

JOL (0)
19/03416/OUT

Sunnyside
High Street
Henstridge
Templecombe
Somerset
BA8 0RB

20th January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re. Application number 19/03416/OUT

Location: Land at Manor Farm, Combe Hill, Templecombe, Somerset

As a local resident and a landowner in Bowden Road, Templecombe I am writing to express my deep concern over the proposed development as detailed above. I wrote to you back in September to the same effect but I understand that due to a delay in the planning permission being applied for, that these letters no longer count. I am aware of the depth of feeling regarding these developments and that many others conveyed this to the planning department at a similar time.

My concerns are as follows:

- The access proposed for both vehicles and pedestrians are extremely dangerous. Both of the proposed access points are on bends in the road. There is no footpath through Templecombe from the East Street/Temple Lane access point and the road is narrow with no room for two large vehicles to pass, let alone a pedestrian – or parents and children or wheelchair users, who would have no choice to do so in order to access the school/amenities. There is of course the option to drive to the school, but there is insufficient parking in this area already and an increase to traffic would increase the vulnerability of the children. The height of the children needing to walk this road, or children in pushchairs/prams would be at the same level as vehicle exhausts – a serious health matter as a result of pollution. There is also no street lighting in East Street/Temple Lane.
- The land that is proposed for the development is historically farm land. The impact on the wildlife in this area is at risk, from birds, hedgehogs and bats to otters (that have been sighted in this rural settlement). It is a known fact that birds who live and rely on farmland for their homes and feeding are in the most decline due to the development of their habitat. This is exactly what is proposed here – the destruction of a natural habitat.
- Templecombe is a **rural settlement** and as such has exceeded the amount of development for its status already. I am aware that the council is considering changing the status of Templecombe to a 'Village' in order to allow for further expansion and development.

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Henstridge is also on this list so the proposal of TWO rural settlements being made into Villages within two miles of each other is too much. We are talking about Rural Settlements in a RURAL community and it would appear to someone looking in, that South Somerset District Council has lost sight of its responsibility to care for this very special environment and habitat.

- There is already significant development in Templecombe with more being proposed. This in addition to the developments in Wincanton, Henstridge and Stalbridge – all along the A357 – is too much for the infrastructure that exists. The front wall of my garden was hit by a vehicle and the driver did not feel the need to leave contact details. There are also cases of properties being hit by vehicles in Templecombe, including The Manor House, a grade II* listed building, also near the proposed crossing for pedestrians from the Combe Hill exit to the proposed development. This I fear is going to be repeated along this stretch of road with the increased traffic as a result of the developments. There are houses immediately on the road along the A357 which means that there are no options for footpaths/pavements as the road is already too narrow to use any of its width to create one.
- There is also the question of protecting the archaeological remains of the once Templar/Hospitaller preceptory site. I am aware that 'Time Team' (the Channel 4 programme) found human remains during their investigation here, but due to licensing matters could not go further or broadcast these finds. For our heritage there is a need to preserve this. This is after all how Templecombe got its name – Temple (from Templar) and Combe (valley).

Please also find enclosed a copy of the letter I sent in September as I feel it is important for the planning department of South Somerset District Council to know the depth of concern felt by local residents, that they are prepared to write twice on the same matter. As OUR representatives, and as those of future generations, you have a responsibility to preserve our environment and rural heritage.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Cuss MEd

cc. Right Honourable David Warburton MP

Sunnyside
High Street
Henstridge
Templecombe
Somerset
BA8 0RB

17th September 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you as a landowner in Bowden Road, Templecombe to express my deep concern over planning applications that have either been submitted or are said to be being submitted in the near future, and with regard to the proposal of the council to change the grading of Templecombe from a 'rural settlement' to a 'village'.

The council is seeking to so-called 'upgrade' the 'Rural Settlement' of Templecombe into a Village (along with 9 other rural settlements in their care), but in so doing would be destroying it by it's own definition - rural.

Bowden Road is already severely congested due to the developments that have already happened in it's immediate area. The increase of housing along the back of Vine Street, in Bowden Road itself and Overcombe (off of Bowden Road). Bowden Road is the only 'exit' for all traffic using Vine Street, Westcombe, West Street and of course Bowden Road itself (and its side roads). Vine Street being one-way and narrow, and the top of West Street also narrow and dangerous for the traffic that already uses it, without an increase to this. I refer here to proposed development in West Street which would have to use Bowden Road. On the details proposed by the developer they are keen to emphasise the 5.5 metre access that the development will have, but this is of little relevance when the road onto which it will exit is narrow, has parked cars along the full length and its exits are onto Bowden Road - either by means of Westcombe (seriously congested) and the top of West Street which is narrow and not sufficiently wide for two vehicles to pass. This is referring to domestic vehicles and not even mentioning the congestion and danger that would result from construction vehicles accessing this area.

I understand that planning permission is being sought for land adjacent and south of Bowden Road. This land is historically farm land and is a nature haven for wildlife including wild birds, hunting grounds for sparrow hawks and buzzards, and a home to otters, badgers and bats. A significant section of ancient hedgerow has already been ripped out by the land owner to create so-called better access to the field. The removal of this hedgerow was done at a time when hedgerows are protected for bird nesting without consequence and apparently due to a loophole in the permission. The hedgerow itself was ancient with native plants and as such cannot be replaced. This appears as wanton destruction for the sole purpose of creating an 'existing' access that would then be suitable for a development access and no other reason.

The development of land to the East of the High Street (behind Manor Farm) is also of concern. The land is of potential historic value as the grounds used by the Knight's

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Templar and Knight's Hospitaller. Exploration has already been undertaken by the land owner without any regard for any archaeological remains and apparently without supervision. There is 'local knowledge' that relevant archaeological evidence was 'lost and destroyed' when the modern Manor Farm was built and this could be happening again.

The school is already running at capacity. The local doctor's surgery has absorbed patients from the Stalbridge surgery after it's closure. The developers of West Street were keen to emphasise the amenities the community has - these are proportionate to the current community and not for a much wider development.

There is an excess of development in the immediate area in Henstridge, Stalbridge and Wincanton and these will all impact on Templecombe as a central point between these areas.

The infrastructure of Templecombe is inadequate to cope with the additional proposed developments and burdens. This is in terms of water, drains, drainage and conservation. We are forever hearing about the loss of drainage due to construction of roads and houses, etc. and yet this is what is apparently going to happen. The planning office is there to protect the people and communities of South Somerset from over-development and this is not happening. It seems that boundaries are pushed and stretched to meet the means/ends of the developer with no consideration for the local residents.

I have to ask 'Why here?' when Templecombe and Henstridge have already seen huge development and massive infill of all possible spaces.

My concern also extends to Henstridge as this is also on the list to be so-called 'upgraded' to a village - this is two rural settlements within two miles that you are proposing to change beyond all recognition and to lose their rural status. Both Templecombe and Henstridge have seen significant development already with all possible 'gaps' filled in, and now the aim is to develop the areas of beauty that surround them and the very reason that they have their current charm and appeal.

It seems to me that South Somerset District Council has little interest in preserving what Somerset is - a RURAL COMMUNITY made up of rural settlements that support its residents.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Cuss MEd