in the Green Belt.** National legislation therefore gives it total protection unless there are Very Special Circumstances which would allow development. We do not believe that the Very Special Circumstances outlined by the applicant meet the test. They should be unique to this site and, in this case, they are not. The applicant's argument is not site specific and could apply to any of the Green Belt land. For example *in VSC1 they maintain that this site is Green Belt by default only*, a statement that, on their summation could apply to every area of Green Belt around the City. Our Green Belt policies were saved in the 2006 RSS and this area enjoys as much protection as any other. *In VSC2 they say that the site performs a very limited Green Belt purpose.* Our view is that it does perform a Green Belt function and therefore deserves protection. It does perform a purpose in *checking the unrestricted sprawl* of large built-up areas. As the applicants argue that all the land up to the A1237 could be developed for up to 1800 houses we feel that their view of urban sprawl is very different to residents who would see such development as the very description of urban sprawl. If this site is developed then it would be difficult to argue against a further extension. We would argue that this land is neither derelict nor urban land. *VSC4: There is no coherent strategy for addressing the acute housing need.* We would argue that the draft Local Plan does address housing need.
- 2. The site is not allocated in the draft Local Plan.** This plan has indentified enough housing land to meet future needs and therefore this site is surplus to requirements. The application is therefore premature as the Plan is progressing through the statutory process.
- 3. The effect on Askham Bog, a SSSI.** This is a nationally important site and developing land adjacent to it will have an effect on the water table. Although the developers claim that they have developed robust measures to ensure that this doesn't happen we will only know if that is the case after the event. If the measures don't work then it will have a devastating

irreversible effect on the Bog. We fully support the concerns of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Askham Bog is considered one of the most botanically bio diverse sites in the region and nationally important for invertebrate fauna. Development could damage the hydrology of the reserve causing irrevocable damage.

There would be a negative impact on the efficient use of land resources as the land where the housing would be built is Grade 3 agricultural land, associated with peat reserves and its ability to provide and store ground water for Askham Bog. There could also be a negative impact on the quality of the water that feeds into Askham Bog. This area of land also supports diverse wildlife and provides a corridor between the Bog and the open countryside.

4. **Unacceptable engineering work in the Green Belt.** Part of the proposal to protect Askham Bog is to build a bund up to 3.5m high and 6.1m wide. We would argue that the major engineering works needed to create the EPEZ to protect Askham Bog is “inappropriate” in the Green Belt. How can a bund of this size not affect the openness of the Green Belt? It is only needed in order to make this development acceptable in relation to the Bog so it, of itself, should be refused. If you don’t develop the land you don’t need to do major engineering works.
5. **Effect of housing on Askham Bog.** We know from other sites where houses are adjacent to open space/local nature reserves that there is an impact from human activity. Rubbish is dumped, there are requests to trim or remove trees and vegetation and people find their own way to access the land. Domestic pets, in particular cats, will find a way into the EPEZ
6. **Isolation of Askham Bog.** If the buffer zone and Bog are made as impregnable to access as it is claimed then it will also become impossible for wildlife to exit. It is important for wildlife to be able to move freely in and out of the area or the Bog will stagnate. But if they can move out then the area will be damaged by inappropriate access. There is no solution to this conundrum apart from, of course, not developing the land.
7. **Traffic congestion.** Moor Lane is already a busy road with traffic using it to access Tadcaster Rd and the ring road. 4 new accesses plus vehicles from 517 houses would put unacceptable pressure on an already busy road. Employment opportunities are not available locally which would mean residents would need to commute. With easy access to the A1237 and the A64 it would become a commuter hub for those working in Leeds and beyond.

The applicants argue that, because this site was identified in a previous draft Local Plan and that the sole reason for deleting the site lies with the in-principle decision taken by CYC not to identify any safeguarded land in the Plan, then it is suitable for development. The Local Plan process has been a long one with many iterations of the Plan with previous administrations allocating areas of “safeguarded” land. The major review by the current administration that started in 2015 concluded that safeguarding land was an unhelpful concept. Residents and developers needed certainty as to which sites would be developed during the Plan period. The safeguarded sites were reviewed, along with all other sites and this one was removed from the draft Plan as it not needed for housing.

The site has increased from the 17.5 hectares to 40.05 hectares in this application. The increase seems purely to offer a sop to the community in the providing “community facilities”. It is factually incorrect to say that there are no allotments in the ward. Children’s play areas in the Ward have recently been upgraded and include facilities for teenagers. Despite identifying other shortfalls in

facilities for teenagers and formal parks the application does nothing although to directly address those issues.

The community facilities proposed are not what local residents want. They feel that there is a need for a doctor's surgery and a school rather than shops and restaurants. They also query who would run and maintain the football pitches and pavilion in years to come.

As the Local Ward Councillors we continue to support the very many people who have objected to this unnecessary development, which will have a devastating effect on Askham Bog and a major impact on the live of the residents in our Ward and, above all, is not needed to address the housing shortfall in the City.

Cllr Ann Reid, Cllr Stephen Fenton, Cllr Ashley Mason.
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe Ward.